

**A Tale of Two Countries:**  
**A Comparative Study of Partition Literature of India and**  
**Finland**

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother, Maija Wallenius, widowed at 55 and laid to rest at 93. I salute her strength, resilience and self-sacrificing love. Having had first-hand recollections of the war in Finland, having watched their home burn and having buried two beloved brothers who served, it is her stories that planted, in my mind, the seed of this work. Her example of hard work and determination spurred me to pursue and complete this degree. Sinulle, Äiti.

Her accounts and those of whom I met in Delhi—first-hand survivors of the Indo-Pak Partition, inspired me to pull up to light historical accounts that must be preserved. These links of suffering and survival bind humanity into one world-wide race. May we never forget!

## DECLARATION

As required under the University Ordinance, OB-9A.9 (v), I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, **A Tale of Two Countries: A Comparative Study of Partition Literature of India and Finland**, is the outcome of my own research undertaken under the guidance of **Professor K. Sripad Bhat**, Professor, Department of English, Goa University. All the sources used in the course of this work have been duly acknowledged in this thesis. This work has not previously formed the basis of any award of Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles to me, by this or any other University.

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## CERTIFICATE

In fulfilment of the provision of the Goa University Ordinance OA-19.8 (viii), I hereby certify that the thesis titled **A Tale of Two Countries: A Comparative Study of Partition Literature of India and Finland** submitted by Ms. Marja-Liisa Wallenius for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is the record of her own work done under my guidance and further that it has not formed the basis of any award of Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles to her.

Professor K. Sripad Bhat

Professor of English

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Date:

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Marja-Liisa Wallenius

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . ."

*A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

#### 1.1 General Introduction

1939 - the world is at war again. Only twenty years after the Treaty of Versailles, a barely healing world is once again at arms. Just as virtually every part of the world was affected then, so also World War II (WWII hereafter) proves to be no different. The depths of despair, the tragic loss of human life and the devastating effects of the war impacted every continent. Among these, two countries on opposite sides of the Greenwich Meridian - with varying cultures and different impacts, rise to reveal a scar that remains a common haunting feature. This scar, a simple line drawn on a map, would be a rift, a fissure so deep, that it will irreversibly tear its country's political boundaries, rip apart families and lacerate to destruction an unsuspecting legacy and a way of life that had thrived in prosperity and peace for generations.

For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on two countries in particular which were greatly impacted by WWII: Finland and India. Both of these nations were desperately fighting for their sovereignty and independence. Finland was battling the Soviet Union in order to protect her newly acquired independence; and India was struggling to wrest hers from the hold of the British Empire.

In his masterpiece *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), Charles Dickens brings together two cities in different countries, representing two completely opposing

political platforms in a uniting pathos. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . ." (1). Even so, for Finland, as well as India, this too was the best of times because liberty and freedom from foreign rule and colonial oppression had finally dawned. Yet, it was the worst of times because that freedom came at a significant cost. The tale of these two countries, their aspiration for freedom, their drive for untethered national identity, and the blood that was spilt in the bargain, both, ties and sets apart these two nations.

From time immemorial, wars and conquests mark the rise and fall of civilizations. Power-obsessed tyrants, selfish protective rulers, rioting masses and privileged classes have all led their spheres into ruthless, bloody combat. The reasons may have ranged from power, money, territory, religion to plain avarice. By the same token, countries have been joined to fulfil military, political and even matrimonial alliances; and ruthlessly divided for the same.

The juxtaposing driving forces of selfishness and self-preservation are unmistakably visible in the foreground of human history. They have induced actions that flout sound judgement and dare to achieve the impossible. They also are an intrinsic part of human nature and behaviour, and thus have been intriguing for many historians, sociologists, doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists.

The emergence of the world's powerful political leaders inevitably germinate in the hotbeds of selfish convictions, and all too often, it is the populace who pay the ultimate price for that selfishness. Many are left confused and disillusioned by the arbitrary decisions of their leaders. The sundering of Eastern Europe and the heartless dividing of Africa, to name a few, depict the cold, uninformed, inhumane outcomes of

such political movements. One such irrational decision was the Partition of India in 1947, as was also the severance of Karelia from Finland in 1944.

On the day India gained her independence from the British Crown, due to violent tensions between the Congress and the Muslim League, India was separated into the different states of India and Pakistan. The line separating the new-born country of Pakistan was drawn quite arbitrarily by a man who had never been to India, nor had familiarity with her customs, cultures, or religions. In some instances, the border ran through villages, cutting houses and wells into two. Both India and Pakistan were left devastated. Over fifteen million people were forcefully relocated into regions completely foreign to them. They migrated to join their particular religious majority. Even now, seven decades later, the emotional, political and material wounds inflicted on India and Pakistan by the Partition have still not healed.

The Partition of Karelia from Finland mirrors uncanny similarities with the Partition of India. At approximately the same time in history as India gained her independence, Finland fought desperately for the right to hold on to hers. She was at war with Russia, as her independence was threatened. Three wars, and four and a half years later, a victorious Finland faced the devastating reality that in the final peace treaty of the Moscow Armistice, in September 1944, Finland was forced to relinquish Karelia to Russia. As the Finnish troops retreated through Karelia, they brought in their wake the displaced Karelians who desired to evacuate before Russia assumed control. Consequently, approximately 420,000 Finnish Karelians abandoned their homes and were relocated elsewhere in Finland. As the Indo-Pak Partition forced people to choose religion as the basis of their existence and location, so also these Finns had to choose nationality and sacrifice the territory they had always known as home.

There are some convergences in the narratives of these two countries. India achieved her independence in 1947 and Finland was able to protect hers against the Soviet Union during the WWII. Furthermore, the decisions of the leaders resulted in indescribable pain for the people of these nations. They were forced to uproot their lives and escape toward the unknown. India was divided mostly on the basis of religious differences while the land of Finland was bisected to fulfil Russia's demands for territory in the peace treaty. People lost their homes, many lost their families, their identities and their citizenships. They had to leave behind everything they had, their possessions, their lives, and their memories as they once knew them, in order to save themselves.

In both Finland and India, these events have been extensively recorded. Official history has given its clinical interpretation of what occurred, while individual authors have given a more personal account of the tragedies so often ignored by the authorised versions. This study focuses on personal partition narratives, which are accounts that relate the events and experiences surrounding a partition. They bring forth stories about people's individual experiences - whether written by the Partition-generation themselves or by someone else to whom they chose to reveal their stories. It seems that the most significant narratives have been those that portray the author's personal involvement in the events. The highlighted emotional experiences allow readers to appreciate the culture and its influence on the mind of the author. Therefore, this appears to indicate that culture has an important part to play in the narrative style, as well as in what an author chooses to include and exclude. In reading partition narratives, one can experience some of the agony, fear and uncertainty that is presented by many who have been denied an official voice. Smothered history cries

out to be recognized, acknowledged and seen in truth, without prejudice and without bias. There can be nothing more painful than denial.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The aims of this study are as follows:

- To explore possible corresponding comparisons in the recording and telling of partition narratives from India and Finland.
- To discover similarities in response to human tragedy in both these culturally and socially divergent countries.
- To examine the role of 'memory' in relation to partition narratives.
- To assess the effect of partition violence on people, especially women.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To juxtapose Indian and Finnish partition narratives in order to investigate and identify any convergences in the manner of interpretation and narrative techniques.
- To analyse the primary texts and interviews for a better understanding of one's response to tragedy despite the numerous religious, cultural and social differences.
- To evaluate the possible effect of memory on narration by employing some aspects of the psycho-analytic theory.
- To analyse, through a gendered reading of the primary texts, the psychological effects of partition violence on women.
- To employ relevant critical theories to further understand the process which is involved in generating partition narratives.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

There is no dearth of literature concerning the Partition of India and Finland's part in WWII. Yet, it seems that no comparative studies have been conducted on these two, almost simultaneous, events that proved to be so significant to each country.

However, to compare experiences of women from two such different countries, which vary significantly in size, climate, culture, societal norms, and the role they played in these Partitions, enables one to further interpret and understand human behaviour.

Thus, this study delves into some details of the Indian and Finnish Partitions, comparing the impact they had both socially and psychologically on people.

### **1.4 Delimitations of the Study**

The delimitations of this study are the following:

- This study is limited to the Partitions of India and Finland.
- Both the topic and the sources of this study have been limited to a few authors who are well known in their respective countries and whose works are available in libraries and bookstores.
- For extra clarification on cultural behaviour (particularly with reference to Finland), interviews were conducted with Finnish evacuees.
- The Finnish primary texts were selected on the basis of the gender and age of the authors.
- The criterion for the selection of the Indian primary texts was a matter of linguistic convenience. Therefore, the present study takes up for analysis works which are available in English and in English translation.

- Though the Partition of India was not limited only to the Western boundary, for this study, the authors chosen are all from Western India. The study does not include the impact of Partition on Eastern Pakistan and Bengal.

## 1.5 Primary Texts

The primary texts for this study are narratives that are mostly fictional in nature. However, since the authors are individuals who experienced the Partitions first-hand, the fictionality appears to be based on actual events that took place. Therefore, one can see quasi-autobiographical overtones in the texts.

The Finnish primary texts are selected to portray the life of women before, during and after the Partition. The two authors chosen are prolific writers about the Partition of Karelia and their narration is based on their own personal experiences at the time of the Partition of Karelia. The Finnish texts selected for the study include:

Novels written by Laila Hietamies:

- 1) *Edessä elämän virrat* (*The rivers of life ahead*) (1984).
- 2) *Hylätyt talot autiot pihat* (*Abandoned houses deserted yards*) (1982).
- 3) *Vierailta poluilla, oudoilla ovilla* (*On unknown paths, at strange doors*) (1983).

Novels written by Eeva Kilpi:

- 4) *Talvisodan aika* (*The time of Winter War*) (1989).
- 5) *Välirauha, ikävöinnin aika* (*The Interim Peace, the time to yearn*) (1990).
- 6) *Jatkosodan aika* (*The time of Continuation War*) (1993).

The Indian primary texts were conveniently chosen because of their linguistic suitability. Therefore, the present study explores works only in English, written by people with first-hand experience about the Partition. Out of the four authors, only one is a woman. The Indian primary texts are as follows:

- 1) Alok Bhalla's *Stories About the Partition of India, Volumes I-III* (1994).
- 2) Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1973).
- 3) Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1991; Originally published as *Ice-Candy Man* in 1988).
- 4) Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956).

## **1.6 Literature Survey**

The primary sources for establishing the parameters and direction for this study have been previously existing narratives. Both India and Finland have copious amounts of narratives, both fictional and factual, with reference to the circumstances surrounding their Partitions. Those texts have been listed above under the heading of Primary Texts. However, to further study the implications of the Partitions, this study has surveyed several other books, critical essays and theoretical publications, as well as a few personal interviews. The works consulted have contributed pertinent critical and relevant information for this study.

This survey includes some of the essential works consulted for this study in the areas of comparative and translation studies, historical background, psychoanalytical theory, feminist framework and other critical works on the topic of Partition in both India and Finland.

### 1.6.1 Works Referred to on Comparative and Translation Studies

This study has adopted comparative theory as its main framework in order to analyse certain partition narratives. These narratives have pointed out the influence that other disciplines, for example psychoanalysis and feminism, have had on narrative techniques of the texts. Furthermore, the field of literary translation has facilitated this particular research by making some partition narratives and other pertinent texts available in English.

Sisir Kumar Das and Amiya Dev, who edited *Comparative Literature: Theory and Practice* (1989), advocate the practice of comparative studies as there are different cultures and literatures that could enrich one's own. In their collection, they have included essays on several orientations: like the French, Canadian, Chinese, and Indian schools of thought. Furthermore, in "Muses in Isolation," Sisir Kumar Das opines that the interdisciplinary nature of comparative studies is a "reflection of our increasing awareness of the power and value of literatures of other cultures" (5). As the interest in global literature escalates, he challenges the notion that "the study of national literature is enough for any nation" (6).

Another essay in Sisir Kumar Das and Amiya Dev's compilation is "Comparative Literature: The Indian Context" by Nirmala Jain. Jain defines comparative literature as a "discipline that transcends the frontiers of single languages and national literatures" (79). However, she points out that the situation on literature in India is different from the West. Being that India is so vast and diverse, it must be understood, first and foremost, that "Indian literatures are a product of multiracial and multicultural social-historical melange" (80). In her article, she proposes that Indian

comparative studies might benefit from beginning on "an intranational plane" (80) before moving beyond the national borders.

Indra Nath Choudhuri has put forth the idea of multiculturalism and globalization in relation to comparative studies in his article "Reinventing Comparative Literature" in *Studies in Comparative Literature: Theory, Culture and Space* (2007), which is a compilation of articles on comparative literature. He draws from G.C Spivak, Sartre, Derrida, and many others as he comments on how the "issue of multiculturalism is related to the notion of global village" and the importance of embracing and integrating the evolving notion of multiculturalism (114).

Similarly, Nikol Dziub, in his essay titled "Practical Introduction," also points out the cultural diversity of literature, especially in Europe. In the essays, in their compilation, they have demonstrated the role of comparative literature in the different nations of Europe. In reference to Finland, they claim that "role of comparative literature in Finland has always been to promote European culture" (17). Harri Veivo, in his article "Comparing in Finland: A Method in a Moving Field," goes even further by suggesting that in Finland "comparing is surviving" (91).

Likewise, Nagaratha Parande proposes in her comparative study "Tagore and Bendre: A Study in Comparison" (2011), that "comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field" (12). She brings forth that comparative study provides a much more comprehensive perspective than any single piece of literature. In her study, Parande quotes B.K. Das on the importance of translation in terms of intertextuality and multicultural aspect of comparative literature: "Translation brings intertextuality to our knowledge and that intertextuality is the core of comparative literature" (23).

Another useful work has been Susan Bassnett's *Translation Studies* (2002), which traces translation theory from a historical perspective, including Bible translation, the early theorists, the Renaissance, and all the way to the twentieth century. Furthermore, she discusses the central issues of translation studies: language and culture, types of translation, loss and gain, and so on. Finally, she reviews any possible problems in relations to the practice of translation. In her work, she brings out how the "processes of globalization highlighted issues of intercultural communication" (1). The quantity of books that have appeared on the study of translation is evidence of the fact that there is "extensive international interest in translation studies" (2). As a matter of fact, translation has become an integral part of cultural and sociological studies today. It has broadened the overall perspective of literature that extends beyond national boundaries.

### **1.6.2 Sources on Historical Background of Finland and India**

As was mentioned earlier, this study explores the partition narratives of Finland and India. In order to better interpret the narratives, it is relevant to understand the reasons and outcomes of the two Partitions and how they were different.

Jussi Lappalainen's *Itsenäisen Suomen synty* (1967) (*The birth of independent Finland*) is a general presentation of the events that led to Finland's independence from Russia. He describes how the idea of an independent nation spread throughout the country. The book also paints a picture of the antagonism between the two ideologies that fought for dominance in Finland: namely, democratic socialism and communism.

Another useful work for the historical background of this study is *Karjalan Kansan Historia* (1994) (*The history of Karelian people*), which was edited by Heikki Kirkinen, Pekka Nevalainen and Hannes Sihvo. In their work, they trace the history of the people in Karelia. They also bring out how Karelia has been both a stage for war and a link between the East and the West. Trade and cultural exchange between Vyborg and Helsinki passed through Karelia. Furthermore, this book establishes a historical timeline from the prehistoric times to the recent developments in relation to Karelia.

In *A Concise History of India* (2002), Thomas and Barbara Metcalf trace the history of India from the times of the Mughals and Sultans until the democratic India in the nineties.

Another significant work on the history of India is *A History of Indian Literature* in two volumes. The first volume covers the period from 1800-1910 and the second volume looks at years 1911-1956. This vast work was compiled by Sisir Kumar Das for the Sahitya Akademi in 1991. For the purpose of this study, chapter thirteen is of special interest. In "Triumph and Tragedy," Das comments on the division of India and highlights the violence and agony that took place in the Punjab, Sindh and Bengal. He also points out that the "most pervading emotion in the writing of partition is nostalgia, the memories of home and the acute agony of losing it for ever" (379).

Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998) presents the key aspects of the history of colonialism and the relationship between literature and colonial discourse. She explores race and class as they apply to colonialism, as well as defines colonialism and imperialism, suggesting that the terms are interchangeable. She ends

her work with some challenges that face the colonial discourse, namely, nationalism, feminism, the subaltern and post-modernism, along with post-colonial studies.

Another interesting work on Indian history with post-colonial overtones is *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India* (2016) by Shashi Tharoor. He expounds on the ravaging and ruinous rule of the British over India. He has covered the looting of India by the British, how the British drove Indians against each other, and he also comments on the consequences of the imperial rule. It is a book that offers an alternative view of the rule of the British in India.

*Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics* (2016), which is edited by Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer, and Rahul K. Gairola, offers a compilation of critical essays on different perspectives of the Indian Partition. It covers topics like: Specters of Democracy/The Gender of Specters: "Cultural Memory and the Indian Partition by Radhika Mohanram; Lost Homes, Shifting Borders, and the Search for Belonging by Jasbir Jain; A Will to Say or Unsay: Female Silences and Discursive Interventions in Partition Narratives by Parvinder Mehta; and "Difficult Choices: Work, Family, and Displaced Women in Partition Writings by Debali Mookerjee-Leonard, to name a few. The essays have been categorized by pertinent themes, such as Approaches to Partition; Nations and Narrations; Borders and Borderlands; From Pakistan to Bangladesh; and finally Partitions Within.

### **1.6.3 Critical Works on Partition Narratives**

Some of the significant works that concentrate on the personal and often untold side of the Partitions are listed below.

*Partition Dialogues: Memories of Lost Home* (2006) was assembled by Alok Bhalla from the various interviews he had with some of the prominent Partition writers. In his work, he has discussed the events of 1947 with, for example, Intizar Husain, Bhisham Sahni, Krishna Sobti and Bapsi Sidhwa. Their conversations cover topics like: *Memories of a Lost Home*; *Tamas and the Landscape of Memories*; *Grief and Survival in Ice-Candy-Man*, and so on. The significance of the book is summed in a quote from Hannah Arendt: "The first loss which the rightless suffered was the loss of their homes, and this meant the loss of the entire social texture into which they were born and in which they established for themselves a distinct place in the world" (Preface xi).

Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (1998) is a remarkable compilation of oral stories and narratives, often from women and children, that highlight the experiences of individuals that have not been recorded in the official history books. Her work is divided into eight sections that cover different aspects of mostly oral history: *Beginnings*, *Blood*, *'Facts'*, *Women*, *'Honour'*, *Children*, *'Margins'*, and *Memory*.

Yet another useful work is Anis Kidwai's *In Freedom's Shade* (2001), which is translated by Ayesha Kidwai. In her book, Kidwai provides a personal memoir, an activist's record of the first two years of independence of India. The horrors left in the wake of the Partition have left an indelible mark on her. Chapter nine on abducted women has been of especial value to this particular study.

*Ruma sota: Talvi- ja Jatkosodan vaiettu historia* (2008) (*Ugly War: the quiet history of Winter and Continuation wars*), which is edited by Sari Näre and Jenni Kirves, has brought to light some aspects of the darker side of the Winter War and the

Continuation war in Finland. What many have refused to discuss in order to maintain decorum and patriotism, Näre and Kirves have identified and examined in this book. In their anthology of articles, they have explored topics like: Censorship and Propaganda during the Continuation War; and Like there is no Tomorrow-Sex Culture and Sexual Violence during the War.

Gyanendra Pandey's book *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (2001) is a significant work on the Partition and the widespread genocidal violence that was so characteristic of that period. Pandey "attempts to analyse the moves that are made to nationalise populations, culture and history" (1) as the nation-state is established. Some of the subtitles of his discussions are: The three partitions of 1947; Historian's history; Folding the local into the national: Garhmukhteshwar, November 1946; and Constructing community.

The books and critical essays that have been surveyed provide much of the factual and historical information that have been used for this research. Their relevance to the critical aspect of this study cannot be understated. Most of them are accessible in libraries or in online sources.

## **1.7 Hypotheses**

Biases and perspectives govern both the generation and interpretation of literature. Partition narratives are no exception. The background, political views and religious leanings of an author are not always obvious, yet, whether overtly or covertly, the narratives invariably reflect the author's worldview.

This study proposes that culture and memory are directly related to narration. Culture affects memory and, consequently, memory affects narratives. Therefore,

cultural divergences, along with social norms and traditions, affect the mindset and thinking of an author. In reference to partition narratives, the past seventy years, in many cases, have failed to heal often persistent memories, and the mind, therefore, interprets painful events in a manner that protects the repressed emotions. Thus, culture and memory do colour narratives with acceptable shades and tones. If a narrative is the exhalation then the inhalation is an air of cumulative suffering and painful memory seeking to survive the wounds of the past.

During the Partitions, all people suffered: men, women and children. However, this study focuses on the women of Finland and India, and though they are culturally, socially and religiously very different, it appears that human experiences supersede the obvious outward tragedies and generate inwardly similar responses and feelings, characteristic to the whole human race. All women are not the same, yet a woman is a woman, no matter where or who she is. Her priorities are almost always her family and her children. Therefore, despite the circumstances and sufferings a woman might have to go through, her basic instinct is for her children, even to the exclusion of her own survival. Therefore, this study proposes that regardless of one's nationality, social background or religion, when confronted with a deep personal calamity, a woman (whether mother, wife, sister or daughter) will respond in much the same way.

The next drawn breath is derived from the pain of the past but with that exhalation there is the opportunity of new infusion. In sharing the pain there is an element of diffusion and the inner burdens become bearable, not just for the narrator but for those who cannot articulate but struggle to come to terms with the unfair horrors to which they have been subjected. In this, there is a semblance of anchor, a rudiment of survival, and so, symbolically, they mirror the very chasm of partition:

divided, changed forever and still existing, seeking to overcome, survive and perhaps, even daring to hope to thrive.

## **1.8 Methodology**

- In order to compare the convergent and divergent aspects of partition narratives of India and Finland, this study has applied some of the relevant aspects of comparative theory.
- For the reader to realize the full implication of these forceful divides, a brief historical outline has been undertaken in order to set the context and highlight the few similarities between the two Partitions.
- Partition narratives available in English translation have been taken up for study.
- In order to examine the role of memory in partition narratives, some aspects of the psycho-analytical theory have been utilised complementing the comparative approach.
- A close reading of the primary texts has provided clarity to the gender disparity evident in partition narratives.
- Interviews with Finnish evacuees are undertaken.

## **1.9 Plan of the Thesis**

The principal objective of this present study is to examine partition narratives of India and Finland in order to assess the possible psychological impact of human experience and memory on narration, as well as to explore the societal and cultural expectations placed on women. Even in the face of physical, mental and emotional suffering, it is often demanded of women to conform to the norms and standards of society.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

The first chapter gives an introduction to what is to follow. In it, are the aims and objectives, along with the scope and the delimitations of the study. There will also be a short mention of the methodology and the relevance of this particular study, as well as, a review of some of the more pertinent works of literature used in this research.

## **Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework**

This chapter addresses the theoretical framework of this study. As is indicated by the title, this study is comparative in nature. Furthermore, besides comparative theory, it will also employ some aspects of colonialism and how it affects the psychological development of narrative techniques. The foreign occupation of a nation will present itself in various ways in the culture and society of the occupied nation. Thus, the by-products of imperialism and colonialism, in both India and Finland, are visible in their respective narrations. Finally, the gendering of narratives suggests a deeply ideological interpretation of them. Nothing is written or read in a vacuum. Therefore, as much as authors might try to avoid subscribing to any specific political or ideological perspective, to some extent, their world view will all too likely be displayed in their writing.

## **Chapter Three: The Historical Background of the Partitions of Finland and India**

This chapter introduces the historical framework for this study. The main objective of the present study is to compare the way Indian and Finnish authors construct their partition narratives. Therefore, the study includes a short outline of the

events leading to both Partitions. Finland's war against Russia is not widely known in the world, nor do many have detailed knowledge of the events that led to India's Independence from the British. Thus, in order to better understand the underlying reasons, it is important that the reader is familiar with the historical aspects of why these two Partitions happened.

#### **Chapter Four: Psychoanalytical Analysis of Partition Narratives**

This chapter will examine the psychological aspect of memory and how it relates to partition narratives. The study focuses on the external and internal forces that have affected the narrative technique of an author. Issues like governmental censorship and the practice of collective shaming have been considered as some of the external influences. Furthermore, the repression of unwanted memories that is highlighted in this study, has clearly resulted in a reluctance by many of the survivors of both the Finnish and Indian Partition generation to speak about their personal experiences and what they seem to remember.

#### **Chapter Five: Gendering Partition Narratives**

Chapter five has been dedicated to exploring the gendering of partition narratives. Everything is written and read from a certain viewpoint. It seems that feminism, throughout history, has been an influential ideology. Since the beginning of time, in a love-hate relationship with feminism, patriarchy has dictated how women should look, behave, think, and so on. Such pre-conditioned thinking has, and still does, greatly affect how narratives are created and perceived.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

The concluding chapter will consist of the analytical discussion and the conclusions of this particular study. The Partitions of India and Finland were cataclysmic. Millions were forced to uproot themselves and relocate to places foreign to them. Countless people lost their lives, succumbing to other people's dictates, preferences, greed and pride. This study attempts to draw one's attention to the voice of the silent sufferers, the women. Each one of the primary texts has managed to bring to light some of the tremendous uncertainty and anxiety, both mental and physical, that so many women were subjected to, while fending for themselves and their families in the face of such horrible and trying circumstances. Finally, a special commendation is due to the Indian male authors, who so successfully painted an incredibly sympathetic picture of the plight of women during the Indian Partition. They should be lauded for their efforts to stay apolitical and ideologically neutral. It is notable how they managed to not succumb to the official line of the presentation of history. Rather, they appear to have stayed true to the reality which can only be read between the lines in official history books.

### **1.10 Relevance of the Study**

It has been said, that if people do not learn from their past mistakes, they are bound to repeat them. However, it is difficult for most to admit their faults and mistakes and grow wiser from them. Therefore, throughout history, one has witnessed history repeating itself. Greedy and power hungry rulers and leaders have forced their people into mindless wars and quests for more power and wealth. Innocent people have suffered because of the manipulations of their own superiors. Furthermore, violence towards women and children has been used as a weapon of war since men

started fighting for power. In today's world, even young children are targeted by morally reprehensible people, especially in times of unrest when social standards and morals are swept aside for instant gratification. Therefore, it is important that history is kept before our eyes and that we learn from it. The human race has a moral responsibility to preserve the record of history as it occurred.

This present study, which delves into the ills of society by taking a look at these two significant historical events, highlights the cruelty that lurks under the surface of a seemingly peaceful, civilised society. It reminds us of the atrocities of which the human race is capable. However, it also is an attempt to reveal that humans are also capable of much more. In some of the short stories in Alok Bhalla's compilation, one can see examples of 'random acts of kindness' in the midst of unspeakable violence. Subsequently, the reader is left with the idea that we all have a choice to make. Some call it the 'Golden Rule': "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Bible 8).

In addition, this research attempts to raise an interest about the effect of the Partition on the following generations. How much were they told by the Partition survivors? Or what have they learned about it in school or from history books? What is their attitude toward the 'other' of the Partition? In India, the antagonism between India and Pakistan continues. Yet, does it continue on an individual level or only officially? Are Finns today, and especially Karelians, bitter toward Russia because of what was done to their grandparents and parents?

In Finland, it seems that most of the violence that women experienced took place post-war instead of during the war. The consumption of alcohol and domestic violence increased after soldiers returned home. The nearly five years of living in

trenches, with the constant killing and seeing people killed left men psychologically scarred and their families became their new battlefield. It would be interesting to study how much of that trauma has been transferred to the subsequent generations.

## Chapter Two

### Theoretical Framework

Partition narratives of India and Finland describe two events during one of the most tumultuous times in world history. The world was at war. Rulers with their ideologies were competing for pre-eminence, and those very ideologies became the background of most officially recorded histories and people's experiences. Hence, in that whirlwind of ideologies, an author might have his or her own vested worldview and preferred perspective, so does the reader. Neither function is performed in a vacuum. Rather, everything is written and read with a predisposed philosophical lens composed of presuppositions and interpretations that are formed by both social norms and personal experiences. Therefore, the authorial intent and the interpretation of a reader can vary greatly, yet they both affect the impact a narrative has.

Though this study does not focus specifically on the colonial or imperial aspects of the two Partitions in question, the historical settings of these events (which are presented in chapter three) will demonstrate "the effects of colonisation on cultures and societies" (Ashcroft et al., *Post-Colonial Studies* 168), with special reference to how "both patriarchy and imperialism can be seen to exert analogous forms of domination over those they render subordinate" (*Post-Colonial Studies* 93). The idea of domination unites patriarchy with colonialism as they both exercise control over their subjects. The question remains "whether gender or colonial oppression is the more important political factor in women's lives" (93). However, during the Partitions, the struggle was not so much for political relevance as it was for basic survival in the midst of terror and violence. Therefore, partition narratives, more than the official historical accounts, present a more individual, or even unidealistic

view of the role of women and feminism during the Partition events, both in Finland and India. This study attempts to explore a few partition narratives within the framework of comparative research, as well as a few aspects of psychoanalysis and feminism.

## **2.1 Comparative Study**

Generally, a comparative study examines two or more subjects and identifies, analyses and explains any possible convergences and divergences. On an individual level, a comparison is part of human nature, and it is exercised unconsciously or reflexively as one interacts with other people. Academically, comparative study is a research method which is applied in various fields: medical studies, legal research, politics, social sciences, history, linguistics, literature and so on. A comparative research method is adaptable and it is often used to complement other methods of research, though it also functions well as a stand-alone method of investigation.

A comparative study is used to compare and contrast or to discover something new about the variables of a research. Charles Tilly has distinguished "four types of comparative analysis, namely: individualizing, universalizing, variation-finding and encompassing" ("Comparative Research" 2). The goal of any given study will determine the type of comparison selected. This present study utilizes both the universalizing and variation-finding comparisons since it seeks to examine the variables that affect how one writes narratives. The process of universalization "aims to establish that every instance of a phenomenon follows essentially the same rule" while the variation-finding comparison "seeks to establish a principle of variation in the character or intensity of a phenomenon by examining systematic differences between instances" (Adiyia and Ashton 2). As was pointed out in the introduction,

this study focuses on two events that seem to have some similarities, hence the comparison. Invariably, such a comparison will also unearth possible divergences. Thus, another objective of this study is to assess some of the possible reasons for any discovered differences. As a comparative study is rather multifaceted in scope, it is often employed to research various aspects of anthropology. Moreover, the ever-transforming globalization and the advancement of technology has provided researchers access to the abundant global database.

Linda Hantrais, in her article "Comparative Research Methods" discusses the cross-national aspect of comparative study. She suggests that there are three different types of comparative studies: "the inductive method, starting from loosely defined hypotheses and moving towards their verification; the deductive method, applying a general theory to a specific case in order to interpret certain aspects; and the demonstrative method, designed to confirm and refine a theory" (*Social Research Update*). The current study is inductive by nature, as it sets out to test two hypotheses which attempt to investigate partition narratives from different perspectives. Being a sociologist, Hantrais advocates cross-national, as well as cross-cultural, study as "the researcher sets out to identify the specificity of social forms and institutional structures in different societies and to look for explanations of differences by referring to the wider social context," and present a "greater emphasis on contextualisation" (*Social Research Update*). This study presents an opportunity for such a cross-cultural and socio-cultural enquiry as the two countries juxtaposed are existentially so diverse, yet seem to have corresponding aspects in relation to their partition experiences and narratives. By sight, they are significantly different, yet with enough of similarities that one is intrigued to find out the unifying features.

The present research adopts comparative theoretical framework with some concepts from psychoanalysis and feminism while analysing certain partition narratives. The thematic nature of this study encourages the examination of the role of the mind and a gendered reading facilitates an investigation of the effect of memory on partition narratives, as well as, an analysis of the role of women during the two Partitions in question. This study is also qualitative in nature as it seeks to explain, through the historical model, which variables affect one's narrative and to describe in the words of Kimberlee Leonard "past events in order to understand present patterns and anticipate future choices" ("Six Types of Qualitative Research"). As a comparative study, this one is interdisciplinary in scope while it explores literature spanning history, crossing borders, language boundaries, cultural and societal limits.

### **2.1.1 Comparative Literature**

Every day, the concept of 'the Other' appears to be all-pervasive, suggesting that comparison has been a part of human behaviour throughout history. Moreover, today's rapid globalisation necessitates the quest to understand cultural differences and to assimilate any salient elements from any acceptable 'other.' It is for that purpose that this study undertakes the comparison of partition narratives of Finland and India.

Henry Remak defined Comparative Literature as:

Comparative Literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand, and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g. painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences (e.g. politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion,

etc., on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression. (Bassnett *Comparative Literature* 29)

Furthermore, as a comparison usually implies the presence of 'the Other,'

A. Radhakrishnan points out that "comparisons are never neutral: they are inevitably tendentious, didactic, competitive, and prescriptive. ... comparisons are never disinterested" ("Why Compare?" 454). Thus, comparison is seldom utilised without some thought for personal gain. However, in reference to literature, much of the Western concept of comparative literature seems to have focused on cultural convergences and divergences between two or more countries, as expressed in literature and art. Thus, the traditional comparatist has mostly been concerned with "the binary logic of Self and Other" ("Why Compare?" 460) of his or her national literature in relationship to other countries and their national literatures.

Nikol Dziub, in his "Practical Introduction" to *Comparative Literature in Europe: Challenges and Perspectives* (2019), points out that, "Comparative literature is both a science and a laboratory of contemporary cultures, which promotes the cultural diversity and fecundity of Europe" (15). Dziub also suggests that comparative literature is a discipline in crisis while, at the same time acknowledging the validity of "literature without borders" ("Practical Introduction" 16). He goes on to say that, the "aim of comparative literature is to create cross-border connection and communities" (16). His concepts assist in what this present study attempts to highlight: any possible parallelism between two contemporary, yet vastly different cultures that experienced tremendous human suffering, regardless of social, cultural, political and religious divergences. Henry Remak appears to agree in his exposition on the relationship of literature and other forms of art. He points out that "The study of literature beyond the

confines of one particular country of study of the relationships between literature on one hand and the other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts, philosophy, history, the social sciences, religion, etc., on the other hand" (Parande *Tagore and Bendre* 14).

### **2.1.2 Comparative Literature in Finland**

Veivo suggests in his article "Comparing in Finland: A Method in a Moving Field," that "comparative perspective has often if not always characterised discussions on literature in Finland, or even that Finnish literature was born from a comparison" (81). For the early Finnish writings, the object of comparison was Swedish literature. "The rise of Romanticism and the annexation of Finland by the Russian Empire created, however, the conditions for a new perception..." (81). Veivo goes on to say, that "the particularity of the nation - its traditions and its 'soul' - was able to blossom only in an international field of similarities and differences in relation to other nations;" (82). Therefore, "In Finland a comparative international perspective was also crucial for the founding of modern literary studies as a discipline" (82). Although Finnish literary studies have developed within the comparative framework, it does not mean that it has been the only or the foremost research method. However, the seemingly inherent spirit of comparison and competition Finland appears to feel toward Sweden has only enabled her to propel forward in academic endeavours, as well as in everyday life.

In Finland, as elsewhere in the world, comparative study of literature is changing from a limited binary scope to a global one. Literature is evolving and is tied to a larger historical framework. Veivo points out that "The fundamentally historical nature of literature means also that it cannot be fully described by one

theory only" (87). It is for that reason, that Finnish literature studies have modified their general aim. Nyqvist and Polvinen have discussed in their article "Vertailun vaikeus ja välttämättömyys ("The difficulty and necessity of comparison") how literature studies have abandoned the traditional comparative perspective and have moved toward an approach which is more challenging and questioning to the norms and standards of culture and expression (3). They go on to say, that although comparative literature studies are not widely discussed in Finland, Finnish national literature is studied more than ever in relation to literatures of other language areas (4). And today, comparative study in Finland offers a discipline which interacts with other disciplines and serves as a common tool of cooperation for knowledge.

### **2.1.3 Comparative Literature in India**

Nirmala Jain points out in her article "Comparative Literature: The Indian Context," that "For a comparatist, any literature is basically a literature which has to be studied with reference to other literatures" (79). According to her, literary studies in the West and in India are not the same. Indian literatures "are a product of a multiracial and multicultural social-historical *mélange*" (81). She further suggests that a comparative study of Indian literatures should actually start with a comparison of national literatures. "In other words, can any Indian national literature be understood as a singular entity in isolation, comparable to single non-Indian literatures?" (81). India being such a medley culturally and socially, a research that attempts to highlight any one single aspect over others will face multiple obstacles, as "In multilingual India, plurality is not limited to language alone; it extends to other areas of existence, social, religious, ethnic, etc." (Jain 84).

With reference to Indian literature, Sahitya Akademi, which was established in 1954, in order to encourage cultural activities in all fields in India, has encapsulated the essence of Indian literatures as being one, though written in many languages. The Akademi is an organisation "to foster and co-ordinate literary activities in all the Indian languages and to promote through them all the cultural unity of the country" (Sahitya Akademi). Equally, Jawaharlal Nehru's phrase "unity in diversity" in his Presidential Address in 1953 (Nehru "Unity in Diversity"), demonstrates the dominant idea about Indian literature even today. On the impact literatures have on each other, Parande, in her dissertation on *Tagore and Bendre*, appears to adopt Sisir Kumar Das' thought in stating that "Today the impact of one literature on another has become a part of the creative process" (Parande 16). It is a process, in which a comparatist is "concerned mainly with the relationships, the resemblances and differences between national literatures; with their convergences and divergences" (Das, "Why Comparative Indian Literature?" 96). Das also points out that "The comparatist knows that comparative literature is a method of investigation, while world literature, as Goethe meant, is a body of valuable literary works" (96).

Generally, comparison involves some measure of judgement, and since passing judgement comes easily to humankind, in the course of this study, it has been a challenge to shun national predispositions and the innate preferences for superiority. As Das indicated, a comparatist concerns himself with, not only comparing, but also highlighting possible parallels between national literatures ("Why Comparative Indian Literature?" 96). Therefore, this study aspires to investigate any such correspondences between two strikingly different cultures. A comparative study of literature will enable one to discover something about suffering. On an individual level, it is a

ubiquitous phenomenon. It knows no boundaries. People bleed red blood, no matter their nationality, gender, caste, social status or religion.

#### **2.1.4 The Merge of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies**

In his article "Muses in Isolation," Sisir Kumar Das suggests that "The study of national literature is not enough for any nation" (6). As a man is not an island to himself (Donne), so literature today must accept the expanding globalisation. Das proposes further that literature taught in schools should include national literatures of other countries (16). Thus, a more inclusive attitude toward cultures and literatures of other countries would be inculcated into the young minds of the next generation.

There is already a change taking place in the West in regards to comparative literature. Bassnett's definition of the discipline is "the study of texts across cultures, that it is interdisciplinary and that it is concerned with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space" suggests that the very meaning of the discipline is changing (*Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* 1). Thus, when a comparatist undertakes a comparative binary study of literature to determine the presence of any divergences or convergences in literatures, not only does he study the language, rather, he endeavours also to understand the influences of society and culture behind the linguistic expression in question.

Anand Patil has pointed out in "The New Indian Comparative Literature and Culture Studies," that, "Comparative perspective gives good opportunity for evaluating how history can contribute to modern knowledge" as "Inclusiveness and plurality are the watchwords of globalization" (192). This present study attempts to discover any such parallels between partition experiences and narratives of Indian and Finnish authors while focusing on the underlying purpose of such writings.

The idea of cultural inclusivity worldwide was set forth already by Matthew Arnold when he suggested in a lecture at Oxford in 1857 that, "And everywhere there is a connection, everywhere there is an illustration: no single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in its relation to other events, to other literatures". (Bassnett, *Comparative Literature* 1)

Arnold's statement apparently supports the importance of expanding the scope of the study of literature to cross cultural boundaries, as human experience and expression do not take place in isolation either. And today, one can observe that globalisation has penetrated most cultures and societies. Therefore, this study endeavours to encourage further examination of diverse aspects of literature as it reflects cultural and societal norms.

Indra Nath Choudhuri's article "Reinventing Comparative Literature," suggests that "Multiculturalism as a stage of historical awakening in the West is recent. The multiculturalism in India is ancient: whose multicultural concerns have long informed India's history and traditions, constitutions & political arrangements and have always found unity in its diversity" (116). Throughout history, the Indian subcontinent has had encounters with other cultures that have influenced her cultural development and thus left her enriched with multiculturalism that is foreign to most other nations. Choudhuri also suggests that a comparative literature study is also known as cultural studies ("Reinventing Comparative Literature" 114). This indicates that the discipline is expanding its scope and that there is a fresh adoption of multiculturalism and global identity. Choudhuri's study has been impacted by Gayatri Spivak (Choudhuri 110) and her thoughts on the "transformation of comparative literary studies" as presented in her book *Death of a Discipline* (Spivak 2). Spivak thought comparative literature should have been "world embracing" from the start (4).

Furthermore, she opined that "a care for language and idiom" remains the "hallmark" of a new comparative literature (5). Thus, it is not surprising, that Spivak advocates a more multi-faceted and open-minded approach while combining comparative literature and area studies which transcend national and linguistic boundaries.

### **2.1.5 The Role of Translation Studies in Comparative Literature**

The availability of foreign language texts in translation has expanded the scope of research. Parande suggested that actually "The existence of comparative literature depends a lot on translation" (*Tagore and Bendre* 22). She goes on to suggest that, "Comparative literature is a study of intertextuality" and that translation is essential to it (23). Before, the concept of binary studies was limited to the languages known to the researcher, as traditionally, he would only study texts he could read in the original. Therefore, without the role of a translator, the accessibility to world literature would not be possible. Thus, translation has expanded the scope of study and enabled students of literature to include texts of even the lesser known languages in their research. Bassnett opines in her book *Translation Studies* that "translation today is perceived as an inter-disciplinary field of study and the indissoluble connection between language and way of life has become a focal point of scholarly attention" (Preface 2).

### **2.2 The Psychoanalytic Aspect of Memory in Relation to Partition Narratives**

A common definition for 'psychoanalysis,' found on an online dictionary, is "A system of psychological theory and therapy which aims to treat mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind by techniques such as dream interpretation and free association" (*lexico.com*). The concept of the

unconscious was developed by Sigmund Freud when he explored the role that the unconscious mind has in people's lives. However, though Freud did not invent the idea of the unconscious mind, his opinion of its ubiquitous nature in everyday life made his perception of it noteworthy and unique (McLeod "Unconscious Mind"). There are a few aspects of psychoanalysis that have been applied throughout this study: namely, the concept of the unconscious and the idea of repression. Tyson points out that "we tend to repress our most distressing experiences, push them into the unconscious, which is the psychological storehouse of painful experiences we don't want to remember" (*Using Critical Theory* 83). The focus of the theory of psychoanalysis is to discover the source of the psychological problems and provide the means to overcome them. Tyson further discusses the defences, which are "the means by which we keep ourselves from becoming conscious of the experiences we've repressed" (83). In order to emotionally protect oneself, a person will likely progress through the steps of defence: denying the reality of the situation, avoiding people and places that might be a reminder of the painful event, displacing the fear and anger onto someone else and, finally, projecting the actual problem onto another person (Tyson 84). It is the practice of repression of unpleasant memories into the realm of the unconscious that one can perceive in many of the authors of partition narratives.

This study has employed some aspects of psychoanalysis in an attempt to examine the possible influences that affect the process of writing partition narratives. Therefore, it endeavours to establish commonalities that might affect narrative style between these two countries so diverse from each other. It also examines the cultural and social disparities which cause them to narrate stories differently. Furthermore, this study attempts to demonstrate whether women, regardless of their circumstances,

respond similarly when confronted with personal tragedy. It also focuses on the relation of culture and memory to narration, and as was mentioned earlier, culture affects memory and consequently, memory affects narratives. Therefore, cultural differences along with social norms and traditions, do have an impact on the mind and the memory of an author.

In order to comprehend the complex nature of human memory, it is important to understand the function of the memory and that it is a repository of past experiences for later retrieval and use. However, at times, it refuses to recall unpleasant events or it chooses to distort them in order to protect self. A few of the authors used in this study were adults at that time, but most were children. Maybe their age has been a factor, to some extent, in how these authors have remembered and how they have recorded the events they experienced.

There seem to be several reasons for remembering and forgetting. First of all, many tend to remember nostalgically how things used to be. There is both pleasure and sadness in what and how they remember. For example, both Lahore in Pakistan and Vyborg in Karelia have conjured up powerful emotions in many who were forced to leave them. It appears that such feelings do not present themselves in the second and third generation migrants.

The above notion leads one to reflect on how differently younger generations think of or remember the Partition. Their understanding of the events is mostly based on oral narratives they heard from their parents and grandparents. Thus, the yearning for what was, is not in them; the past is not within them like it is in the Partition generation. The nostalgic attraction has not transferred along with the narrative. Therefore, they appear to have formed their own version of the Partition, at times

even including the antagonism and hatred that is related to it. The Partition is not a personal memory to them, not in Finland, nor in India.

Lastly, at least in Finland, the forceful governmental censorship controlled, to a great extent, the way people voiced their thoughts and opinions or portrayed their memories. The submissive nature of the Partition generation enabled the government to manipulate them easily. Therefore, even today, it is possible to see the effects of such control on the creative freedom of many of the authors of that time.

### **2.3 Gendering of Partition Narratives**

Women have struggled to achieve political equality for several centuries. Over the years, the focus of that endeavour has changed. The emphasis has morphed according to the historical changes that have taken place in the world. In other words, the feminist ideology has transformed itself to be congruous with the dominant political theories and intellectual evolutions in society. Thus, feminism has sought, according to Lois Tyson, "to understand the ways in which women are oppressed - socially, economically, politically, and psychologically - in order to reduce, if not eliminate their oppression" (*Using Critical Theory* 139). Hence, there have been different approaches to feminism. Hekman suggests in her article "Feminism," that though women were granted enfranchisement in the first decades of the twentieth century, "the status of women in Western nations was little changed" by it. "Most women continued to occupy an inferior status politically, legally, economically and socially" (91).

Gendering of partition literature gives this study an opportunity to juxtapose the treatment of women in fiction in connection with the events surrounding WWII in Finland and the Independence of India. The backdrop of Partition is commonly

portrayed from the male perspective, and as most official histories are penned from the patriarchal perspective, their treatment of events seem to be an imbalanced depiction. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a scope to compare female experience in the light of cultural diversity using some aspects of feminism.

Patriarchal norms and standards are internalized from an early age, therefore, very few resist the societal pressure to perform according to the accepted communal and religious conventions. In her article, "Gender, Women and Partition," Paulomi Chakraborty brings out how partition literature "allows us a critical insight into the nature and structure of gender relationships that hold normal, everyday life together" (41). Her statement appears true in a universal setting as well and not only in India. Thus, the world owes its gratitude to those few feminist authors and historians who, much later, have substantiated the continuity of archiving some personal experiences of many such women.

In conclusion, the Partition of India in 1947 and the period of war and the subsequent partition of Karelia from Finland are difficult subjects for those who experienced them first-hand. The physical and mental pain they endured is truly unfathomable. No amount of stories or pictures will provide a clear understanding about their true horrors. The wounds are deep and the scars impenetrable for the probing eyes of those who might seek to know more. Some have chosen to speak about their experiences, but many have not. There are those who have suppressed their memories and adopted a code of silence. Their wounds are shrouded in silence.

By comparing the narrative styles of partition literature, this analysis attempts to highlight some of the overall themes related to Partition, like womanism, women's empowerment, isolation, patriarchy, and so on. Furthermore, the portrayal of women

in partition narratives compel a reader to admire the strength of the Partition generation women. They were resilient because they had to be, not because of an ideology. They had to adjust and move forward, or perish. Their foremost thought, at that time and in those circumstances, was often that of protecting themselves and their children rather than the honour of the community and the nation. Bhasin and Khan expressed well the personal struggle, "All of us can and have to participate in the process of finding the meaning of feminism for ourselves" (*Some Questions on Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia* 21).

It is axiomatic that the past is not the sole proprietor of history. It also belongs to the present, and in turn dictates the future. This study hopes to offer a fresh perspective to something that has been relegated to the annals of history. Maybe such a comparative study, of partition narratives of two countries so diverse from each other, could challenge some to understand and appreciate the heavy cost of freedom today.

Although Finns and Indians come from highly different cultures, countries, upbringings, and religions, yet the common thread of suffering, of its impact on women and its repercussion on memory seem to reflect in both cultures, both stories, and in both narratives. In today's world that is so united by the worldwide web, yet so divided by opinions, is there a place to bring these diverse cultures and countries together and then compare them? The comparison is not with a view to isolate either one or suspend one over the other, but to unite and understand humanity because it does not matter who or where one is, all feel pathos the same way. Every culture is affected by emotion. Expressions are the same, be it seen in a remote tribe or on Wall Street. An expression of sadness is still sadness and an expression of joy is still joy.

Yet, it is not enough that a few remember, it is also important to ensure that others do not forget. Suffering is ubiquitous. No group is exempt. However, this study does not look at all partitions worldwide. Rather, it focuses only on India and Finland. They both experienced Partitions and they both had part of their territory removed within the same time frame. This very exclusive nature of this study makes it unique.

This study is a humble attempt to share with people a profound appreciation for both countries and what they have had to suffer. How they both, as a people, have emerged despite the odds. They prevailed, at a high cost, in spite of the losses and the pain. Hopefully, this study will pass on that honourable legacy to yet another generation that already seems ignorant of it. This history should not vanish. Therefore, this study endeavours to be a preserver of memory, to make it worth the price paid by the victims.

Finally, there is a segment of people today who insist that the holocaust is fiction. There are people who do not want to remember the horrors of slavery. What has kept those truths within the framework of time is literature - stories, poems, the legacy of facts wrapped in personal emotion, carefully written in fear and vulnerability preserving a fractured time in history. If the next generation does not preserve those works, they will be lost. Therefore, it is imperative that they do not just remain within the archives, but be brought forward for people to remember and never forget.

## Chapter Three

### The Historical Background of the Partitions of Finland and India

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

George Santayana

#### 3.1 Introduction

The two Partitions in question, that of India in 1947 and of Finland in 1944, took place during the same time in history, when the world was thrown into turmoil with WWII. However, they were different in purpose and nature. To best interpret the narratives pertaining to each Partition, it is necessary to understand how the reasons, nature and outcome of each one were different. These divergences affect the narrative styles of the authors whose narratives were chosen for this particular study. Yet, despite outward differences, the human experience and individual tragedies in these partitions have noteworthy similarities. In an instant, the familiar was gone. People no longer had work, homes or land. They had to abandon their possessions and suffer irreconcilable losses. Indescribable personal suffering was inflicted on millions. Both, those who had to relocate their lives, and also those who had to adjust their living situations in order to accommodate the evacuees and refugees, had to come to terms with their new circumstances.

Considering Finland and India, one observes two countries that could not be outwardly much more distinct from each other. Culture, education, religion and the sheer number of people involved are vastly dissimilar. However, as individuals, Finns and Indians are not necessarily so different in relation to personal, or collective, tragedy. Devastation and trauma affect everyone equally. Yet, the narrative styles,

the way people tell their stories, reflect the different worldviews and the perceptions that prevail in each country.

To grasp better the differences in the partition narratives of these two countries, it is important to outline briefly the history and politics that preceded these Partitions; to point out some of the differences in the nature of these gruesome events in human history. History tends to repeat itself, particularly where objective understanding and true remembrance are disregarded. What were the events that led to these Partitions? How did people respond to the turmoil and chaos around them? In order to properly interpret available narratives, it is beneficial to take a look at the underlying reasons for these two life-changing events.

### **3.2 Partition History of Finland**

A well-known Finnish poet, J. L. Runeberg, in his poem, "Maamme" ("Our Land"), described Finland as a land of thousands of lakes. This poem later became the national anthem of Finland. He called Finland "O land, you land of thousand lakes," (Krogt, "Johan Ludwig Runeberg"). When most people think of Finland, they think of Lapland where Santa Claus lives; they connect Finland to saunas, the Moomins cartoon characters, Northern Lights, Nokia and the viral animation, Angry Birds. Today, very few know that Finland fought in WWII to preserve her independence.

The current generation seems to think of history differently. For many the wars that took place in the twentieth century are merely anecdotes from the past. Most of their knowledge seems to be derived from school books. Obviously, they do appear to appreciate the freedom they have today, but understanding the heavy cost of that freedom eludes them. Therefore, for the benefit of the reader of this thesis, some of the main events that led to Finland's independence in 1917 and the wars of 1939–

1944, which almost cost Finland her newly-attained independence, have been highlighted.

### 3.2.1 Historical Background of Finland and Karelia

The map below shows the current border between Finland and Russia. Andersen explains in his article "What is Karelia?" that the dotted red line indicates Finland before WWII and the solid one shows the border after WWII. The different parts of Karelia are marked with green and orange. Northern Karelia and Southern Karelia are part of Finland, however, most of Karelia and East Karelia still belong to Russia today. As a consequence of WWII, Finland was forced to cede them to the Soviet Union.



**Fig. 1.** Andrew Andersen, "What is Karelia?"  
Russo-Finnish border before and after World War II

Lappalainen brings out, in his book *Itsenäisen Suomen synty* (*The birth of independent Finland*), that Finland's Eastern border has been very fluid since the Middle Ages. He traces the history of Finland from the 1100s onward and how Sweden and Russia competed for the rulership of the Finnish territory. The life of the population of the Province of Karelia has been characterised by constant adjusting and bending with the winds of time and ever moving border markings. It was in 1100s that Finland started to lean more toward the influence of Sweden. At first, when Sweden started to rule Finland, the influence was mostly ecclesiastical. However, it slowly transformed itself into a more political one. The 1600s, in Finland, are marked with flawless loyalty toward Sweden (Lappalainen 12).

There have been several wars between Sweden and the Soviet Union. In the Great Northern War of 1700-1721, Russia challenged Sweden to gain access to the Baltic Sea. As a result, Sweden ceded a strip of Finnish Karelia to Russia (Lappalainen). He goes on to comment that, towards the end of the 1800s, the Soviet Union thought that the only way to secure their Western border was to take Finland from Sweden and bring her under Soviet protection as an independent or an autonomous nation (13). Alexander I started the Finnish War against Sweden in 1808 with the goal of annexing Finland into the Soviet Union, and subsequently, Finland became an autonomous state of Russia. However, with the idea of autonomy was also birthed the idea of total independence.

The beginning of the First World War in August 1914 escalated the 'russification' of Finland. On the one hand, Finland wished the war would lead to more autonomy or independence, and on the other hand, Russia saw this as an opportunity to absorb Finland into the Soviet Union permanently (Lappalainen 20). In desperation, Finland turned to Germany for help. However, the co-operation with

Germany had to be kept secret because the Soviet Union, who ruled Finland, and Germany were enemies. Nevertheless, Finland needed help. Since 1905, Finland had not had armed forces as the Russian Empire had ordered them to be disbanded. Nor did Finland have any military leadership. Dreaming of a free future, Finland sent young men to Germany to learn the art of war (36). They were trained as light infantrymen, and later, they became the leaders who laid the foundation of the Finnish liberation army.

The March 1917 Revolution in Russia came as a surprise. Russian politics in Finland had given the impression that Russia's government was strong (Lappalainen, 43). Yet, Vladimir Lenin was able to seize power in the October Revolution. Tepora outlines in his article "Finnish Civil War 1918," that Finland had not taken part in World War I. However, after the Russian Empire fell, it appeared that the ensuing power struggle might reach Finland as well. Finally, the Parliament of Finland declared Finland's Independence on December 6, 1917 and the Bolshevik government of Russia formally granted it on the 31st of December of the same year. Soon after, the Civil War in Finland broke out between the bourgeoisie government and socialists sympathetic to the Bolsheviks. It was a cruel and bloody war between brothers. In the end, the government forces won and the society was divided. That division is visible even today. There is still an unspoken division between the have's and the have-not's, or the bourgeoisie and the Bolshevik sympathisers (Tepora "Finnish Civil War").

November 30, 1939 is forever burned into the history of Finland. Stalin feared Germany's attack through Finland as he was familiar with Finland's ties to Germany. Therefore, he demanded that Finland surrender to the Soviets. Naturally, Finland refused, and subsequently, the Soviet Union declared war on Finland. The Winter War started.

Three months later, though Finland maintained her independence, in the Treaty of Moscow, she was ordered to surrender parts of Karelia, as well as areas of Salla and Petsamo in northern Finland to the Soviets. This surrender caused a relocation of about 420 000 Finnish Karelians.

The peace after the Winter War was short. During WWII, Germany had become interested in Finland. As Hitler claimed Finland was an ally of Germany, Stalin took it as an affront, and subsequently bombed Finland on June 25, 1941. That was the beginning of the Continuation War, which was to last until September, 1944 (Karelia Society). This time, Finland was prepared and quickly took back the areas lost in the Winter War. However, the Finnish leadership was driven by their success and greed to conquer more land and establish Greater Finland. Incomprehensibly, Finland rose against the mighty Soviet Union. Yet, in the end, she had to bend under the final Russian offensive ("Continuation War").

Through centuries, Russia has had an interest in Finland. She has considered Finland her Western front, or a buffer, against possible enemies from the West. Undoubtedly, Russian apprehensions have not been unwarranted, as Sweden has warred against Russia on several occasions, as has Germany. One wonders, if the leadership of Finland had been content with the restored original borders, then the Soviet Union might have let her keep them.

The following map shows the areas ceded to Russia at the end of the Continuation War in 1944. Finland lost the Karelian Isthmus by the Lake Ladoga, Petsamo with large nickel deposits, Salla, the islands in the Gulf of Finland and Porkkala, which is a naval base on the Southern coast of Finland. The Soviet Union

felt the need to occupy this base to secure her own safety in the Baltic Sea (Karelian Society).



**Fig. 2.** *Wikipedia*, Areas finally ceded to the Soviet Union in 1944.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karelian\\_question](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karelian_question)

Often, when people talk about Finland's involvement in WWII, it is with regard to the two wars already mentioned, the Winter War and the Continuation War. Even most Finns today rarely know about the third war. It was the Lapland War. According to the Moscow Armistice, in 1944, Finland was to drive out the Germans who were still in Finland. As a desperate last effort, Finland had asked Germany to help during the Continuation War, and now Finland was ordered to turn on her only ally and drive the Germans out. Unfortunately, Germany was not going to give up Petsamo nickel mines and the surrounding areas voluntarily. Thus started the war between Finland and Germany. At first, both countries fought amicably, but Russia became impatient with the 'fake war' and ordered Finland to fight properly and force Germany out. The Germans retaliated by burning Rovaniemi, the largest city in Lapland, and as they retreated to Northern Norway, they systematically destroyed everything in their path. They mined bridges and roads as they went along. Thus,

Lapland was destroyed and the last Germans left Finland on 27. 4. 1945 (Budanovic "The Lapland War")

The people of Lapland were evacuated. Over 150,000 civilians were relocated. Some were taken South to different villages and others to Sweden to refugee camps. On a personal note, this researcher's mother and her family were also evacuated to Sweden, across the Tornio river. Aunt Helena often reminisced about having watched from across the river how their house burned. The sight of the first hand grenade thrown through the window was a fresh memory, seventy years later.

As is stated in an article published by *Yle* news agency "70 vuotta sitten: Aimo Moilanen palasi Lapin sodasta viimeisten joukossa," Aimo Moilanen was among the last soldiers to leave Lapland after the war was over. He was only 19. Today, he is 91. According to Moilanen, "War is war," he said, "It was not a waste of time. Finland kept her independence. That is the inheritance we veterans leave to the coming generations" (*Yle*).

### **3.2.2 The Nature of the Partition**

In 1917, Finland gained her independence from the Soviet Union. Immediately after, the nation erupted with internal turmoil with two ideologies pursuing pre-eminence. The Civil War, though short in duration, was surprisingly divisive in nature. According to the online *New World Encyclopaedia*, Finland was divided into "the forces of the Social Democrats led by the People's Deputation of Finland, commonly called the 'Reds,' and the forces of the non-socialist, conservative-led Senate, commonly called the 'Whites.'" The Reds were supported by Bolshevik Russia, while the Whites received military assistance from the German Empire" ("Finnish Civil War"). Therefore, the country, as an independent nation, was

struggling to define her ideological worldview and decide the future course of her new life.

One might say that losing Karelia to the Soviets was the price of Finland's independence. It was violent, sudden, and devastating. Kanerva brought out in her study at the Immigration Institute of Finland, that the forceful annexation of Karelia to Russia resulted in Finland's loss of 11 % of her surface area. Karelia was a prosperous area. The annual profit had been about one fifth of Finland's total revenue. Karelia had produced 20 % of Finland's lumber industry, 18 % of water energy, 40 % of sugar, and had consisted of about 30 % of mill industry. Additionally, the Karelian railway network was the most dense in the country (Kanerva). As one considers the wealth and prosperity of Karelia at that time, it is no wonder Finland joined Germany, without hesitation, in what became the Continuation War, in order to reclaim the areas lost to Russia after the Winter War in 1940.

When the final evacuation was ordered, in the 1944 Moscow Armistice, the announcement about the final border was kept a tight secret in order to avoid panic (von Born 1944). Such secrecy is a reminder of the way the actual lines of Indian Partition were kept a secret until two days after the fact, again to avoid panic and confusion. However, unfortunately the two words - panic and confusion - describe exactly the situation that ensued from the Indian Partition. However, unlike the British authorities, the Finnish government did have a plan for the evacuation of civilians. Therefore, any personal relocation was discouraged. The process was to be orderly and swift. Nevertheless, by the time the Russian final offensive of 1944 took place, there was not sufficient time to evacuate all the villages closest to the enemy. Thus, many villagers were taken captive, and sadly, many did succumb to their gruelling experience at prison camps.

### 3.2.3 Censorship and Propaganda

Already in 1850, a censorship law was established in Finland. It significantly limited what one could print in public, especially about the Soviet Union. The government used censorship and propaganda to direct public opinion, and after WWII, a Soviet-led Allied Control Commission vigilantly monitored Finland and exercised considerable influence, both to oversee the implementation of the Armistice in Finland, as well as, ensured that nothing negative was published about Russia (Tallgren "The Finnish War-Responsibility Trial in 1945-6").

According to Näre and Kirves, it was dangerous to express views contrary to the government and be anti-war. One was quickly labelled unreliable and treasonous (*Ruma Sota 15*). The government directed public opinion, often by shaming and labelling, and even imprisonment (21). In the Winter War, Finland had defended herself, and defence was easy to condone. However, at the beginning of the Continuation War, which started as an aggressive war of conquest, the government directed public opinion to favour the war. At first, Finns prioritised taking back Karelia and letting all the Karelian evacuees return home. Nevertheless, as has been said earlier, Finnish leadership became greedy. They wished to conquer more land, thus expanding Finland's border further to the East. As the Finnish troops advanced, the ever-expanding conflict became more difficult to justify. The government continued use of strict propaganda and censorship helped steer public opinion.

The purpose of censorship was to control the presentation of information that might damage the security of the country, foreign affairs and war efforts (Näre and Kirves 17). It was also used to maintain people's faith in victory (no matter what happened at the front line). News agencies were not allowed to report any civilian

casualties. There were at least two Russian attacks on trains that were not reported. A train evacuating children to Sweden was bombed, killing all the children. Another was a train transporting evacuees from Karelia. It was standing at Elisenvaara station when it was bombed. Over a hundred civilians, soldiers and female volunteers were killed. Generally, such incidents were not reported publicly in order to prevent the possible spread of panic, fear and despair. For the same reason, soldiers were not allowed to write home about the life in the trenches, nor about the reports about cruel murders of civilians by the Soviet guerrillas. Mass hysteria had to be avoided and the morale of mothers, wives and sisters was of utmost importance for the morale of the whole country (Näre and Kirves 22).

Although censorship was strict, the degree of it fluctuated according to the politics of war at any given time. Näre and Kirves also comment on how Finnish journalists were not forced to openly lie to people, rather, their journalistic self-censorship was in the guise of patriotic protection. Such coercion compelled people and news agencies to censor themselves (18). In fact, one is left to wonder if such praxis caused an emotional implosion in many. With nowhere to vent their feelings or to seek comfort, this practice possibly gave rise to further resentment on a subconscious level. Did this enforced repression sow Jekyll and Hyde seeds that might surface later in socio-psychological repercussions?

### **3.2.4 The Evacuation of Karelians Affected by the War**

Karelia was not the only area of Finland which was lost to Russia after WWII, however, it is the one most talked about. Especially, as the Karelians were the largest group to evacuate. Close to 420,000 Finnish Karelians were forced from home ahead

of the advancing Russians. Venla Karppinen brings out that by the end of 1945 around 600,000 people altogether had eventually been relocated (*Karjalan evakot* 7).

The terms 'relocation' and 'evacuation' elicit strong emotions. Most often they imply a person or people forcefully having to leave their homes for some overwhelming reason: be it war, persecution, famine or death, for example. Depending on the reason of the relocation, a person might be a refugee, who generally relocates to another country ("Refugee") or an evacuee, who "is a person evacuated from a place of danger, for example, a war, and moves to another location, usually within their own borders ("Evacuee"). The Finnish Karelians were evacuees. They were moving within their own country. Furthermore, the Finnish government devised a systematic plan of evacuation to make it easier to find replacement homes for those fleeing war-torn Karelia. It seems that Karelians were mostly placed in private homes, unlike the Laplanders who had to take refuge at refugee camps during the Lapland War in 1945. After the Germans were gone from Lapland, Laplanders were able to return 'home' and start rebuilding. For many, what was 'rebuilt' was a shadow of their previous home. Lapland had been destroyed and rebuilding was expensive.

Most Karelians were farmers and herdsmen. They felt helpless having to leave their homes and lands behind. To ease their plight, albeit, only after the wars were over in 1945, the government of Finland established a 'land acquirement law,' by which they tried to give the evacuees about a 40 % compensation for lands and houses that were lost (*Karelian Society*). The government instituted a ruling by which every farm or house in Finland, according to their size and available space, had to take in Karelians. Thus the situation was difficult for both the evacuees and also the Finns who were expected to house them in their homes. The negation of choice bred inevitable strain and resentment that were hard to mask.

### **3.3 Partition History of India**

Jawaharlal Nehru stated in the Constituent Assembly on the eve of Independence in August, 1947 that: "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." The history of the Indian Subcontinent is long and colourful. It dates back at least to 5000 BC when the Indian Civilization in the Indus Valley was advanced and organised. Throughout history, much has happened to this Subcontinent. Kingdoms have risen and fallen; rulers have come and gone; yet the Subcontinent has survived. The countries that geographically comprise the Subcontinent are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. However, this research focuses on India and how she was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947.

#### **3.3.1 Historical Background of India**

Bose and Jalal point out that "The ancient Persians and Arabs referred to the land beyond the river Sindhu or Indus as Al-Hind or Hindustan and the people inhabiting that land as Hindu" (*Modern South Asia* 1-2). In order to get an idea of the magnitude of the circumstances and events that led to the devastation surrounding the Partition of India, it is beneficial to briefly highlight the history and politics of India. What attracted so many conquerors to India? Why the British occupied India? Why was it necessary to divide India? What gave the Partition such a religious emphasis at the time of the Indian independence struggle? There are so many questions surrounding the Partition, however, this section will only give a brief overview of the situation to benefit the readers' understanding of it.

Today's India is a country of great diversity. Peoples, cultures, languages and religions, incredibly varied, all reside within the same country. She is the result of

having been influenced by many different people, religions and political views. India is a conglomeration of her own ancient roots and centuries of foreign influence.

Indian civilization is one of the oldest in the world. Bose and Jalal describe the two key urban centres at Harappa and Mohenjodaro as "having achieved highly sophisticated level of urban culture." For thousands of years, different civilizations and rulers have left their mark on India: The Turks, the Persians and the Afghans, along with the Sultans of Delhi and the Mughals and so on. India was seen as the land of opportunity (*Modern South Asia* 13-22).

Metcalf and Metcalf mention that The English East India Company was founded on 31 December, 1600 and it was chartered by Queen Elizabeth. It was one of the many European trading companies that wanted to benefit from the wealth found in India (*A Concise History of India* 43). There were bitter fights between the Dutch, the English, the French and the Spanish trading companies. All of them vied to hold the monopoly in Indo-European trade. It appears that as the countries fought in Europe, so did their trading companies in India. Cities and colonies changed hands and loyalties from one trading company to another according to European victories, losses and contractual weddings. Eventually, the English company established a monopoly into the Asian trade, especially the "hugely profitable spice trade with the island of the East Indie" (43). The Company had in place a lucrative trade in spices, but later expanded it to include, indigo, saltpetre, and fine quality hand-loomed Indian textiles (45).

In 1772, The East India Company's directors appointed Warren Hastings to be the first governor-general in India. He was given the task of "creating an ordered system of government for British India" (Metcalf and Metcalf 55). Thus The East

India Company's attention was shifted to include governance, not only trade. The Company Raj rule had commenced. It was to last until 1857. The Company's rule was to lay the foundation for the British Raj in India, which was accomplished after the 1857 Sepoy mutiny. Bose and Jalal give further details about the mutiny. The army was given new Lee Enfield rifles which used greased cartridges that had to be bitten off before firing. A rumour was spread that the cartridges were "smeared with cow and pig fat, repugnant to Hindu and Muslim soldiers alike, and this was widely seen as an insidious plot by the infidels to pollute Indians before forcing their conversions to Christianity" (*Modern South Asia* 79). Thus, the mutiny ensued. After the great mutiny, the English Crown decided to end the Company's rule and added India to her conquered territories, after almost three centuries of the Company's exploitation of India. Queen Victoria was finally proclaimed the Empress of India in 1877. The government of England had put an end to the rule of the East India Company's mismanagements of India (85).

Shashi Tharoor mentions in his book *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India* (2016) that, "By the end of the nineteenth century, India was Britain's biggest source of revenue, the world's biggest purchaser of British exports and the source of highly paid employment for British civil servants and soldiers all at India's own expense" (24). Tharoor also draws attention to the fact that, "The India that the British East India Company conquered was no primitive or barren land, but the glittering jewel of the medieval world" (3). He goes on to quote J.T. Sutherland by saying that "India was a far greater industrial and manufacturing nation than any in Europe or any other in Asia" (3). It has been said that "Britain's Industrial Revolution was built on the destruction of India's thriving manufacturing industries" (7).

Many Indians were disenchanted in the way the British had taken advantage of India and it led to the Swadeshi Movement of 1905 in Bengal. It was an important development in the process of India finally gaining her independence from the British. This movement was also known as the 'Make in India' movement. It "encouraged domestic production of goods and boycott of foreign goods as part of the campaign for independence" ("Swadeshi Movement" *Dictionary.com*).

Another meaningful year in Indian history is 1919. In reaction to the numerous oppressive reforms by the British, many Indians chose to follow a new leader, one who championed 'non-violent non-cooperation'—Mohandas K. Gandhi (Metcalf and Metcalf 167).

As England's time in India was coming to its end, there was a great concern about the future of the country. Who should be left in charge? The British had practised a 'divide and rule' principle in order to have better control over the vast Indian population. They had driven a wedge between the Hindus and the Muslims, and now, as the nation was gaining its independence, there were doubts in both communities about the power and control of future India. In the 1937 elections, the Indian National Congress party was victorious (Khan 37). However, it failed to include the Muslims and the Muslim League in the new government. This resulted in Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League demanding a separate state for the Muslims. They suspected that they would not get a fair chance under the rule of a government that gave them no voice. The circumstances and events were played out in such a way that the British had no other option but to partition India. They created West and East Pakistan for the Muslims and this led to the largest mass transfer of population in history. Approximately 12-15 million people relocated—Hindus from Pakistan to India, and Muslims from India to Pakistan—and possibly a million people

died in communal riots. People who had lived as friends and neighbours for centuries became enemies almost overnight. The brilliant, non-violent *ahimsa* triumphed by achieving independence; yet in its wake, innocent blood was wantonly shed in the brutal Partition which followed (Khan 155-161).

### **3.3.2 The Nature of the Partition**

Before the Partition, there was a desire for independence. People of India, wearied by the exploitation by the British, desperate for independence, united against a common enemy. However, the British, for decades, had capitalised on playing different communities against each other. The Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs all wanted independence, but on their own terms. The wedge between the different sections of the society had been driven deep by the 'divide and rule' strategy of the British (Tharoor 48). They knew how to play the diverse communities against each other to their own advantage. The idea of the Partition arose from a desperate hope for peaceful co-existence.

As was mentioned earlier, while discussing the nature of the Finnish Partition, there are different categories of migrants. In Finland, the Karelians had been evacuated and relocated systematically within their own country by the government. In India, the circumstances were different. A few might have foreseen the future chaos and prepared accordingly. However, most people had no such foresight. They were propelled from their homes with such force that they barely escaped with what they were wearing. Their departure was so hasty that they had no time to liquidate their possessions and it was impossible to carry all they owned. Personal material loss was immense on both sides of the new border.

Hindus from Muslim Pakistan and Muslims from Hindu India travelled in order to relocate among their religious majority. Yet, the travel was grievous and harrowing. The hatred that had overtaken the communities triggered unimaginable violence toward the other community. People who had been friends and neighbours for several generations rose against each other. Centuries long friendships turned to hatred. Thus, thousands of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan were hunted and killed, as were innumerable Muslims in India. People left their homes because they feared for their lives. They joined the endless number of refugees crossing the border. The sheer number of people made any organized or systematic evacuation difficult, if not seemingly impossible, for the governments to accomplish. Chaos, despair, hopelessness and misery extended as far as the eye could see.

### **3.3.3 Arbitrariness, Censorship and Secrecy**

To accomplish the job of dividing the country, the British brought in Sir Cyril Radcliffe. He was an English barrister who knew virtually nothing about India (Lapierre and Collins *Freedom at Midnight* 278). Sir Radcliffe was to determine the boundary lines dividing the provinces of Bengal and Punjab (279). Lapierre and Collins point out that, "Radcliffe knew that no matter what he did, there would be terrible bloodshed and slaughter when his report was published" (330). They describe a haunting thought Radcliffe had: "'I'm going through this terrible job as fast, as well as I can,' he told himself, 'and it makes no difference because in the end, when I finish, they are all going to start killing each other anyway!'" (331). When Sir Radcliffe was finally done, Lord Mountbatten, India's last Viceroy, decided to keep the new boundary lines a secret until after August 15, 1947. He thought, "Let the Indians have the joy of their Independence Day, ... they can face the misery of the situation after" (351). Khan, in *The Great Partition: The making of India and*

*Pakistan*, highlights the absurdity of the situation. While some were prepared, "In the early days of Partition, the well-informed put arrangements in place to transfer precious objects and savings" (Khan 123). Unfortunately, only very few were well-informed. Most people did not even know that the Partition had taken place until a couple of days after it had already happened.

Such secrecy should be considered one of the worst forms of censorship. Knowing the consequences, the British still decided to keep the boundary award a secret from the masses (*The Day India Burned: Partition*). *Britannica.com* defines 'censorship' as "the changing or the suppression or prohibition of speech or writing that is deemed subversive of the common good" ("censorship"). *Global Internet Liberty Campaign*, in "What is Censorship," defines censorship like this: "The rationales for censorship have varied, with some censors targeting material deemed to be indecent or obscene; heretical or blasphemous; or seditious or treasonous. Thus, ideas have been suppressed under the guise of protecting three basic social institutions: the family, the church, and the state" (*Global Internet Liberty Campaign*). It would appear that main purpose for secrecy and the censoring was to appease the British conscience. The British were more concerned that, "all our work and the hope of good Indo-British relations on the day of the Transfer of Power would risk being destroyed if we did not do this" (*Freedom at Midnight* 352).

### **3.3.3 Communalization of Politics**

As was mentioned earlier, for centuries, Indians from different religious backgrounds lived in relative harmony with each other. Although rulers and emperors changed, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and others, as neighbours, shared in each other's

joys and sorrows. There was acceptance and respect for the faith of others. At least on the surface.

Since the Partition, many have speculated what actually led to the dividing of India, the land of alleged communal harmony. In an attempt to better understand the development and progression of the divide, Tharoor cites Gyanendra Pandey who suggests "that religious communalism was in large part a colonial construction" (*Era of Darkness* 133). Pandey continues, that the colonial effort to categorize and classify the Indians has contributed to the idea of communal identity. He does seem to propose that these identities existed already before the British era in India, however, he is of the opinion that "colonial policies led to the hardening of these communal identities" (133). Thus, colonialism had an integral part in the divide (133). However, it does seem that there is no simple and straightforward explanation. The blame does not lie with one person or one community alone.

Bipan Chandra brings out in his article "The Indian National Movement and the Communal Problem," that in order to succeed against the imperial oppressors, "One of the major tasks facing the leadership of the national movement was to impart a common national consciousness to the Indian people and to unite them in the common struggle against imperialism" (258). It seems that Chandra lays much of the blame for the failure to achieve such unity on the inefficiency of the leaders of the national movement, namely the Indian National Congress. He goes on further to suggest that as the Congress party was a "secular and free of religious narrow-mindedness," it should have been able to direct the country toward a peaceful resolution. However, as Chandra comments, the Congress failed to "launch a frontal political and ideological attack on Hindu communalism" (268). They were not successful in confronting the "communal nationalists" (274) among themselves either,

thus failing to promote "a sturdy, secular nationalism" (274) in India. The nationalist leaders overlooked the power of the masses. The leadership failed to unite the different communities for one reason or another, and even today, the tension between Hindus and Muslims is still tangible.

Sisir Kumar Das, in his book *A History of Indian Literature*, chapter 13, called "Triumph and Tragedy," summarizes a Punjabi book *Khun de Sohile* written by the late Nanak Singh. Singh's book describes the way "communalization of politics slowly infiltrates villages far away from the centre of power struggle" (372). The book starts with a narration of a quiet village of Chakri. The Hindu village chief Bhaneshah has taken in his dead Muslim friend's family. However, the peace of the village is shattered when some Muslim fanatics come to make fanatical speeches that stir up Muslims against Hindus. Das explains how "none can escape from the fire that started spreading from one corner of the country to the other." The Muslims attempt to intimidate Bhaneshah into putting the Muslims out of his house because it offends the Muslim community. With his novel, Singh emphasizes the emotional dependence that can develop between individuals of different communities, as it did between Bhaneshah and the Muslim girl, Nasim. Unfortunately, communal violence leaves them isolated and destitute, as they lose their families on their long trip toward "the truncated India" (Das *A History of Indian Literature* 372).

"If pitting Muslim communitarianism against Indian nationalism had the potential to misfire, playing the region against the centre could secure British imperial interests" (Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia* 148). Bose and Jalal further comment on the religious divide in India:

Religious strife in contemporary India, for example, has little to do with any supposed ancient religious divide between Hindu and Muslim and cannot be explained without accounting from the invention of communally defined political categories in the early twentieth century and the historically dynamic dialectic between communitarian and provincial as well as religious and linguistic identities. (7)

An Anglo-American poet, W.H. Auden, wrote a poem about the Indian Partition in 1966. *Scroll.in* describes it as "a caustic criticism of the five weeks Cyril Radcliffe spent in the subcontinent drawing up the borders between India and Pakistan" (*Scroll.in*). The poem titled "Partition" perfectly encapsulates the arbitrariness and secrecy that surrounded the process of dividing India:

Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,  
Having never set eyes on this land he was called to partition  
Between two people fanatically at odds,  
With their different diets and incompatible gods.  
'Time,' they had briefed him in London, 'is short. It's too late  
For mutual reconciliation or rational debate:  
The only solution now lies in separation.  
The Viceroy thinks, as you will see from his letter,  
That the less you are seen in his company the better,  
So we've arranged to provide you with other accommodation.  
We can give you four judges, two Moslem and two Hindu,  
To consult with, but the final decision must rest with you.'  
Shut up in a lonely mansion, with police night and day  
Patrolling the gardens to keep assassins away,

He got down to work, to the task of settling the fate  
Of millions. The maps at his disposal were out of date  
And the Census Returns almost certainly incorrect,  
But there was no time to check them, no time to inspect  
Contested areas. The weather was frightfully hot,  
And a bout of dysentery kept him constantly on the trot,  
But in seven weeks it was done, the frontiers decided,  
A continent for better or worse divided.  
The next day he sailed for England, where he quickly forgot  
The case, as a good lawyer must. Return he would not,  
Afraid, as he told his Club, that he might get shot.

In conclusion, this chapter has taken a look at the politics and the nature of the two Partitions in question: the cession of parts of Finnish Karelia to Russia and the partitioning of India into three parts: India, East Pakistan and West Pakistan (later, in 1971, West Pakistan became Bangladesh).

In the case of Finland, the partitioning was mostly political and geographical. Stalin, the Russian leader at the time, wanted to safeguard Leningrad. Before the Winter War, Leningrad, which was the centre of the Bolshevik Revolution, was only thirty kilometres from the Finnish border. Stalin considered it important to push back the border and thus make Leningrad more secure. Therefore, Stalin decided to attack Finland and tried to annex Finland permanently to Mother Russia. Uitto has researched the topic of Stalin's interest in Finland and produced a work called *Puna-armeijan marssiopas Suomeen 1939 (Red Army Route Planner to Finland)* which is based on a Russian army guide book that the Finnish army found during the war. The

guide details different road connections in Finland. It appears that Stalin had planned annexing Finland for several years before the beginning of Winter War (Uitto).

In India, the British saw that a divide between different Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religions and communities would be beneficial to them and proceeded to perpetuate it by their 'divide et empera' policy (Tharoor, *Era of Darkness* 48). Eventually, they incited Indian communities to fight each other while Britain finally quit India, leaving the country in chaos and devastation. It seems that the partitioning of India was highly motivated by these religious divides. According to Krishna Tummala's article "Religion and Politics in India," "the issue of religion and politics in India is as large and complex as India itself." Still today, as during the Partition, religion is used to "further secular causes" (57-76).

## Chapter Four

### Psychoanalytical Analysis of Partition Narratives

*"Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt  
will always glorify the hunter."*

An African proverb

#### 4.1 Introduction

Much has been written about the Indian Partition of 1947. Countless narratives recount the events, the trauma and the cruelly incalculable outcomes of the Partition. Understandably, these narratives are from varied points of view, depending on whether the author experienced the Partition personally or was retelling stories which were passed down from generation to generation. India gained her independence through the most socially exemplary non-violent movement of *Ahimsa* (Khan 52). But the fine print was viciously debilitating and fostered the birth of Pakistan. Often, the stories that are shared with us are coloured by filters of culture, religion or gender. India's monumental independence was gained at the high price of innocent blood spilt, severed families, sundered friends, divided lands. Those who survived were tormented into an unimaginable existence. The communal tolerance that was stoked then is still prevalent.

Abundant accounts have also been recorded in fact and fiction about the part Finland played in WWII (as Finland fought the Soviet Union to retain her independence). As was discussed in Chapter 3, Karelia was a Finnish province situated at the border of Finland and Russia. It was the stage for most of the war between Finland and the Soviet Union.

Ultimately, in the aftermath of the war, Finland had to relinquish Karelia to Russia in 1944 as part of the Moscow Armistice. As a result, about 420,000 Finnish Karelians were relocated to other regions of Finland.

During the course of this research to compare Finland and India, a certain observation emerged that gave rise to the possibility of the influence of culture on the narrative technique of the author. This, in turn, is perceived by the reader through his own cultural exposure in his perception of the presented narrative. For instance, in the documentary *The Day India Burned - Partition*, the protagonist Bir Bahadur Singh recounts the hapless feeling of being surrounded by Muslim rioters. He tells how his father looks at the women who are seated in the room. He recalls their beauty, their youth, and the courage of his sister who, when her father summons her with his sword drawn, obeys without the slightest hesitation. And even when her braided hair impedes the fall of his blade, she herself moves her hair out of the way so that his second blow beheads her. Singh is so emotionally moved when he recalls that every girl and woman comes forward to her fate without fear or any outcry. To a reader of more modern bearing, this might appear barbaric, but to Singh and to other readers of his community, it would be hailed as bravado. They would rather slay their own than have them raped, mauled and killed by 'the Other' (*The Day India Burned - Partition*).

It has also been interesting to note, that the majority who experienced the Partitions first-hand have often been reluctant to share their memories. What they endured has left them scarred and embittered. It appears these are memories best left alone. It can be observed that in interviews with Partition survivors, at the onset, they seem quite composed, but as their recollections take them deeper into the past, they become visibly disturbed, emotionally overwrought and often unable to speak of the horrors they were subjected to, as was the case with Bir Bahadur Singh (*The Day*

*India Burned*). One cannot even imagine the savagery that it was, or the gruesome acts they witnessed, or perhaps even participated in. Undoubtedly, those distressing sights have left indelible memories which have been repressed and buried deep within the unconscious mind.

Discussing the role of memory, one notes that the events of the Partitions are recorded at two levels: there is the public national memory and the personal or private one. Unfortunately, the two rarely correspond. The official records of historical events seldom convey the personal pain and trauma experienced by the individuals involved.

As was mentioned earlier, there is, as it were, a collective selective memory, an official history, which often tends to present the history of a country in a more positive light, at the expense of the whole truth. The events that taint the image of the country are frequently left out, especially personal stories of people with 'deletable,' embarrassing or shameful details pertaining to the nation's history. At this point, it is advisable to examine how memory is constructed and played out. It is important to remember that there are two different types of collective representation, i.e. the national version and the communal one, with the two rarely being in agreement.

#### **4.2 The Role of Memory in Partition Narratives**

The human brain is a remarkable organ. And even today, it both baffles and fascinates medical and psychological streams of study. The epi-centre of man's being, it is what makes a human being function and operate in both voluntary and involuntary capacities. The operation of these hemispheres of grey matter is what also formulates the powerful expression of human language. Loraine K. Obler and Kris Gjerlow state that "It is common knowledge that the brain controls muscular activity

in the human body. It is clear that the brain is also the seat of conscious thought" (*Language and the Brain* 13). Furthermore, it is here a person's memories are stored.

While researchers are in pursuit of the engram, the evanescent physical trace or representation of memories, there are differing opinions about which part of the brain controls or houses memory: is it the whole brain, one part of it or many different parts in unison. Stockton, in his article "Your Brain Doesn't Contain Memories. It *Is* Memories," even suggests that the brain is not a container for memories, rather, it is memories. It is rather a combination of different aspects of the event. He goes on to comment on recollecting an event that "Reconstructing it, you remember the smells, the colors, the funny thing some other person said, and the way it all made you feel." He goes on to say that it is "Your brain's ability to collect, connect, and create mosaics from these milliseconds-long impressions is the basis of every memory." Technically, "a typical memory is really just a reactivation of connections between different parts of your brain that were active at some previous time" (*Wired*).

A human brain processes information using memory for storage. In *Psychology*, Rosie M. Spielman and her colleagues present the process in chapter 8, which deals with memory. The initial encoding happens in one of three ways: semantic, visual or acoustic. Semantic encoding deals with words and their meaning, visual encoding processes images, and acoustic encoding records sounds, especially words (255). In 1975, Fergus Craik and Endel Tulving conducted experiments to discover which process best stores information. They concluded that semantic encoding resulted in better retention of information. It "involves a deeper level of processing than the shallower visual or acoustic encoding, especially if we apply what is called the self-reference effect. The self-reference effect is the tendency for an individual to have better memory for information that relates to oneself in comparison

to material that has less personal relevance" (Spielman 256). This concept relates directly to memory and partition narratives. Perhaps the deeper, emotional meaning and connection of words like home, war, partition, freedom and so on result in a longer and clearer retention of memories related to those concepts.

In addition, it is suggested "that strong emotions trigger the formation of strong memories and weaker emotional experiences form weaker memories" (*Psychology* 281). For example, "Strong emotional experiences can trigger the release of neurotransmitters, as well as hormones, which strengthen memory, so that memory for an emotional event is usually stronger than memory for a non-emotional event" (281). Partition narratives seem to substantiate this point. The memories of the Partitions of both India and Finland became highly emotional because of the heavy personal loss people experienced. Their frightful circumstances resulted in these memories being embedded deeply in the subconscious.

Such highly emotional memories in the recesses of the psyche, may be recalled to the surface by a provocation of the senses. Lamia points out in her article "On being 'triggered': How emotional memories affect us," that "When a particular stimulus—a situation, an event, a person, or a thought—activates an emotional memory, it can be enjoyable or painful, although it may not be felt as intensely as the original experience of the emotion" (Lamia). Kilpi's autobiographical trilogy about the Finnish Partition, at times, testifies to the veracity of Lamia's comment. Though she remembered the events, she was not always sure that they were actually her own experiences. Some of her memories, she admits, are from her mother's stories. Kilpi's memory surrounding her Partition experiences will be discussed later in this chapter. However, one of Kilpi's first memories, in her book *The Time Without Borders* (2001), is triggered by sight. In 1991, after over 50 years, her mental picture of a past

memory was strikingly clear. Her mother had been on a pier washing clothes when some horses close by startled her. She ran toward her mother but stepped on a bar of soap and fell into the water (16). She remembers having heard that story told numerous times and finds it hard to distinguish if that memory is truly her own recall or has it been imbedded in her engram by way of auditory repetition. Any one of the five senses may stimulate an emotional memory, but smell and sound appear to be the strongest triggers. Amanda Maxwell discusses memory recall in her article "Sense Memory: Total (Involuntary) Recall." She points out that "Voluntary memory recalls information on cue, for an exam or filling in a form; sense memory triggers an immediate involuntary recollection that plunges you back into a forgotten world" (*Now Northrop Grumman*). Considering the role of memory in partition narratives, one can only imagine the flood of involuntary emotional memories when Partition survivors attempt to narrate their experiences. Even so, sometimes forgetting might be more important than remembering. Thus the suppressing of unwanted, strong emotional memories will enable one to control the direction of their thinking and emotional well-being (Lamia "Unwelcome Emotional Memories).

A famous introduction to the world of involuntary emotional memories is Marcel Proust's episode of madeleine cakes and tea in *Swann's Way* (1913). Proust's 7-volume *In Search of Lost Time* "is a story of Proust's own life, told as an allegorical search for truth" ("In Search of Lost Time"). In volume one, *Swann's Way*, Proust describes the process of discovering and experiencing a sudden rush of old memories that were brought on by something he tasted. In his narrative, Proust suggests that one's past is inaccessible. He says that it "is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture it: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect," (60). However, human senses, especially

taste in his case, can coax a visual memory out of the dark recesses of the human soul.

In the following excerpt, Proust explains the sequence from taste to visual memory:

And as soon as I had recognised the taste of the piece of madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-blossom which my aunt used to give me (although I did not yet know and must long postpone the discovery of why this memory made me so happy) immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like a stage set to attach itself to the little pavilion opening on to the garden which had been built out behind it for my parents (the isolated segment which until that moment had been all that I could see); and with the house the town, from morning to night and in all weathers, the Square where I used to be sent before lunch, the streets along which I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine. And as in the game wherein the Japanese amuse themselves by filling a porcelain bowl with water and steeping in it little pieces of paper which until then are without character or form, but, the moment they become wet, stretch and twist and take on colour and distinctive shape, become flowers or houses or people, solid and recognisable, so in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann's park, and the waterlilies on the Vivonne and the good folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of Combray and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea. (Proust *Swann's Way* 64-65)

Proust's account of the powerful sensory trigger is one example of the variety of ways involuntary memories can be recalled. Whether the trigger is linguistic or sensory, it most often cues in one's everyday environment that evoke those memories. Often, if the memory is desirable and pleasant, a person might leave the particular

object around in order to access that same involuntary memory again, without having to rely on the voluntary memory to recall it.

Lamia concludes her article on memory triggers by pointing out that "We cannot erase emotional memories, although we can be aware of what activates them and the interpretations we make" ("On Being Triggered"). Nor can one always voluntarily choose which memories to keep. Rather, one's present self is sum total of his past memories and present experiences. A person's memories, both voluntary and involuntary, make up much of who he is today. Lamia further points out that "As we live our lives, many past unpleasant events become buried beneath new emotional memories, and these newer memories can shield us from the past and our emotional responses" ("Unwelcome Emotional Memories"). Along with her notion about the past memories goes the idea that time heals all things, or at least, it alleviates some of the pain. However, for some, recalling and processing distressing memories is important in order to be able to better control the effect those memories might have.

An article sponsored by the American Psychological Association posed two interesting questions about memory in the very title of it, "Can a memory be forgotten and then remembered? Can a 'memory' be suggested and then remembered as true?" ("Can a memory be forgotten") These two questions facilitate the quest to establish the role of memory in the creation and expansion of these partition narratives. It is a valid question to wonder whether or not painful and traumatic experiences in an individual's past can be voluntarily and purposefully suppressed? Sigmund Freud opined that they can. In his psychoanalytic theory, he called it 'repression of memories' or even 'motivated forgetting' (DePrince "Motivated Forgetting"). DePrince comments on Freud's concept suggesting that ". . . forgetting trauma and trauma-related information as well as misremembering events as less traumatic than

they actually were . . ." (194) are very real forms of self-protection. However, although the unpleasant memories are silenced and stored in the subconscious, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, the effect of those past experiences tend to manifest themselves in one's present behaviour.

This study compares the representation of Finnish and Indian partition narratives, as well as the prevalence of violence toward women and the effect of it on one's presentation. After a close reading of several novels and narratives about the Partition of India of 1947 and the hostile annexation of Western Karelia to Russia in 1944, it is obvious that neither Partition was a quick, simple event in history. The Partition of India was a long process accompanied by indescribable communal hatred and violent repercussions. Partition literature retells quite graphically the horrors that took place in 1946–47 in India. While searching for relevant research material in Finland, this researcher expected to find similar candidness in Finnish partition literature. However, there seemed to be a dearth of narratives mentioning any significant violence toward civilians and especially toward women. It was a perplexing detail, as wars tend to unleash a level of atrocity and violence that would be unimaginable in peacetime.

#### **4.2.1 Effects on Memory**

There are both internal and external forces that affect one's memory. For instance, there are the unconscious repression of unwanted memories and the conscious suppression of undesirable thoughts. An unpleasant recollection can also be altered to better fit one's system of self-preservation. Näre and Kirves suggest in *Ruma Sota (The Ugly War)* that human memory is built in a way that it will easily turn suffering into heroism (10). The unconscious part of human mind will

independently conceal a potentially harmful thought or experience from the conscious memory. Elizabeth Loftus comments in her article "The Reality of Repressed Memories," that "memory is malleable even for life's most traumatic experiences" (*American Psychologist* 518-537). It seems that the idea of a pliable memory, which is susceptible to influences outside of itself, is real. In Finland, governmental censorship and the pressure to perform for the collective good were the main external forces that affected how individuals remembered, or rather, voiced their past.

Loftus also discusses Sigmund Freud's use of the term 'repression' in order to describe the way emotionally painful events can be blocked out of conscious awareness so as to avoid experiencing their painful effects. The mind buries anything tragic "into some inaccessible corner of the unconscious" ("The Reality of Repressed Memories" 518). The process of repression is an automatic psychological defence mechanism against emotional trauma and does not involve conscious intent.

Typically, one associates any discussion about repressed memories with physical or sexual abuse in a person's childhood. However, W.H.R. Rivers points out in his article "The Repression of War Experience," that the same is also true with other traumatic experiences. "This natural tendency to banish the distressing or the horrible is especially pronounced in those whose powers of resistance have been lowered by the long-continued strains of trench life, the shock of shell explosion, or other catastrophe of warfare" (3). The life in the trenches, during WWII, left many men hoping that they could forget. What they were forced to witness must have been dreadful. Therefore, any effort to remember and retell is dismissed as pointless. Those with no personal frame of reference could not relate, ergo why persist in unearthing something so painful.

Having established that there are some external forces, like 'collective good' and 'governmental censorship' (especially in Finland), that affect a person's memory, it is important to also consider the viable internal factors that may influence one's memory and the recounting of past events. There appear to be several reasons for what and how people remember, and why they might want to forget.

First of all, many seem to remember longingly the way things were before the Partition. There are both pleasure and sadness in what and how one remembers. Nostalgia is a powerful theme in many of the partition narratives. Many Karelians, after over seventy years, still reminisce and tell stories about the beautiful Vyborg or the serenity of the lost Karelian landscape. The same is also true of many Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs who were forced to leave their homes beyond the newly drawn border. People of that generation tend to remember things the way they were more than accept the reality of the way things are at present.

#### **4.2.2 Finnish Narratives**

The selection of the primary texts for this study was on the basis of the gender of the author and according to their time in history. Laila Hietamies and Eeva Kilpi experienced the Partition of Karelia from Finland personally. Their narratives describe the typical lives and involvement of Karelians, especially Karelian women, during the volatile times of WWII.

As was mentioned earlier, this study attempts to examine if there is any connection between memory and one's narrative style, and a close reading of the texts has presented a surprising, yet apparent, dearth of stories about any violence toward civilians during war. This may be due to the culturally unacceptable and politically incorrect nature of such narratives. Furthermore, the interviews which were

mentioned earlier point out that such narration does not seem to be present in oral history either.

Out of the eighteen novels that were surveyed in preparation for this study, only one related an incident of deliberate violence toward civilian women. Hietamies, in *Hylätyt talot autiot pihat* (*Abandoned houses deserted yards*), describes one such occasion. A Finnish army deserter attempted to rape a pregnant woman whose husband was at war (29-30). This was surprising because such savagery was expected from the obvious 'Other,' the Russian, not from one's own people. However, the Continuation War lasted for over three years and the soldiers lived in the trenches. Many lost their nerve and fled. Women living at home alone with their children and the elderly feared the army deserters the most. The horrible things those men had witnessed made them lose their sense of morality and decency, relegating their responses to that of savage animals.

Eeva Kilpi is an evacuee from Karelia. Her novels and poems often echo her love for Karelia. Even her speech betrays her strong ties to her native place. The last seventy-eight years have not managed to root out her Karelian accent. Kilpi has always considered it her fate to be an evacuee. Now, at 91, she still remembers the importance of returning to Karelia when Finland recaptured it from the Soviet Union in the beginning of the Continuation War. Kilpi has written an autobiographical trilogy about her experiences. The books follow a family similar to hers during the Winter War, The Interim Peace, The Continuation War, as well as during the years following the Moscow Armistice in September 1944. The description of the events progresses as seen through Kilpi's eyes and according to her memory. Her narrator is a young girl, one like herself, at the time of war, who was forced to grow up too quickly. Actually, Kilpi gives the impression through her narration that she is the

narrator. Through the narration of the young girl, Kilpi seems to state the fears and anxieties that children witnessed in the grown-ups at that time. Panic spread to them from their parents. By observing, children also learned to fear a hostile takeover by the Russians and the possibility of being sent to Siberia. Thus, it is possible that through this particular narrative technique, Kilpi has felt more comfortable to confront and manage her own demons and lingering fears that have dominated her long after the Partition.

Kilpi's first narrative in the autobiographical trilogy is *Talvisodan Aika* (*The Time of the Winter War*) which she wrote in 1989, almost 50 years after the Partition. In it, Kilpi describes life in a small Karelian village. Her narrative relates what seemingly happened in her own life, in her family, in Karelia and in Finland from the Fall of 1939 to the Spring of 1940. Her novel is a sincere literary documentary. It portrays a living picture of the home front and the attitudes and atmosphere prevalent at the time.

In *Talvisodan Aika*, the first-person narrator is a 11-year-old girl who remains anonymous throughout the novel. She has just entered second grade in school when the war begins and the school building is taken over by the military. The novel trails the girl as she spends her now free days helping her mother, visiting her grandmother at the station of Hiitola where she reads newspapers, wanders around the familiar forests, and follows in the news the growing threat of war. Until the day the war begins. The first bombs hit on the second day of the war (40). As the family escapes the bombing, the girl is forced to part from her father who has been called to battle. The narrative focuses on the experiences of the family as the war progresses. Though people are forced to take shelter in uncomfortable conditions, no one complains. It is understood, that under the circumstances, one must be brave. Besides, everyone

thought this was only temporary. Yet, in February 1940, the evacuees are forced to move inland, further into Finland (152). To the narrator's great disappointment, their home remained behind the enemy lines (193). Their home was lost and so was Karelia.

The function of the memory is fascinating and complex. As was discussed earlier, memory can be triggered by different senses, especially olfactory, aural or visual. Eskelinen points out how Kilpi describes how even the thought or the sight of a fox skin brings the the unpleasant smell of fox skin very vividly to her mind. While growing up in Karelia, her father hunted foxes and the whole house permeated with the smell of the fox skin being treated. Kilpi remembers the "indescribable smell of fox skin" which she still associates with something disagreeable and feeling ill ("Paikat ja Muistaminen" 36). At times, a memory can be a specific atmosphere or mood associated with an event or an experience that is prompted by something in the present. Kilpi's narrative examines memory and how its presentation has varied in her writings. Sometimes it is merely the feeling created by an event that she remembers, not the event itself. Then there are days she cannot remember at all. Furthermore, throughout her account, she realizes that some memories have been altered. It is made plain to her by comparing her own memories with different works available on WWII and the Partition (Hietanen "Muistojen aika").

Some of Kilpi's earliest memories in *Talvisodan Aika* are how the children tried to understand why their parents looked for the easiest method to kill oneself. A child cannot comprehend the concept of a prison camp. Nevertheless, the children imitated the adults and tried to hold their breath, still puzzled by the exercise. However, after much effort, they concluded that there must be a better way to kill oneself. Many such memories affected Kilpi long after the Partition, and her fears

have manifested themselves in her dreams. One such dream haunted her. In it, she knew the war was going on and that she should run for cover, but she had frozen in place, petrified. Throughout her life, she has remembered that dream and all her nightmares through the years have revealed the same mood or feeling (*Talvisodan Aika* 22).

Besides writing novels and poems, journaling has been Kilpi's method of managing her memories throughout her life. It helped her as a young girl to cope with what she could not understand. Therefore, her books reveal some of the smallest details of her family's journeys, at least the details that were important to a child.

Typical of Kilpi, she also ponders the thin line between remembering and forgetting. Through her memory, *Talvisodan Aika* chronicles vividly how common man gets trampled by the political tactics of national leaders, as well as her disapproval and contempt of what was done to Karelia. In her narratives, the characters and their fate point out the injustices people were forced to endure. This is obvious in all three parts of the trilogy.

Kilpi's second novel in her trilogy is *Välirauhan Aika - Ikävöinnin Aika* (*The time of Interim peace - a time to yearn*). It is an honest depiction of what she observed as a child during her family's first time of resettlement. It describes how Finnish Karelians are evacuated and now living in homes that had been assigned to them by the government resettlement agency. Kilpi's family is placed in a small village, only five kilometres from the new border, merely fifty kilometres from home. In the previous part of her trilogy, she said that it was just on the wrong side of the border, (*Talvisodan aika* 193).

In *Välirauhan aika - Ikävöinnin aika*, Kilpi recounts the experiences of the family during the year and a half of Interim Peace. School is an important element in Kilpi's narratives. It brings much desired order and stability in the chaos of the times. When the adults start speaking about the need to set up a school, children know that life is returning to normality, or close to it. During the Interim Peace, the narrator is sent away to school where students, in two months, cover what they missed the previous year, during the Winter War (247). The now 12-year old is forced to mature quickly as she faces intolerance and prejudice in school. However painful her school experience was at first, it enabled Kilpi to manage life. It forces Kilpi to focus her attention away from the threat of war. At the outset, life is filled with longing for home, for that which she knows and finds security. It leaves her physically ill. At that point, she is convinced that even her diarrhoea is a form of crying (258). The two months that she is away at school changes her. At first, her life is lonely. She feels like an outcast. And finally, she makes a friend. She meets another girl from Karelia and they immediately feel a connection. Being and talking with the girl is easy because she already knows many things about Kilpi, from her own experience. There was no need to explain (300).

Along with the school, the forest becomes an important symbol to the narrator during the war and the resettlement of her family. She finds solace there. Kilpi describes the forest as if even nature seemed to reflect the deep and unrelenting homesickness. Terttu Anttila, in her short story "Puutkin tuulessa taipuvat kotiin päin," (Even the trees bend homeward in the wind") uses her own mother for an illustration of the deep yearning many Karelians felt towards their lost home. Her mother yearned for her own kitchen and her own oven, and she described the feeling by drawing a comparison between her strong pining and that how trees bend in the

wind toward Karelia, toward home (56). Similarly, to Kilpi, the forest was also a place where she found solitude. It helped her to process the confusion and disorientation that resulted from constant sharing of space in homes that were not their own.

Longing for home is strong in most Karelians. In her Master's Thesis *Paikat ja muistaminen* (2018) (*Places and Remembering*), Karoliina Eskelinen discusses at length the nostalgic longing for the lost home. She suggests that the yearning is not only for the place, the physical abode, but it is also bound to the social values and relationships, along with the family. 'Home' means so much more than meets the eye. Eskelinen points out about Kilpi, that "the writings of Eeva Kilpi portray how the memories connected to the childhood home and the possibility to remember and tell are important for the individual's own sense of identity" (*Paikat ja muistaminen*, 1).

*Jatkosodan aika* (*The time of Continuation war*) is the third part of Kilpi's trilogy. It was written in 1993, nearly fifty years after the war. Before writing *Jatkosodan Aika*, Kilpi revisited her roots in Karelia. It enabled her to remember with both longing and sadness the years after the Partition of Karelia. Her memories seem very detailed and believable, as she ponders on how memories are actually made. Furthermore, she does not diminish the effect of other people's memories on one's own, nor the fact that many details seem to have been forgotten. It appears, that her memory turns on and off, seemingly independently, in order to protect her from the pain of some incidents (*Kilpi Välirauhan aika* 360).

*Jatkosodan Aika* is the most extensive part of the trilogy as the time span it covers is the longest. By the end of it, the narrator is already in high school, ready to graduate. Now, during the Continuation war, the narrator's family is again in Karelia

and is forced to move around. As the war approaches, the Karelians have to keep retreating before it, and being that she is a young girl, most adults do not consider the deep thoughts and fears that are churning in her inexperienced mind. Once again, the forest proves to be a place of comfort and consolation for her, a place where she meets her fears and prays. Kilpi describes once such incident like this:

We, women and children, were once again running from the war, while men were at war. Nothing bad was supposed to happen to us, according to our plans. Nevertheless, we had been hit. My uncle had gone missing at the front line. Your husband ... Yes, they all were our men, all of ours, our fathers, our sons, our brothers, our loved ones.

I prayed among the hummocks as long as I could; from now on one must pray without ceasing. No peace for God, he had to be forced to bend his ear to our distress ... A mountain-ash leaf has always looked to me like an outstretched hand, maybe that is when that mental picture was born. I could be in the forest as long as I wanted. No one remembered to look for me, though I was to help in the kitchen. It was getting cooler when I finally returned home. I had prayed until I was empty, until I had cried so much I had no more tears left. I didn't know how to go inside and join the others. I didn't know what to say. No matter what, I would not be able to express how deeply I felt (370-371).

School is again an important component of the narrator's coping mechanism in *Jatkosodan Aika*. The Winter War had disrupted almost a whole school year. However, during the Interim Peace, with two months of intensive study, children were able to make up what they missed. And now, during the Continuation War, schools were re-established in Karelia for the children who returned with their families. Even

the narrator was finally able to concentrate on her studies. The different descriptions of life in school account for a large portion of the narrative, as it follows the narrator during the turbulent times.

Kilpi conveys very serious thoughts through such a young person. It is a grim reality of war. Each one, regardless of age, has to face their own fears. For Kilpi, the Continuation War began with that memory, over fifty years ago. However, those memories are still alive. They are tender, as if covered only by a thin fascia, under which a nerve tugs, never relaxing (*Jatkosodan Aika* 372). Kilpi's depiction of the time of the Partition, from the perspective of a child, does portray the narrator's development from a child to a young woman as she struggles to process the tumultuous events unfolding in front of her eyes. Kilpi skillfully relates the inner world of a child, with its imaginations, feelings and thoughts about what is happening in the world of adults.

Throughout her narratives, Kilpi seems to have challenged the validity of what one remembers and how memories can be conjured up. Her gradual building of the account from fragments of memories testify to the fact that, at times, it is impossible to determine whether a memory is one's own or it is sprinkled with fragments of other people's stories and memories. Nevertheless, the nature of memoirs and recollections is such that one can never rely on the memory to be always accurate. During the years covered by the trilogy, the young narrator has grown from a small girl into a young woman. She has treaded the difficult road of constant goodbyes and been robbed of her childhood. She has been forced to mature beyond her years.

Another noteworthy narrative written by Kilpi is *Rajattomuuden Aika* (*Time Without Borders*). It also is a novel of recollection, similar to her trilogy on the time

of the wars and the subsequent Partition of Karelia from the rest of Finland. As was established earlier, Kilpi was a small girl when the war began. Her family had just sat down for a meal when she saw the bombers come. She describes how she saw the bombers approaching. Her childish curiosity had barely enough time to count them, and then the bombs fell. The family's flight to an underground cellar was quick. They left their food untouched (443).

To Kilpi, throughout her autobiographical trilogy, as well as in *Rajattomuuden Aika*, Karelia memories have always been vivid and she has written much about the formation of memories. And much of her own memories, especially during the years leading to the Winter War, she confesses, have come from her mother's stories (12). For example, she tells of her mother's fear of water. As a child, her mother had fallen into water and inhaled some of it. Ever since then she was afraid of water. Having heard the story about that incident numerous times, and sensing her mother's fear, Kilpi also developed a fear of water. The details of those stories are intertwined with her own memories as she internalized her mother's fear (16). As was stated previously, she admits that she cannot always differentiate which memories are her own and which are based on what she has heard (27).

As Sidhwa writes *Cracking India* from a child's perspective, Kilpi also uses the same narrative technique in *Rajattomuuden Aika*, as in her trilogy, to enable herself to bring forth emotions many adults shied away from. Kilpi remembers the inexplicable and paralyzing terror she felt every time she thought about the war or heard the war being talked about (178). She describes her need to write about the ubiquitous fear that flooded Finland through the media and people's conversations (191). Children, she realized, do not only fear, but too often they also imagine that what happens around them is their fault. Who knows, she goes on, whether children

everywhere might feel such guilt. Maybe they did something wrong and now adults fight because of it? (200) With her novels, Kilpi appears to comment on the importance of passing on her knowledge and her memories. She considers it her mental patriotic duty (445).

The description of fear, from the perspective of a child, seems to apply to both children and adults alike. War is always a time of uncertainty and gives rise to an unprecedented sense of insecurity, doubt and anxiety about one's safety and the future. These feelings are easier to talk about as a child, especially as a Finn, who is supposed to have and exhibit *sisu*, which is defined as, "strength, perseverance in a task that for some may seem crazy to undertake, almost hopeless" (Smirnova). It is perseverance under extreme pressure. According to the partition generation *sisu* is the only option in their situation. Life has to go on and one has to adjust. There is no other way. Therefore, it seems to be more expedient to use a child as a narrator in such narratives that discuss or question subjects that adults cannot approach. A child has not yet been moulded by societal expectations. In *Talvisodan Aika*, before the Winter War, Kilpi relates how she feared war. She heard adults speak about the possibility of war almost throughout her young life. She grew to fear war though she did not understand what it meant (11). She had nightmares that war had started. In her dream, she was always fearful and all alone (21). Even children's games had to do with war: practicing how to put on gas masks and rehearsing and preparing for dangerous scenarios (30). And finally, when the war started, she remembers that, all of a sudden, she was not afraid anymore. As if all those games had prepared her for what was to come. The fear she had lived with for so long was wiped away. Now, as she records her memoirs, she remembers feeling almost brave. Until that same day, when her father was called to war (41).

Kilpi also describes her notion that the whole nation is affected by war. "We all are prisoners of war and, to some extent, and disabled by it. No one remains unaffected" (*Rajattomuuden Aika* 337). According to Kilpi, these memories need to be shared with the younger generations. It is important because it also helps herself make sense of the past and to hopefully keep history from being repeated. She comments that war is an accident that changes a life even when it doesn't end it (450). All have been affected and wounded by war and it has disturbed everyone's life (505).

Another significant Finnish author, whose narratives frequently reminisce about the past life in Karelia and who comments on the role of memory in one's writing, is Iris Kähäri. Two of her best known novels are *Elämän Koko Kuva* (*The whole picture of life*) and *Seppäle Viipurille* (*A wreath to Vyborg*). Themes such as home, being an evacuee, nostalgic longing and loneliness are often portrayed in her work. However, though being proud of her Karelian heritage, it does not result in overly enthusiastic Karelianism, which is an impractical dream of upholding Karelian customs and traditions while integrating into the Finnish main stream social system.

*Elämän Koko Kuva* portrays life in a fictional place called Juoksema, a fictional city in Karelia. It starts from 1944, the year when the Moscow Armistice was signed in September, and covers until 1956. Kähäri describes life as it was toward the end of war and follows some of the people for the next twelve years. She was already an adult, a wife and a teacher, by the time the Winter War started in 1939. Her first child was born in 1940. Lea Toivola, in her review of *Elämän Koko Kuva*, expounds on Kähäri's life during that time. The time during the Continuation War was filled with endless hard work. During the day she was a teacher, worked with the Lotta Svärd organization and was solely responsible that her family had food, firewood and clothes. She was brave, while the front line was far away from home. However, when

the front line broke down, she panicked. She considered herself having failed. In her opinion, her war ended in defeat. She was not able to cope with her responsibilities when it mattered. In her book, the main protagonist is Jalmari Joro, a man with many positive qualities, who fights for justice and sacrifices himself for the benefit of others. He is relentless. He is everything that Kähäri herself is not. The only thing she had in common with Joro was their motto: It's worth it, even when it isn't ("Iiris Kähäri: *Elämän Koko Kuva*).

Much of *Elämän Koko Kuva* deals with the years after the evacuation. It describes how different generations responded to the changes the evacuation brought about, and Joro, according to the author, is the epitome of what is traditional and Karelian. He fights to encourage those from his village to remain faithful to the Karelian values (346). So much so, that after the war, when a surveyor requests Joro to chronicle the history of Juoksema, he accepts the challenge as an honourable pursuit (362). The surveyor is only interested in the number of Karelians and how many acres they own, while Joro wants to describe the mental effects of the Partition on people. This project will occupy Joro's life until his death in 1956. It enables him to dwell on what it means to be Karelian and it traps him in the past as he endeavours to hold on to his Karelian identity. In his quest for all things Karelian, his own children disappoint him. As Finland again begins to prosper, the children born after the war become adults and drift away from Joro's old Karelian worldview. His children understand that to return to Karelia again is impossible, and therefore, it is important to integrate and adjust. When Joro's daughter marries a man from the county of Häme, his wife has to remind him that people from Häme are also people (417). Nevertheless, Joro decides that his grandchild will be brought up Karelian! At the same time, his son Mikko moves to Sweden and marries a Swede. It appears that

Joro's excessively authoritative parenting drove his son away. Mikko had said to his father that 'I've never been able to bring you joy because you've wanted me to work like you, but I cannot ... I can't' ( 459). The intense longing for his home, everything he knew in Karelia had consumed him and his strong desire to pass on his legacy had finally driven away his own children.

As can be seen in Kähäri's *Elämän Koko Kuva*, people born after the Partition inevitably describe Partition history differently (225). Their sentiments are not sourced in what they know about the Partition. Rather, the understanding they have is largely based on stories they have heard from their parents and grandparents. The yearning for what was, is not in them; the past does not have the same meaning to them as it does for the Partition generation. Therefore, they seem to have formed their own version of the Partition, as well as of the antagonism and hatred that are related to it. The Partition is not a personal memory to many young people today, not in Finland, nor in India.

There is another possible reason for one's selective memory. Due to traumatic personal experiences, people are motivated to forget events that are too unpleasant. Kähäri's novel *Elämän Koko Kuva* has taken the liberty to describe one such event, as notably such descriptions are seldom found in narratives written by the Finnish Partition generation. The people of Juoksema were being evacuated by a train. They had stopped to wait for more passengers at the station at Elisenvaara. While the train was at the station, Russian bombers dropped their bombs, killing the majority of the civilians onboard (105). To avoid public panic, the media did not cover the story. That particular incident remained a rumour until many years after the war. Finally, in 1960, even Kähäri was able to write about it. Her description of the bombing is surprisingly graphic. For instance, there is a description given wherein next to the trash from the

train, lay a woman with her stomach torn open. In her stomach was an unborn child and next to her was her small boy without a head (107). That attack was forgotten quickly because it was not broadcasted. Only after 53 years, in 2000, the bombing of Elisenvaara has come to light. It has become a matter of some criticism because the officials, at that time, used the same train stations for the trains transporting evacuees and those carrying ammunition and soldiers. Inevitably, those stations became enemy targets (Jegorow "Elisenvaaran Tragedia"). Yet, no anti-aircraft weaponry was placed at those stations for the protection of civilians. Throughout the time of evacuation, there were several civilian trains that met the same fate.

The above graphic portrayal of the victims of the bombing is unusual to Finnish narratives. However, there are numerous similar scenes in the Indian texts. For example, Khushwant Singh narrates one such gruesome sight in his novel *Train to Pakistan*, which is a story about a fictional village of Mano Majra, where Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians have lived harmoniously for centuries. Although, there are news about the impending Partition of India, no one expects the violence to reach this peaceful village near the border of Pakistan. Singh highlights the abruptness with which the all-consuming violence descended upon the unsuspecting villagers. *Train to Pakistan* is story of brotherhood, communal violence, love and the ultimate sacrifice—death.

The villagers of Mano Majra gathered by the river and "they sat and listened and watched strange indistinguishable forms floating on the floodwaters" . . . "Lambardara, they were not drowned. They were murdered." . . . "There has been a massacre somewhere" (*Train to Pakistan* 150-151). Another example of candidness found in Indian narration is found in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*. Ranna, Imam-Din's (the protagonist Lenny's family cook) grandchild narrates an experience when

his village was attacked by the Sikhs. Ranna had fainted from pain. Finally, he woke up in his aunt's house, alone. It was quiet. He got up and ran through the village. He kept running. In Amritsar, he quietly moved through the city. "No one minded the semi-naked spectre as he looked in doors with his knowing, wide-set peasant eyes as men copulated with wailing children-old and young women" (218). Yet another example is a short story titled "A Leaf in the Storm," (*Stories about the Partition of India*, vol. I, 137-145) in which Lalithambika Antharjanam narrates a story of a woman who had been married to an officer in Sindh. "Tragedy overtook her car and waylaid her. She was violated in front of her husband's body which lay ripped open and scattered. She could only see the blood-stained hands of her children. Someone reclaimed her body, more dead than alive, from the railway tracks. Alas, she hasn't yet died" (138). These few samples seem to highlight a difference in cultural openness and what is acceptable in storytelling.

Lastly, the aforementioned governmental censorship in Finland, to a great extent, controlled the way people wrote about their experiences and memories. Whether or not the official memory selection corresponded with the personal one was immaterial. The official, collective memory which presented the events in a patriotic fashion was more important. This idea will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Undoubtedly, the portrayal of violence is substantially influenced by culture. In many ways, Indian culture is more open and colourful than the Finnish one. Most Indians do not seem to shy away from the topic of violence. It is considered a natural part of life. Newspapers and television news abound with pictures of violent events, as there is hardly any censorship. This is not the case in Finland. Words like introvert, taciturn, reticent, reserved and guarded aptly describe the characteristic traits of Finnish people. There are many things Finns are not comfortable talking about,

including violence. Generally, journalists do not add pictures of accidents, murder or rape victims in their articles. These polarizing extremes of cultural behaviour lead one to question the soundness of such strong feelings and reservations. Presumably, such reservation has affected Finnish partition literature which is produced by the Partition generation, and this assumption led to some additional research. It seemed necessary to interview a few women who personally experienced the partition and separation of Karelia from Finland. Anneli Ilonen was twelve at the time of the first evacuation; Terttu Tirri was eighteen and she was already part of Lotta Svärd organisation; and Tuovi Tönning was only nine.

Tirri, a 95-year old war veteran from Karelia, was 18 years old at the beginning of the Winter War. When her family was evacuated, she stayed in Karelia and lived alone at their home. She was a *lotta* and was one of the last people to leave her village. When asked if she had seen or experienced any undue violence, she replied that she had not. Rather, Tirri's memories included stories about her family during the resettlement. At first, they were treated very unkindly by the host family because the Karelians were seen by many as intruders. However, the father of the family, that hosted Tirri's family, was a soldier and fighting against the Russians in Karelia. When he came home on furlough, he told his family that he owed the Karelians a great debt for how they had cared for him and the other soldiers. They had shared everything they had with him and the others. Yet, now the Karelians were driven out of their homes by war, ahead of the advancing enemy, and for no fault of their own. Without hesitation, the father charged his family to treat the Karelians well because they (the Karelians) had treated him as one of their own. While in Karelia, the Karelians had showed their gratitude to the soldiers who fought to keep Karelia in Finland. Their appreciation was evident and felt by all (Tirri). This same attitude was

clearly manifested in the descriptions of the interviewee. Truly, one can take a Karelian out of Karelia, but not Karelia out of a Karelian.

The experiences of the interviewees were filled with great emotion. They were young when they lost their homes. Some even lost their fathers and brothers. All three women, as so many others, who believed to the last possible moment that they would not have to evacuate, had to finally run for their lives while bombs were literally landing around them. They barely made it, while some did not. However, when asked about violence toward women and civilians, they seemed very sincere in their answers. They had never witnessed any. Although it is common knowledge that war distorts moral and ethical values of any civilization (Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf 1), it is intriguing that Tirri so dogmatically asserts that she never saw any such violence. Her motivation to forget and time could have impacted her memory to such an extent that she has forgotten everything disagreeable. Furthermore, the long-lasting adherence to the strong censorship enforced by the government might also unconsciously manifest itself in her reluctance to remember. It is possible that the three interviewees merely represent the Karelian nature and character of always looking for the positive to see what good can come out of every situation.

Lea Winerman comments in her paper "Can You Force Yourself to Forget?" regarding Boulder psychologist Marie Banich's experiment which resulted in finding that forgetting "actually worked better for scenes with emotional content than for scenes with non-emotional content" (52). Both Finnish and Indian partition literature are filled with emotion. People lost their loved ones, their homes, their citizenship, and were forced to endure conditions where they had to desperately fight for survival. No wonder that many want to forget.

In *Ruma Sota*, Näre and Kirves have written about the ugliness of war and the shameful and unpleasant side of history. They focus on the two wars Finland fought against Russia between 1939–1944: the Winter War and the Continuation War, as they present a fresh perspective on war censorship, propaganda, sacrifices, death at war, deserters, political prisoners, and so on. Many of these topics have been silenced in general history because they speak of the dark side of humanity, of fear of death and hatred of the enemy (7). Näre and Kirves also point out how the government propaganda against Russia, in the beginning of the Winter War, was to promote unity and patriotism among Finns. At that time, it was acceptable, even encouraged, to derogate the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, yet another war against Russia challenged the Finnish resolve. Finland needed to remain united if she wanted to recapture Karelia and keep her independence. The nation needed to believe that she could win (21).

Though the Finns recaptured Karelia, the leadership was not gratified. In their greed, they dreamed of 'Greater Finland'; they wanted to unite all Finnic peoples into one state ("Greater Finland" *Wikipedia*). That dream proved to be a nightmare. It resulted in an unfortunate and unnecessary trench war which lasted for over three years. Both the soldiers and the home front grew tired and discouraged. Furthermore, at that time, the Finnish government initiated a strict censorship on everything written in the country, especially about Russia. In the event, that Finland was to lose the war, they were afraid of Russian retaliation. Therefore, even the soldiers' correspondence home was examined and censored (Näre and Kirves 26).

The media even learned to censor themselves. According to Näre and Kirves, during war, the governmental censor board only censored about a hundred articles a month (18). That is a very small amount compared to the number of articles written

daily. Furthermore, as censorship was wide-spread and strict, it affected everyone in the country. Those strict rules of censorship were enforced on a nation at a time of great emotional turmoil, and maybe it was that emotional nature of the times that caused those rules to be ingrained into the minds of the people. Therefore, it is possible that the Partition generation, even today, adheres to those same censor rules in their writing years after the Partition.

It seems that the situation in Finland afforded an opportunity for both unconscious repression and conscious suppression of thought as people tried to forget the past and press on to rebuild the nation after the devastation of war.

One more possible reason for the lack of negative narratives might be that of character. The Finnish Karelians are genuinely positive people. Kyllikki Mäntylä's *Opri* (1953) is a prime example of such genuineness and positivity. *Opri* is a three-act play, in which Opri, an older Karelian woman, is forced to leave her home in Karelia. She is given a place in a nursing home somewhere in Finland. However, at first, she is not accepted and welcomed by the other residents. Most residents in the home are introvert, quiet and taciturn elderly ladies and they consider Opri to be too talkative and meddling, even annoying. However, Opri only wants to help. And finally, she does win each one over by her openness and joy.

Opri typifies a Karelian with a character which sees something good in even the worst of circumstances. Opri is a reminder of the three Finnish ladies who were interviewed for this study. They are very much like Opri. It is natural for them to not focus on the hardships they both experienced and witnessed. Like Opri, it seems that Ilonen, Tirri and Tönning, have rather chosen to highlight how to overcome the negative experiences of the Partition.

### 4.2.3 Indian Narratives

When Butalia embarked on her research for *The Other Side of Silence* (1998), she encountered in many people a great reluctance to speak about their past. When asked to recount past experiences from the time of the Partition, there seemed to be a common thread of doubt and apprehension: "What, they asked me, is the use of remembering, of excavating memories we have put behind us?" She concluded, as she said in her book, that "... memory is not ever 'pure' or 'unmediated'..." "so much depends on who remembers, when, with whom, indeed to whom, and how..." (10). It seems that W.H.R. Rivers' statement, in his article "The Repression of War Experience," applies to the Indian context as well: " Nothing annoys a nervous patient [wounded soldiers] more than the continual inquiries of his relatives and friends about his experiences of the Front, not only because it awakens painful memories, but also because of the obvious futility of most of the questions and the hopelessness of bringing the realities home to his hearers." (Rivers 3). Though Rivers was analysing the repression of memory in relation to war experiences, his words suggest a certain selectivity of memory. However, Butalia argues that there is no way of knowing whether the stories people choose to tell are 'true' or not, nor of knowing what they choose to suppress (*The Other Side of Silence* 12). The purest memories surface only when remembered with fellow refugees. Both Rivers and Butalia seem to point to a camaraderie which develops among people who experience the same tragedy. They can identify with the experiences of the other, and thus sense a connection which requires no verbal communication. There is understanding without words.

Butalia also presents an aspect of gendered construction of partition narratives which will render a very different account from the mainstream history. In her experience, when women were able to tell their stories, they "located almost

immediately this major event in the minor keys of their lives" (*The Other Side of Silence* 16). Undoubtedly, men tend to talk about major events like the relationships between communities and broader political realities, while women speak out the minute details of their lives. For example, their focus is on a child having been lost or killed. Yet, considering that women were seldom interviewed alone, their voices seem to have been silenced even in many oral histories.

Alok Bhalla's compilation of short stories (*Stories about the Partition of India, Vol. I-III* (2013) and *Volume IV* (2012)) present a vast selection of Partition narratives. He says, in the introduction to Volume I, that "I have put together this anthology of stories about the Partition not in order to exorcise the past, but in hope of initiating an ethical inquiry into the history of my age and place" (x). Bhalla is concerned that the impact of partition narratives is being lost today. For his selection, he has chosen to use authors from different backgrounds and religions in order to maintain a neutral stance when discussing an event that was so communally charged. The stories he has compiled cover topics in four specific categories: stories which are communally charged; stories of anger and negation; stories of lamentation and consolation and stories of the retrieval of memories (xv). He highlights the irrationality of the violence that erupted in India in 1947. It was unnecessary. However, many of the stories have been used to emphasize the hasty nature of the Indian Partition. Yet, there also are a few refreshing reminders that there is hope for humanity, even in the midst of the unspeakable evil. With a few of the stories Bhalla has selected, he has focused on the human, personal aspect of Partition. One example of his consideration of the basic human emotion is "Getting Even," where S. H. Vatsayan 'Ajneya' relates a story about Suraiya, a Muslim woman, with her two daughters on a train to Aligarh. The train starts before she realizes that she has entered a compartment with two Sikhs in it.

Fearing for her life, she contemplates moving to another compartment at the next stop. However, the old Sikh man puts her at ease with his reassuring words. Eventually, two Hindu men enter the compartment. After noticing the Muslim woman, one of them proceeds to talk about the communal violence he has heard about in Delhi. Several times he tries to antagonize the Sikh men by statements like, "... what those Sikhs went through, before whose very eyes their wives and daughters were ..." but the older Sikh does not take the bait. Rather, he replies, barely able to control his voice, "All people have wives and daughters, Babu Sahib" (*Stories about the Partition of India* vol. I 122). The Sikh had lost his family. Only his son is with him. Yet, his idea of vengeance is unique. He says, "... because there can be no adequate vengeance for all that took place there! I can only get even after a fashion - so that whatever happened to me should never happen to another. And that is why I escort people back and forth between Delhi and Aligarh. It helps to pass the days, and I am able to get even just a little" (124). The old Sikh had chosen the higher purpose. He found his revenge in kindness, not returning evil for evil.

Bhalla's "own memories began to acquire a density and a detail from the narratives of a variety of different people," suggesting, much like Kilpi did earlier, that one's memories are seldom purely his own. The collective narratives of destroyed properties, lost family and friends, massacres and "about the mutilations of women" become uniquely as one's own. However, Bhalla also heard of "acts of kindness and decency, courage and selflessness." Those acts were "being free always from prejudices of race and religion" and they "suggested modes of behaviour which we had failed to transform into qualities of our ordinary culture during the time of the Partition" (*Stories about the Partition of India* Introduction xi). Bhalla's compilation of short stories juxtaposes the two sides of human behaviour: the brutality with which

some people treat each other and the kindness which others choose for their personal paradigm, regardless of the situation. These narratives "have more to do with the actualities of human experience in barbaric times than with ideologies" and, according to Bhalla, they "seem to be bound together by one common thread—they find the notion that there was always hatred between the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in ordinary life, completely incomprehensible" (xiv).

A few such stories are Salil Choudhary's "The Dressing Table," Jamila Hashmi's "Exile," Lalithambika Antharjanam's "A Leaf in the Storm," and "Getting Even" by S. H. Vatsayan 'Ajneya'.

Choudhary's "The Dressing Table" is a commentary on communal violence and the sudden division of society. In it, the protagonist buys his wife Nanda a dressing table, thinking that it will make her happy. However, after she finds four letters in a drawer and reads them, she becomes so agitated by the story they tell, that she wants her husband to return the dressing table immediately. The letters tell a story of Rahim and Amina Choudhury during the Partition of India. It happens, that Rahim is separated from his wife when the riots break out in Calcutta. He travels to Bagerhat in Bangladesh from Calcutta in hopes of finding work, while Amina stays in Calcutta. Already on the train, he personally encounters communal unrest. At first, he befriends a Hindu family from Bengal who are interested in his paintings. They share their food him and he shares his puris with the boy of the family. However, as soon as they hear his name, Rahimuddin and realise he is a Muslim, the wife, in anger, snatches "the puri you had made from her son's hand and threw it on the platform. A delicious puri, made so lovingly by you, lay on the platform. ... I wanted to turn to the other passengers in the compartment and shout, 'Come and see the injustice! I have been very unjustly treated!' But I restrained myself and no one heard my complaint" (30-

31). His profound disappointment, the reproach to his sacrifice and the base cruelty in return for kindness is voluble. For not only is Rahimuddin degraded, but his Amina is too, for no fault of their own, save the fact that they are 'the Other.' It brings to mind what's in a name? Had Rahimuddin said his name was Rama, the same puri that had been thrown would have been received. The senselessness of such hate is poignantly felt in this story. Salil Choudhary expresses the bewilderment that was most assuredly felt by both parties when they were attacked, not on the basis of their persona, but on religious grounds. Unfortunately, this experience is only a foretaste of what he is yet to encounter in Bagerhat.

The letters serve as a historical description or a memorial to one individual account of suffering during the Indian Partition. Throughout the letters, the protagonist describes the violence he witnesses in Bagerhat while, at the same time, dreading the fate of his wife in Calcutta. Yet, though he fears the worst, he cannot seem to "lose faith in the truth that people are basically good" (34). Unfortunately, his good will toward men vanishes as he is forced to witness the constant violence. It appears that Choudhary questions the reality of the alleged communal harmony in Rahimuddin's words: "People seem to have lost even the last drop of humanity" (35). After the protagonist's sister-in-law is abducted, he finally realises the true nature of man: "I always praised man for his humanity, but I forgot his capacity for bestiality. Now it is the beast in man which has begun to prowl" (36). What particularly stands out is the undeniable confusion in the mind of the protagonist. There is a sense of betrayal. There is a breakdown in ideology and his sincere belief in humanity is not just questioned, it is practically destroyed.

The letters stop abruptly. They do not explain what happened to the couple from Calcutta. However, Choudhary's story seems to comment on the sudden change

that affected millions of lives. The separation of families was often so quick and violent that individuals found themselves rent apart without any warning. Such abrupt displacement, as in the case of the protagonist, can leave a person disillusioned and his belief in humanity shipwrecked.

Hashmi's "Exile" applies the Hindu epic *Ramayana* to the story of the unnamed protagonist, as it references the story of Sita and how she was abducted by Ravana and taken to his kingdom in Lanka. The story goes on to relate how Sita's husband Rama rescues her and brings her back to Ayodhya. Furthermore, Rama insists that she pass a fire test to prove her purity. Without it, she cannot return home to him. Sita's story bears some similarities to the life of the protagonist in "Exile." She is abducted, yet her family does not come to rescue her. In the epic, Sita's honour remains intact, however, in Hashmi's story, the narrator's honour has been soiled. Furthermore, her story will be discussed in more detail in reference to 'shame culture.' Whatever hopes our nameless Sita has held on to in order to survive are of no use. Her survival has no place in the religious beliefs of her own roots. She cannot be reclaimed.

Hashmi's "Exile" appears to comment on the pain of separation and exile from all that is familiar. "Once separated they are fated never to see each other's faces again. The paths they travel over are obliterated behind them like the tracks made on water by small insects" (41). The narrator goes on to say, that "The spaces that separate one life from the next are immense. When human beings lose hope, their bodies become hard and brittle" (44). Yet, however deep or dark those spaces are, it is impossible to forget the past. As in the case of the protagonist, she is unable to forget. Yes, she adjusts, like many women during the Partition had to, but she cannot forget.

She summarises her life by saying, that "The wheel of life revolves between happiness and suffering" (44).

"A Leaf in the Storm" by Lalithambika Antharjanam is a short story that was briefly mentioned earlier in reference to graphic portrayal of victims in Indian literature. It is a narrative about a reclaimed woman. She had been exchanged at the border. She was going "From one prison to another?..." (137). "A Leaf in the Storm" is mostly a story about nameless women who were caught in the whirlwind of displacement during the Partition. It describes the hopelessness that can be ascribed to so many women's lives that were abducted, raped and later reclaimed. It is also a story about Jyoti. "What moved within her was a challenge to every cell of her being. It symbolized everything womanhood and humanity found despicable in nature." The shame of abduction and rape are now her reality. For her, only to lose the baby would be a relief. Therefore, she dreamed, that "—at midnight she could wipe herself clean of her filth and come out—into a new world of hopes...!". In her mind, the child she bore was to become a vessel of vengeance. Her child would not be "the darling of her kinsfolk and neighbours." Jyoti had grown up in Punjab. She had refused to conform to the societal rules. Her fight for freedom was not only for herself. "It was also the freedom from slavery for her community, indeed for the whole human race. She wanted to free the bonded, those who were enslaved by convention." However, those "dreams had landed her in prison. Today, her dreams were but a memory. Now, her "Memory...frightening scenes from memory again..." failed to release her from her mental prison as well (137-142).

Jyoti had not been able to "evade the tax levied on her life." However, now her struggle is over. "Her first instinct was to close her eyes, grope her way about, and choke it to death with her hands. With that, she might bury the bundle of her misery

and shame which she had borne all these months..." (144). Yet, Jyoti cannot abandon the child. Despite the gruesome beginning of the child, she finds herself drawn to the infant. "Jyoti is confused. It was rather difficult to sever life's bonds so easily" (145). Jyoti is an example of a woman who is willing to suffer and adapt in an impossible situation. Partition narratives are full of stories of women with a similar fate. Yet, this child born out of suffering is also her. By some strange token, this child reflects back to the innocence Jyoti once held. The unjust assault committed against her, she is suddenly reluctant to levy upon this new offspring. In the birth of the child there is an emergence of a new persona, a blend of 'the Other' and herself, of the perpetrator and also of the victim. This child represents the enemy but it also is a part of her. Therefore, she deems this child worthy of a new beginning. This is significant because there will be many such new beginnings born out of ruthless cruelty and yet with the basic right to survive and prevail. Rather than crush the evidence of her past, she decides to foster a new future for her and her child.

Together the short stories that are discussed in this study bring to forefront the diverse gamut of human emotions. They are stories of women who had experienced intense pain and suffering, yet somehow found strength to pursue life and survive their past. These stories resonate with the reality of the Partition and evoke emotions of both sides of the tortured divide. These varied perspectives are of adult men and women who have embraced their inherited religious dogmas.

The added perspective of a child who has not yet personally claimed her religious affiliation is also shattered, hurt and disillusioned in Lenny Sethi's character in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*. Just as Kilpi's narratives, Sidhwa highlights certain aspects of the Indian Partition that an adult might not be allowed to point out. It is a narrative that follows young Lenny Sethi's life in Lahore during the time of the

Partition. She suffered from polio which left her with a limp. Now she is cared for by her Ayah Shanta and surrounded by Ayah's admirers of different religions. Ice-Candy-Man and Masseur are both Muslim and there is a quiet rivalry between them for Ayah's affections. Through her narrative, Sidhwa examines the colonial Pakistani identity, especially of the Parsees who were left bewildered as they sought their place in the midst of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. She also explores different voices, as is pointed out by Ralph Crane, in his article "Bapsi Sidhwa Biography," in choosing her narrator and "characters from Pakistan's minority communities - members of the Parsi religion, ... and perhaps most importantly, women" (*Jrank.org*). Thus, Sidhwa's novel from the perspective of a small Parsee girl is able to comment on several questionable societal norms and practices.

Throughout the novel, as the situation between communities deteriorates, Sidhwa questions issues like religious differences, religious outward signifiers, communal loyalty, and sexual attraction in a very patriarchal society. She accomplishes this through Lenny's inquisitive young mind. Furthermore, Crane comments on Sidhwa's perspective as a Parsee author, "The focus on the Parsis, their rites, and customs, not only provides a rich subject in itself, but also an ideal vehicle for observing the history of India, and in particular the events played out between Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims, from a detached, yet intimate/outsider perspective" (*Jrank.org*). The neutral and impartial attitude toward the different communities during the Partition enabled the Parsees to adjust according to the shifting communal hierarchies. Colonel Bharucha's words in *Cracking India* testify to that. "I hope no Lahore Parsee will be stupid enough to court trouble," continues the Colonel. "I strongly advise all of you to stay at home - and out of trouble" (45). Later, in their community meeting, Colonel goes on: "As long as we do not interfere we have

nothing to fear! As long as we respect the customs of our rulers - as we always have - we'll be alright! Ahura Mazda has looked after us for thirteen hundred years: he will look after us for another thirteen hundred!" ... "We will cast our lot with whoever rules Lahore!" ... and for his final comment, as one of the Parsee community leaders, he advises: "As long as we conduct our lives quietly, as long as we present no threat to anybody, we will prosper right here" (48-49). *Sidhwa* remains true to the neutral nature of the Parsees in *Cracking India*. Her narrative does not seem to elevate any community above another.

As little Lenny questions things adults tend to take for granted, her voice resonates with uncertainty and concern for what she sees happening in the adult world. This kind of neutral presentation is a reminder of Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1960), where the young girl Scout is allowed to make observations and racial comments that for adults, at that time, would be highly unacceptable and offensive, and invite immediate repercussions. Lee takes an advantage of Scout's childish innocence which is given more liberties of expression. There is more freedom to state the obvious, as in the story "The Emperor's New Clothes" by Hans Christian Andersen. It does seem that readers give more room for error in a child's utterance. As Atticus, Scout's father, explains to her why he has to defend the coloured man in court against the common consensus of the community, he says, "They're entitled to full respect for their opinions, ... but before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience" (105). Thus, in Maycomb, Alabama, the little girl was allowed to question her father's reasons for wanting to go against the majority who wanted to condemn the innocent coloured man for a crime he did not commit.

In *Cracking India*, little Lenny, as the narrator, who also appears to be a biographical portrayal of Sidhwa herself, points out colonial tensions at a dinner party hosted by her parents in Lahore. During dinner, two of the guests, Mr. Singh and the Inspector General of Police get into an argument. Mr. Singh is a Sikh and the Inspector General is British. "We will have *Swaraj!*" declaims Mr. Singh ... 'You think you'll be up to it, old chap?' says Mr. Rogers snidely ... 'I am not shouting!' hollers Mr. Singh. 'I'm telling this man: Quit India! Gandhijee is on a fast,' he warns the police officer. 'If he dies, his blood will be on your head!'" (*Cracking India* 70-71). This is a good example of childish, jovial narration. Therefore, the reader will most probably not get offended by this because she presents it as a humorous story while she hides under the dining table with her cousin. She also points out the religious tension that was mounting at that time. Her friends in the park never used to call her names. They never pointed out that she was Parsee. However, now some of the Hindu children were yelling at Lenny in the park: "Parsee, Parsee, crow eaters! Crow eaters! Crow eaters!" (108). Thus, she is forced to become aware of religious and communal differences. Even Lenny's Mini Aunty voices the tension as she viciously comments on the death of the Inspector General: "All Englishmen will burn in hell for the trouble they've started in the Punjab! And let me tell you. The Christian hell is forever!" (Sidhwa 121). Little by little the harmonious co-existence of Lenny's maid's admirers starts to fall apart. Partition is becoming personal.

The communal violence becomes clearer to Lenny when she observes the change in Ice-candy-man after he sees a 'ghost' train come from Gurdaspur. He had been waiting for his sisters to arrive on that train. Devastated, he explains to the group of friends:

Everyone in it is dead. Butchered. They are all Muslims. There are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny-bags full of women's breasts! ... I was expecting relatives ... For three days ... For twelve hours each day ... I waited for that train!

What I've heard is unbearable. I don't want to believe it. For a grisly instant I see Mother's detached breasts: . . . . (159)

After the train incident, Ice-candy-man becomes more vocal about his hatred of Hindus and Sikhs. Lenny's maid, Ayah, is a Hindu. Inevitably, her group of admirers disappears. The solidarity of the group of men from different religious and social backgrounds starts to fall apart. Rather, their religious differences begin to surface. Furthermore, even Ayah talks about moving to Amritsar where she has relatives. However, her Muslim lover, Masseur, convinces her to stay. Yet, soon he himself is killed; possibly by Ice-candy-man who is driven by jealousy of Ayah and Masseur's love affair. Such mixed relationships were frowned upon during times of peace, let alone at a time of communal violence. To cross the strict religious boundaries, especially for love, usually invited punishment.

Lenny witnesses this upheaval: physical violence, religious antagonism, jealousy raging over wasted love, and so on. In her immature mind, she tries to make sense of everything she has to witness. Eventually, a Muslim mob comes to the Sethi compound looking for Ayah. Lenny's gullible young mind is deceived by the reassuring words of Ice-candy-man into betraying Ayah. She tells him, and the Muslim mob, where Ayah is hiding in the house (189). In the movie *Earth*, Deepa Mehta's film adaptation of the book, the end of the film shows Sidhwa, as an adult, affirming, "Fifty years have gone by since I betrayed my Ayah. ... But I never laid

eyes on her again. ... And that day in 1947 when I lost Ayah, I lost a large part of myself" (Mehta *Earth*).

Unfortunately, it seems that today's generation is not very interested in what happened in the past. Most do not appreciate the experiences and accomplishments of those who paved the way for today's successes. Rather, they appear to be more concerned about their personal freedoms and fail to realize that without the collective struggles of the grandparents and parents, there would hardly be any freedom today. As Butalia wrote in *The Other Side of Silence*, the Partition was something that existed in history books, but "We were middle-class Indians who had grown up in a period of relative calm and prosperity, when tolerance and 'secularism' seemed to be winning the argument. These stories—of loot, arson, rape, murder—came out of a different time. They meant little to me" (4). For her, it took another traumatic event during her life to open her eyes to the reality of Partition. She was reminded of Indira Gandhi's assassination, in 1984, which resulted in similar violence toward the Sikhs. At that time, many who had come to Delhi in 1947 as refugees were terrified to see the violence of 1947 happen all over again. She goes on to say that, "It took 1984 to make me understand how ever-present Partition was in our lives too, to recognize that it could not be so easily put away inside the covers of history books" (6). It seems that the reluctance of the Partition generation to recount their experiences, has unfortunately produced a national consciousness without those stories and anecdotes being weaved into the collective memory of the society. Many people today fail to understand the significance of the events that took place in the middle of the twentieth century. Freedom is taken for granted. It seems that it is easier to turn a blind eye to the reality of violence in the histories of both Finland and India. As a collective, people select those memories which are unpleasant, politically incorrect or offensive

and suppress them. Such memories appear undesirable and useless, and they should belong only to the generations gone by. Many do consider them better left in the quiet and dark corners of their repressed memories, unconscious minds, and forsaken past.

The small voice of an individual is dying along with the passing away of the Partition generation. The events of 1947 in India and of 1939–1945 in Finland are being forgotten. The stories of pain and suffering of so many grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles are disappearing because they mean so little to the present generations. Therefore, the memories of those who experienced the independence of India and the annexation of Finnish Karelia to Russia need to be harvested and recorded. History must needs be remembered. That is the only way for it not to repeat itself.

*Aika kultaa muistot!* Time heals all wounds! But does it really? Worth Kilcrease is a bereavement counselor in Austin, Texas. In his article "Time Heals All Wounds, or Does It?," in *Psychology Today*, he comments on this well-known and often used phrase with which people attempt to comfort those who have had tragedies happen to them. According to Kilcrease, "mourning is an active, working process, not a passive one." He thinks that it is important "what you do with that time that heals" (*Psychology Today*). Though he is speaking about someone having lost a loved one, we can also apply his concept into partition narratives, where people have not necessarily only lost their loved ones, but also their homes, properties, lands and their heritage. This concept has already been mentioned earlier, however the gravity of the topic warrants a slight repetition. As was pointed out, war veterans in Finland do not freely speak about their own personal experiences during the war. The fact that wartime makes it easier for some to justify highly unusual and immoral behaviour has left most in quiet reflection on what they witnessed. Similarly, during the time of the

Indian Partition, the cruelties committed still haunt many. Perhaps they witnessed atrocities or even committed them themselves. Nevertheless, those events are embedded in their memory. Time will not erase them, though they do not have to rule one's everyday life.

#### **4.3 The Effect of 'Shame Culture' and 'Culture of Silence' on Partition Narratives**

The likelihood of a collective and selective memory, both in India and Finland, was discussed earlier. Clearly, society demands certain behaviour for acceptance, and therefore, even history is known to have a perspective. It is a perspective which conforms to the societal rules and norms. Consequently, when reading history, one must ask, "History according to whom?" As has already been pointed out, the history available to us today is most often established from the patriarchal frame of mind and the religious mindset of the narrator. It is the mindset on which most societies are based.

Culture is a characteristic set of values, traditions, norms, beliefs, manners, attitudes and habits of any given people or group. It is the different worldviews, to a large extent, that define and construct a culture. And, one of the basic characteristics of culture is its dynamism. By its nature, culture changes with the passing of time. Yet, with reference to partition narratives, that change has been at best negligible. Two different countries, two different cultures, yet the partition experience is very similar. The effect of time, to a large extent, appears to have been unsuccessful in both countries. The saying "Time heals." appears to not have had great success in easing the pain of that experience.

Regardless of one's place of birth, it is inevitable that a person learns from his family and society what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Through interaction with others, one learns how to talk, what to talk about, what to shun, what to celebrate, and so on.

Moreover, there are some cultures that allow for more freedom than others, particularly concerning conversational topics. Finland is not one of them. Rather, Finland is a country that has an unspoken list of taboos. Subjects such as politics, religion or sex, for example, are not acceptable. Such topics can make people quite uneasy. Also, Finns are taught at a young age to avoid personal questions: one's age, marital status, salary, rent, the cost of any personal item, and so forth. A Finnish proverb says that, 'Puhuminen on hopeaa, vaikeneminen on kultaa.' (Speech is silver, silence is golden.) is upheld to the extreme in Finland ("Puhuminen on hopeaa, vaikeneminen on kultaa" Wiktionary).

S. Basu, in his article on "Privacy Protection," contrasts Indian culture with that of the West by describing it to be 'holistic', "... which seems to embrace a socio-centric conception of the relationship of an individual to society." He also points out that such social relations "focus more on communication and other practices intended to foster a sense of community" (17). Such a private space in the West includes the complete scope of human existence: physical space, topics of discussion and the practicality and enjoyment of being alone. Most Finns, for example, find it quite comfortable to be and to do things alone. Furthermore, Basu goes on to say that "the Indian conception of privacy, essentially derived from a collectivist mentality, differs from its Western equivalents based on a more individualistic culture" (18). To further comment on the "great gap that separates the Western perception of privacy and the predominating perception in India" he used the findings of two surveys conducted by

the School of Computer Science of Carnegie Mellon University. The surveys showed that privacy in India is "seen more as part of a 'societal value' rather than an 'individual value'" (21–22). Through the years, since the Partition of 1944, Finland has grown increasingly individualistic in characteristic. The collective goals that the Finnish society had after the war have accommodated and made room for the ever-increasing drive for individual gratification.

These cultural differences in communicative practices between Finland and India appear to emphasize the stronghold that the 'culture of silence' has on those who choose to remain silent about their Partition experiences. In fact, as one considers the cultural nuances of the perception of privacy or personal space, one can see that the 'code of silence' in India is much stronger because of her social and collective aspect of communication.

#### **4.3.1 What are 'Shame Culture' and the 'Culture of Silence'?**

It seems self-evident that a culture, that finds personal topics unpleasant for conversation, would excel in practicing 'shame culture.' It is defined as 'shame,' as "A painful feeling or humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behaviour; A loss of respect or esteem; dishonour" ("Shame"). It is a feeling of smallness, embarrassment, guilt, and of low self-esteem, and one must admit that, to some extent, it is part of every society. It is a culture where socially acceptable behaviour is enforced by fear of being singled out and ostracized. Moreover, it is the unwritten list of expected do's and don'ts of a society. Thus, shame is such an integral part of most societies that it has acquired a specific name: 'shame culture.' 'Shame culture' is defined as "A culture in which conformity of behaviour is maintained through the individual's fear of being shamed" ("Shame Culture"). However, in many

cultures, shame is taken beyond an individual. It is experienced more in relation to the family, community, religion or society. One example of such extension of shame is described by Bhisham Sahni in *Tamas* (2001) where a Hindu girl is kidnapped by a Muslim man. Though someone offers to locate her, her father does not want her back. "God alone knows what has been her fate." he says. Even the pundit's wife has given up hope of finding her daughter unspoiled. She says, "What should I say, babuji? May our Parkasho live happily wherever she is. ... Of what use is her coming back to us? said the woman peremptorily. 'They must have already put the forbidden thing into her mouth'" (Sahni 329–330). In such a situation, it is more important to protect the reputation of the family and the community than to retrieve their lost daughter. They would only take her back unscathed. A 'tarnished' daughter does not have any value.

There appears to be a cause and effect relationship between 'shame culture' and the 'culture of silence'. The 'culture of silence' exists because of 'shame culture'. Obviously, one will refuse to speak something that causes shame. Thus, any given society and community can decide and determine what is acceptable for that particular group of people. And as these two different cultures and communities are compared, it is clear that what is shameful for one, might be a norm for the other.

As much as a man tries to convince himself, like Simon & Garfunkel sang in 1965, "I am a rock, I am an island," ("I am a Rock") the truth is, as John Donne already said in 1624 that "No man is an island, entire of itself..." (*Devotions upon emergent occasions*). We need other people. Therefore, people can be easily controlled and manipulated by 'shame culture.' No one wants to be singled out or excluded because of being different. Most prefer to stay within the predetermined guidelines and rules to blend in and thus find acceptance. It comes naturally to human

beings to find a tribe and belong. And in order to live 'safely' within those boundaries, they must conform.

#### **4.3.2 In Finnish Partition Narratives**

Arhi Kuittinen stated in his article "Suomi on häpeäkulttuuri" ("Finland is a shame culture") that 'shame culture' in Finland started under the Swedish rule in the 1700s as 'sin culture.' It was disguised within the cloak of Lutheranism. The coloniser-conquerors created a mandatory 'shame culture' with the help of the church and the law. Thus they controlled the Finnish population and attempted to make the Finns more like the Swedes. For their manipulation, they used the fear of embarrassment as punishment, as did the Lutheran church, and often still continues to do so in Finland. Furthermore, it appears that most organised religions around the world use the same strategy to control millions of people who subscribe to them (Kuittinen).

The stigma of suicide is an example of the harshness of the Finnish 'shame culture.' When someone commits suicide, it is not publicly discussed. According to Kuittinen, it is such a taboo topic that even the media self-regulates its publications. Suicide is an issue that is prohibited due to its reflection on the society as a whole. The idea that suicide causes pain and shame to the family is belittled in comparison to the greater shame that is placed on the society as a whole. Thus, the blame falls solely on the individual while society escapes unscathed (Kuittinen).

In Finland, sensitive issues or topics are not readily discussed. Rather, Finns tend to repress or forget such unpleasantness. The filter in the mind leaves out things to avoid being singled out. Eskelinen comments on the Finnish Civil War of 1918 and how people have a right to remember the past, as well as a right to choose to forget

("Muistin paikat" 4). She suggests that traumas that affect a large group of people might become collective taboos and talking about them will invite social judgment. Thus, any events that take place in the past and are possibly associated with guilt and shame are difficult topics for discussion. Näre's article "Kuin viimeistä päivää - sota-ajan sukupuolikulttuuri ja seksuaalinen väkivalta" ("Like there is no tomorrow - wartime gender culture and sexual violence"), in *Ruma Sota (The Ugly War)*, talks about gender culture and sexual violence during war and how people live as if there is no tomorrow in (Näre 335). Therefore, a person's fear of death during war substantially affects one's sexual relationships. Constant threat of dying can lead to behaviour that reflects a need to live as if there is no tomorrow, resulting in short-term and loose relationships.

Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf agree with Näre as they discuss the moral ambiguity which seems to be highlighted in hostile circumstances. In their work "Women in War and Peace," they report that "the peacetime infrastructure is often destroyed" when there is conflict. They go on to describe how, in general, women adjust to those situations: "They cope because they have to. They bend with the situation" (40). Women have to adjust. They are survivors, especially if they have children. Friedrich Nietzsche's seemingly simple thought from *Twilight of the Idols*: "If we possess a why of life we can put up with almost any how" (6) is a pertinent description of the pliable nature of most women. Their 'why' is their children. Hietamies, in *Hylätty talot autiot pihat (Abandoned houses deserted yards)* uses Martta as an example of such an attitude. The end of Winter War is near. Martta is pregnant and her husband Aarne is still in the battlefield. She is discussing the situation with her friend Helmi Elina who earlier was severely wounded by a Russian airplane attack. She survived her injuries, through pain, fever and confusion, by concentrating on the well-being of her daughter

Laura. While in the hospital, her constant worry is for Laura's safety without her. Hietamies voices many questions about the uncertainty of the future in how she portrays Martta pondering the future: "Will there be peace? Where will she be relocated this time? How will she be received where she is going? Will Aarne return? Where will the child be born? She has managed up to this point ... and now she is losing her strength and courage." Helmi Elisa assures her that as the women have drawn fortitude from each other and persevered, so would Aarne survive because he has to. Martta and the unborn child drive him to survive (348-350), and with him, both Martta and their child will survive through this ordeal.

Näre also brought out in her article "Kuin viimeistä päivää," ("Like there is no tomorrow") that the practice of rape was, and still is, a very common tool to demoralize the enemy. The conquering troops often systematically rape the women of a conquered city ("Kuin viimeistä päivää" 354). The Russians did that, the Germans did that, and so did the Finnish soldiers. In fact, so have done all dominating civilizations before them. However, such behaviour was decried by the Finnish Field Marshal Mannerheim. He sent an order to his troops on 8th of July, 1941, that women of any community should be dealt with decently and honourably (Vatanen 9). Nevertheless, the unusual circumstances of war often lead to an increase in immoral and unacceptable behaviour. That which might be condemned in peacetime is indulged in without licence during the war.

Peltonen also puts forth the idea that there is a certain duality to memory: the conscious, surface memory, which is influenced by the intellect and tries to modify memories into acceptable and mouldable form. There is also the memory at a deeper level, through which the unconscious mind tries to return the memory to its original state, i.e. the way it was when it happened (Fingerroos, "Muistista tiedoksi"). After

researching the narrative culture of Finland and India, it has become clearer that the memory of those who experienced the horrors of war and communal upheaval have struggled, and still continue to struggle, with their memories. The quiet enduring of endless haunting memories direct the path which leads a survivor to a utopian concept of past memories. Maybe writing stories has been a way back to the present for some. It has enabled them to process their experiences and feelings and help them emerge more whole.

Finland's association with Germany, might be another reason for the collective narrative silence about the Continuation War. Finland was running out of soldiers and ammunition. She needed help. However, the world politics during WWII forced Finland to accept Germany's help in order to defend herself against Russia. Though Finland had nothing to do with Germany's activities in Europe, that association, to this day, causes her shame. She has never wanted her name associated with the atrocities Germany committed during WWII. Yet, her only ally was the villain. Had Finland in desperation not accepted Germany's assistance, it is highly likely that her national entity would have been blended with that of the USSR.

In Finland, women who belonged to Lotta Svärd, (a women's paramilitary organization formed to aid in Finnish war efforts) suffered for decades from the 'shame culture.' They were women who wanted also to serve their country, yet were not allowed to join the army. By the end of the war, there were about 232,000 Lottas. They had worked unrelentingly at the frontlines during 1939–1945: cooking, baking, knitting woollen socks, nursing wounded soldiers, preparing the dead soldiers' bodies for transport home, and so on. (Most Finnish soldiers who died in battle were brought home to be buried.) The work of the Lottas was greatly appreciated by the soldiers. Some have said that Finland could not have kept her independence without the

indispensable work of these women. For example, Anna-Liisa Veijalainen, a Lotta, tells a story of how a soldier once came to the canteen all excited. He yelled "Hey guys, I saw a woman!" Anna-Liisa and her Lotta friends laughed as she asked the soldier: "What are we?" And the soldier replied, "No, but you're one of us!" The Lottas were pleased. Most soldiers considered them equal defenders of their country (Veijalainen, *Nainen rintamalla* 83). Unfortunately, the reputation of the Lotta Svärd was deliberately tainted by malicious rumours immediately after the war as Russia wanted the organization dismantled because it was considered too patriotic. Consequently, most Lottas stopped talking about their involvement in the war because they were considered fascist. Furthermore, the Red Commission in Finland, which was appointed by Russia, monitored the post-war Finland and accused Lottas for engaging in alleged immoral relationships with soldiers. It took decades before such rumours were corrected and the reputation of these brave women was restored. Today, finally, the Lottas are as appreciated as the men who fought in the battlefield and they have received the highest honours from the Finnish government and population.

Lottas were not the only ones to endure rumours and ridicule. Wherever the Karelians went in Finland, they faced prejudice and distrust by many Finns who blamed the Karelians for the war and for losing Karelia; they were even called Russians by the most ignorant. As stated earlier, the Karelians were unlike the main Finnish population so far as their character was concerned. They were more open, trusting and looked with more positivity and hope to the future. Thus, true to their character, they adjusted. Maybe it was that happy, resilient quality that threatened some of the Finns who had to receive the Karelians into their homes and communities. Iris Kähäri has described the treatment of Karelians in her novel

*Seppele Viipurille (A Wreath for Vyborg)*. As Karelians were forced to relocate again during the Continuation War, many Finns complained: "Are the Karelians roaming again? They come like lemmings (rodent family) or grasshoppers. Why don't they just stay where they went (back to Karelia in the beginning of the Continuation War)? Don't they ever learn?" (106). In her other narrative *Elämän koko kuva (The whole picture of life)*, Karelians were called 'damn gypsies' (181).

Laila Hietamies, in *Edessä elämän virrat (The rivers of life ahead)*, as well records the doubt and anxiety with which many Finnish Karelians moved to their places of refuge. Martta, who is one of Hietamies' main protagonists in this series of novels, is faced with the anger and contempt where she is placed as many of the local population disapproved of the fact that they had to share their farms, homes and jobs with the arriving Karelians (223). She secured a teacher's post at a local school. However, another teacher, whose wife did not get that job because of Martta, resented her. This kind of dislike and antagonism were very evident in schools. Laura, Martta's niece, felt it also, literally. In school, the 9-year-old Laura was hit on the cheek with a ruler by a boy. Her cheek was bleeding. Yet the boy received no reprimand, but Laura was punished for having walked in the corridor during recess (232–233). It is so unfortunate that often children face the unrighteous hatred and dislike of insecure adults. And children learn from their elders. Cruelty is learned behaviour.

In her article "Oikeus muistaa menneisyys," Fingerroos comments on the 'culture of silence.' There is a desire to forget and change memories in order to comply with the demands of society today. She opines that the intertwined individual and historical experiences and the collective historical conscience are transferred to the next generation by that which a narrator chooses to tell and what he considers best left untold. The narrator has his reasons to forget, change or make better his own past

(4). Such reasons do also affect the availability of partition narratives in Finland, both written and oral.

There is a 'culture of silence' on an individual level, as well as on a collective level. For many, the events that occurred during 1939-1945 have been, and still are, very difficult to process. Many do not talk about them, especially with outsiders—those who were not there, who cannot identify with them. Simo Peura, the Bishop of the Diocese of Lapua delivered a speech "Vaikenemisesta kohti arvostusta ja arvojen vaalimista" ("From silence toward respect and nurturing of values") at the National Veterans' Day gala in Mikkeli, Finland, in 2014. In his speech, he related a story about his uncle who had served in Karelia during WWII. His uncle never forgot the war. Every year, he met with the men fate had brought together in the battlefield. Before her death, the Bishop's aunt finally spoke about those meetings. However, she never told him what the men spoke about—she always made it clear that it did not belong to outsiders (Peura). Yet, those meetings were necessary. In them, the men were able to process their experiences because the war had left indelible marks on them and their then young minds seventy years ago. Only in the safety of their own kind could they unburden their ugly, fettered memories and relive a past they wished had not happened and one they longed to forget.

The Bishop highlighted the five central values in Finland: patriotism, sense of community, sense of responsibility, sense of justice, and Christianity (Peura). As we consider the concept of 'culture of silence,' it seems that all these five values perpetuate or inherently promote silence. It is for the honour of the family, the community, the religion, and even the country. Furthermore, this 'code of silence' influences both individuals and communities alike.

As was brought out earlier, there still seems to exist a war culture today. It allows more licenses without accountability. Atrocities are committed on all sides— atrocities that would be heavily judged and punished during peacetime. Obviously, the 'culture of silence,' or the 'code of silence,' has been adopted and is exercised to avoid bringing up shameful and painful memories.

### **4.3.3 In Indian Partition Narratives**

An American anthropologist Ruth Benedict said that, "No man ever looks at the world with pristine eyes. He sees it edited by a definite set of customs and institutions and ways of thinking. Even in his philosophical probing, he cannot go behind these stereotypes; his very concepts of the true and the false will still have reference to his particular traditional customs" (*Patterns of Culture* 2). Benedict has made a distinction between 'guilt culture' and 'shame culture.' In a 'guilt culture,' a person knows he has been good or bad because of the way he feels. However, in a 'shame culture,' a person is established by the way his society either honours or excludes him. It is the exclusion that lets a person know he has transgressed the accepted norms of his society. Benedict points out in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, that "true 'shame cultures' rely on external sanctions for good behaviour, not, as true 'guilt cultures' do, on an internalized conviction of sin" (*Chrysanthemum* 223).

India, as any other country, has a pre-determined set of do's and don'ts that are socially and collectively acceptable. It is a country with great diversity in culture, traditions, religion, language, and so forth. Yet, among so much of diversity, there is also one unifying aspect to all communities. It is the underlying current of shame which is the primary design for control, and the ubiquitous social control thrives on 'shame culture.' It appears that there often is a difference between men and women

and their list of do's and don'ts. One example of such a difference, in India, is the right of a widower to remarry, yet it is socially frowned upon if a widow wishes to do so. When, for no fault of her own, a woman has become a widow, she will have to bear the shame as her head is shaved and she can no longer wear colourful garments. Thus, the outward symbol of shunning is forced upon her by her community and the society.

There is also a significant diversity in the do's and don'ts between different communities. Again, what is acceptable to one might not be so to another. Nevertheless, in reference to the concept of family honour, there is much similarity. Along with 'shame culture' goes honour. Some communities take extreme measures to ensure their honour, and often, it is religion that perpetuates such strict norms. In India, one can observe, as with Lutheranism in Finland, how religion and society are often intertwined and used to levy and exact standards on the community. Furthermore, those rules touch every sphere of life through the exercise of shaming. It is used at home, in schools, at work, in the army, and so on. To belong, one must comply. If he does not, he must suffer the consequences and be alienated from the community. In George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945), one finds an example of such public alienation. The animals have taken control of the farm. Two young boars named Snowball and Napoleon have different ideas of how to run the farm. In the end, Napoleon has Snowball excluded from the group. This is said about Napoleon's tactics: "He had *seemed* to oppose the windmill, simply as a manoeuvre to get rid of Snowball, who was a dangerous character and a bad influence" (52). A seemingly rebellious creature is dealt with severely for the benefit of the community. Even though his differences are for the benefit of the society, the political leader feels threatened and, therefore, turns the community against him. Thus, the leadership principally directs the norms. The same is seen in the treatment of the Lottas in

Finland. Today, as the Finnish leadership again accepts the Lotta Svärd as a legitimate paramilitary organization, Finnish society does as well. The reputation of a family, the pride of a community and the nationalistic identity of a nation depend on the unifying collective memory.

As Sidhwa's *Cracking India* starkly juxtaposes the experience of Indian women with women in Finland, she has not shied away from presenting a vivid description of the fate of women during the Indian Partition. She seems to highlight the stereotypical binaries of gender, religion and class. She also calls attention to how 'shame culture' abounds in Indian partition literature as well. To protect family honour and religious pride, many were forced to commit unspeakable acts. One such example is seen in Pir Pindo, a village Lenny visited earlier with Imam Din, where a group of Muslims is preparing to face a marauding mob of Sikhs. Their plan is that "The women and girls gather at the *chaudhry's*. Rather than face the brutality of the mob they will pour kerosene around the house and burn themselves" (210). During this time, such attacks happened both ways. In *Tamas*, Sahni describes such an attack on a Sikh community. The women in this particular village are prepared to go to any lengths to preserve their honour. "Jasbir Kaur was the first to jump into the well. ... Within a matter of minutes tens of women had gone into their watery grave, some of them along with their children" (293).

Another gripping example of the combined 'shame-honour culture' can be found in the stories of the women who were kidnapped by men of the enemy community. Thousands were abducted by 'the Other.' They were converted to the enemy religion and impregnated in order to bear enemy children. They bore the brunt of enemy demoralization. However, as Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf bring out, women adjusted; they had no other choice (*Women, War and Peace* 8). Restoration of

abducted women often failed because women refused to leave their children. Yasmin Khan points out in *The Great Partition* (2007) that, "Some women had reconciled themselves to a new life with their abductor. They were able, little by little, to piece together some form of normality, to find happiness in the arrival of children or to adjust and bury their memories of life before 1947. The fortunate ones may even have found love" (180). One such woman is found in Jamila Hashmi's "Exile," which is a sorrowful narrative, in which, "the narrator tells her own story of abduction, rape and marriage" (*Stories about the Partition of India*, vol. I xxiv). She was taken after the death of her parents. In the story, she is introduced as Bahu, the daughter-in-law. Her real name is never given—as if this story represents other women just like her. For several years, Bahu dreams of going home. Maybe it is her solitude and insufferable yearning for her past security that does not allow her to forget her family. Until, "Once Munni was born, however, my dreams loosened their hold over me." The change in her is witnessed when "... the army came to rescue me like a princess in a fairy-tale, I hid myself." Now though the links to her past are severed, she fears Munni's questions about her past. And "In the winter, when the nights are long and cold, sorrow lights a fire and recalls old dreams and tales. ... The heart is stubborn. I don't know why it refuses to forget the past" (50-52). Hashmi uses the story of Sita's abduction, rescue and exile to enable the narrator to navigate through her own experiences. Bhalla points out, in his introduction to this compilation, that the use of a Hindu myth by a Muslim writer suggests "that these myths were the common heritage of both the communities." Consistently, the narrator refuses the advances of bitterness that many would entertain in her situation. Rather, she "resolves 'not to breed sorrow from sorrow'" (*Stories about the Partition of India*, vol. I xxiv). She embraces the

wifely duties and, against all odds, discovers her purpose as a wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law and as a human being.

So many women who were returned to their families were rejected by the same. They were considered polluted. These women were a shame to their family, religion, community and their country. The stigma that followed these women often left them homeless and useless to the very community and society that sought their rehabilitation. Therefore, is it any wonder that a 'culture of silence' surrounds so many narratives about the Partition. Who would want to bring on further ostracism? On the contrary, they will silently shoulder their burden and closet their monster nightmares and hope it would never happen again.

Urvashi Butalia suggests in *The Other Side of Silence*, that the reason why it is so hard for many to talk about their experiences during the Partition, is that, "... virtually every family had a history of being both victims and aggressors in the violence" (11). Undoubtedly, such memories cannot be easily unearthed and repeated, not without shame and guilt. It is not possible to point a finger at the other community while perhaps suppressing the unpleasant, and possibly repulsive, parts of one's own history.

No matter where one is, in whatever culture, shame inevitably leads to silence. Silence is a societal construction. As is the case in Finland, so also an Indian narrator has his reasons to forget, change or make better his own past. Unfortunately, common history books seldom describe what truly happened to many women during the Partition. The silence is an insult to injury. The blatant blind eye to the horrendous atrocities committed to human kind as a whole, but particularly to women, is shockingly obvious. Men, women, children, and the elderly were all clenched by the

cruel violent hold of war and death. But when the facts are bypassed, the wrongs covered and the truth shrouded, the injustices are magnified even more.

Often, adults try to shield their children from the reality of the Partition, and silence is one of the means they employ. The less said the better, so to speak. In *Cracking India*, Sidhwa describes an instance where that silence was broken. It is when young Lenny is puzzled by the women in the neighbouring courtyard. "At night we hear them wailing, their cries verging on the inhuman" (224). Her Godmother tells her that those women are not in jail, but they are fallen women. "Hamida was kidnapped by the Sikhs. Once that happens, sometimes, the husband—or his family—won't take her back." Lenny does not understand, and argues that it is not their fault. Yet, Godmother continues, "Some folk feel that way - they can't stand their women being touched by other men." Lenny's reaction rings so true, "It is monstrously unfair" (227). Most often, one cannot hide the truth from children. They see what happens around them, yet it is difficult for them to understand. Perhaps their perspectives have not yet hardened into adult choices, thus, their view is still objective.

Aanchal Bansal, in her article "The Father's Decision" tells the story of Bir Bahadur Singh, who witnessed his own father kill 26 women of their family. This same story was referenced in more detail earlier, in the Introduction of this chapter, in order to highlight the roles of memory and perspective of the reader of a narrative. However, here the emphasis is on the communal sacrifice of the women. According to Bir Bahadur, his sister's death should have been recorded in the public history books of India's independence, however, it is not (Bansal). Butalia also highlights the idea that a woman's martyrdom should be recognised as heroism. "His sister, Maan Kaur, killed by his father is, for him, not only a woman who gave up her life to save the honour of the community, but also one of the people whose sacrifice should occupy a

place in the struggle for independence of this country." Interestingly, Bahadur's father is mentioned in the interview as a victim rather than an oppressor. He is "someone burdened with the knowledge of having killed his own kin for the honour of the community and country" (Butalia *Other Side of Silence* 218). Again, one cannot be surprised that so many have chosen to stay silent about their past. An act that is supposed to be honourable stains the conscience instead. Maan Kaur, in order to not be violated by the enemy, is killed by her own family. Her father buries his conscience in a heinous act of honour while her brother holds the memory in an untainted conscience. Similar stories are too many to comprehend.

The Partition is not an event that only happened in August 1947. It is still present in people's minds today. Communal tensions have yet to cease. Society still needs to heal from the deep wedges that the act of partitioning India resulted in. Year after year, the partition generation dwindles in number and only their disclosed narrative remains.

"... Partition stories and memories were used selectively by the aggressors; militant Hindus were mobilized using the one-sided argument that Muslims had killed Hindus at Partition, they had raped Hindu women, and so they must in turn be killed, and their women subjected to rape" (Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence* 7). Yet, after reading numerous narratives, one is compelled to agree that such violence was perpetrated by all communities. Khushwant Singh's impartial depiction of the Partition in *Train to Pakistan*, uses the train, which travels through Mano Majra to Pakistan, as an important symbol to portray the pervasive violence that swept the country. The routine of the train, by which the villages set their clocks and daily lives had changed. All of a sudden, "Some days it seemed as though the alarm clock had been set for the wrong hour. On others, it was as if no one had remembered to wind

it" (Singh 81). This unsettled the lives of the people of Mano Majra. "People stayed in bed late without realizing that times had changed and the mail train might not run through at all. Children did not know when to be hungry, and clamoured for food all the time. ... Goods trains had stopped running altogether, so there was no lullaby to lull them to sleep" (81). The unpredictability of life became unsettling, especially as the common man was not privy to the intricate details of the Partition and how it would impact their lives. Most thought that their village would not be affected by what happened in big cities. However, one morning, a train from Pakistan halted at Mano Majra railway station. At first glance, it had the look of the trains in the days of peace. No one sat on the roof. No one clung between the bogies. No one was balanced on the footboards. But somehow it was different. There was something uneasy about it. It had a ghostly quality"(82).

Such ghost trains became more frequent, bringing "a full load of corpses" (124) from Pakistan. In the end of the book, the Sikh and Hindu refugees who had arrived in Mano Majra seek revenge. They plan to "to attack the train near the bridge tonight. It is taking Muslims of Chundunnugger and Mano Majra to Pakistan" (176). Singh, through these narratives, very creatively and aptly demonstrates that no one community can be blamed for the cruelty that accompanied and followed the Partition. The train served as a mode of transportation for both communities alike. Man's inability to control his anger, his resentment toward 'the Other' is an omnipresent phenomenon.

Most history books seem to only tell the collective, national story. The private one is told behind closed doors, in the privacy of a home. As one observes the society today, it makes one wonder if the private household stories still cultivate the antagonistic attitude even now. The concept of 'us' and 'the Other' is still prevalent.

The 'culture of silence' runs in the family. The injustice, the bitterness of hushed, carefully bottled and privately passed down stories from the grandparents to the parents and from the parents to the next generation, prevails.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This study has explored how different similar narratives can be. The bold presentation of Partition violence by Khuswant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* and the communal upheaval so vividly represented in Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* are very different from the more moderate telling of Partition stories in Finland. Finnish narratives show the events of 1939–1945 through the same list-lens of taboos and 'unspeakables.' Violence is unpleasant and clearly lacking in the mainstream archives of Finnish partition writing.

Both events, the Partition of India in 1947 and the period of war and subsequent partition of Karelia from Finland in 1945, are a difficult topic for those who experienced them personally. The physical and mental pain so many endured is unfathomable to younger generations. No amount of stories or pictures will sufficiently enlighten one to their horrors. The wounds are deep and the scars impenetrable for the probing eyes of those who might seek to know more. Some have chosen to speak about their experiences, but many have not. Rather, they have suppressed their memories and have adopted a code of silence - their wounds are shrouded in silence.

Even today, there seems to be a ubiquitous tension between Hindus and Muslims in India. The stories parents and grandparents have chosen to tell their children and grandchildren, though unintentionally, have, at times, passed on their deep resentment and anger toward the other community. In his article "Is there an

Indian Way of Thinking," Ramanujan speaks of the Indians' ability to compartmentalise: "... the new ways of thought and behaviour do not replace, but live along with older 'religious' ways (57)". Thus, today, different communities live and work together again, and deep within, there seems to be a small flickering ember of hope that communal loyalty may be revived.

## Chapter Five

### Gendering Partition Narratives

"There is no agony  
like bearing an untold story inside of you."

- Maya Angelou

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the West, along with the Millennials, came the challenge of the basic societal norms and customs. There appears to be a strong campaign to 'gender' everything. One's gender identity is challenged and questioned practically in everything today, even in the realm of language, especially as it pertains to the English language. Until recently, it was conventional to use the personal pronoun *he*, *him*, *his* when referring to a generic individual in the third person. However, today, some activist groups consider English a language of sexism, misogyny and racism. Even as it is common knowledge that English has no feminine, masculine or neuter nouns. Rather, gender is determined according to biology. However, the fringe elements of feminism and the liberal left are calling for gender neutral pronouns, like *ze*, *e*, or even *they*, in place of a singular pronoun to avoid 'genderism,' thus trying not to offend those who are affected by such gender binaries and find the age-old pronouns offensive.

Reading is an activity that invites a variety of readership, as well as gender binaries. Some readers tend to choose authors according to gender. In terms of Partition literature, this present researcher appears to be guilty of the same. However,

the primary texts used seem to not highlight one gender over the other. They appear to have portrayed the experiences of people with unprejudiced neutrality. As has been mentioned before, history is recorded and interpreted differently, depending on the gender of the writer or the reader. Such 'gendering' apparently takes place in both writing and reading. Thus, it is important to identify any patriarchal stereotypes, and to assess whether they are promoted or judged. Especially, in reference to partition narratives, it is helpful to identify the author's frame of reference and possible intended meaning. The extent of the author's involvement in the Partition events and his or her ideology will shine through and manifest itself in the method of describing the events surrounding the Partition. As has already been pointed out, the authors chosen for this study have all experienced the Partition personally, both in Finland and in India.

'Gendering' is a term which has recently gained popularity. The *Lexico.com* online dictionary defines the term as "the assigning or attributing of a gender to someone or something; division, classification, or differentiation according to gender" ("Gendering"). It is the assigning of a masculine or feminine point of view or a worldview into something one is or does. The above mentioned 'gendering' of language appears to also play into the on-going gender identity struggle. The earlier *he* used to be a generic, all-inclusive, pronoun. Today, it seems to be a threat to some people's individuality.

As has been discussed earlier, much of the recorded official history has been written by men. Therefore, the official history tends to portray accounts largely from a man's point of view. Individual lives are not covered in much detail, if at all. It can be observed that, although the macro view needs to be taken into account, at the micro level, thankfully, there are authors, both male and female, who have given us some

detailed accounts of regular people. The authors whose works are studied in this research are all part of the Partition generation and have seen the events first hand. They have experienced the horrors they write about. Alok Bhalla, Bhisham Sahni and Khushwant Singh treat the women in their stories with compassion and understanding. They have portrayed very truthfully the struggle a woman has in the world of patriarchy, where they are often considered mere commodities. Furthermore, their stories do not seem to be manipulated by any evident gender bias. Bapsi Sidhwa, Laila Hietamies and Eeva Kilpi are women whose narratives give very tangible descriptions of the anguish related to a woman's experience of the Partition on a personal level.

At this juncture, to help the reader grasp the gendered aspect of partition narratives it is important to consider the position women had before and after the two Partitions in question. In order to further understand the shift in women's lives, it will help to trace briefly the progression and development of the feminist ideology, especially in reference to partition narrative.

## **5.2 A Few Aspects of Feminist Ideology with Reference to Partition Narratives**

There are as many opinions about feminism as there are people. Some for it and others against it, largely depending on its meaning and purpose. *Webster's Online Dictionary* defines feminism as "The belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities; organized activity in support of women's rights and interests." *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (1999) defines it in similar terms, "the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of sexual equality" (521). Kathy Capriano, in her article "What is Feminism, and why do so many women and men

hate it?" points out that "Feminism at its core is about equality of men and women, not 'sameness.'" She also brings out that "The issue here is about equal rights and equal access to opportunities" (*Women@Forbes*). The most burning argument put forth, apparently, is that though men and women are physiologically different, their rights and opportunities should not differ from each other. It is important to understand that though women are different in size and strength, they are, in fact, just as valuable and meaningful to a successful society as men. One might go even a step further and argue that there would not be any society without women. Bhasin and Khan point out in *Some Questions on Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia* that "The definition thus can and does change because feminism is based on historically and culturally concrete realities and levels of consciousness, perceptions and actions" (2). They go on to discuss how the meaning of feminism has, therefore, changed. It is no longer the same today as it was in the seventeenth century when the term first was coined. Thus, women, at the time of the Partitions, were not concerned about the gender struggle. Rather, they fought to survive. Their focus was the continued existence of their children, family and community.

Hekman states that, "Contemporary feminism began in the late eighteenth century as a social movement to achieve political equality for women ("Feminism" 91)". However, according to Wind Goodfriend's simple definition of feminism in her article "Feminism types and definitions: Liberal, socialist, culture and radical," it "refers to the belief that men and women deserve equality in all opportunities, treatment, respect, and social rights." She goes on to bring out that "Some people imagine that all feminists are angry, bitter women who only want to subjugate men!" (study.com). Today, it seems that radical feminism portrays a feminist in that very light. Hence, the basic ideology, and the feminists themselves, are often

misunderstood. Evidently, the actual or original goal of feminism has been hidden under the mudslide of liberal and radical subsections in the media. For the purpose of this study, it seems important to examine how feminism relates to partition narratives.

*Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (2007) highlights the "crucial interest" that post-colonialism has in feminism. As was discussed in chapter two of this study, the three post-colonialists above opine that both patriarchy and imperialism seem to employ similar framework for their domination. They propose that "the experiences of women in patriarchy and those of colonized subjects can be paralleled in a number of respects, and both feminist and post-colonial politics oppose such dominance" (93). It is further pointed out that these women have experienced "double colonization" where "women are subjected to both the colonial domination of empire and the male domination of patriarchy" (66). The end of colonialism marked a noteworthy milestone in the struggle of the feminist ideology toward gender equality. However, as the colonial supremacy ended, it resulted only in dissolving the colonial dominance. Women, still today, seventy-two years later, struggle to gain equal footing with men in different aspects of society. Yet, as Simone de Beauvoir pointed out, "... the women's effort has never been anything more than a symbolic agitation. They have gained only what men have been willing to grant; they have taken nothing, they have only received" (*Second Sex* 18).

### **5.3 Historical Evolution of Feminist Thought**

History reveals that at the time of Shakespeare, in the sixteenth century, patriarchy did not allow women to have a voice. Virginia Woolf opines that no woman could have written "the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare," (*A Room of One's Own* 48). At least, she argues that if she did then "her work would

have gone unsigned" (51). Thoughts as risqué as those of Shakespeare would not have been considered quite appropriate originating from the imagination of a woman. Furthermore, within patriarchy, the masculine thought of women and their ability to learn was not particularly encouraging. However, men's opinions differed substantially. Woolf points out how "Napoleon thought women incapable" of learning, while "Dr. Johnson thought the opposite" (31). She credits Alexander Pope with words like, "Most women have no Character at all." While "Goethe honoured them; Mussolini despised them." Woolf quotes Mr. Oscar Browning of Cambridge, who said that, "the best woman was intellectually the inferior of the worst man." She goes on to point out that "... there was an enormous body of masculine opinion to the effect that nothing could be expected of women intellectually." Thus, the dominant thoughts men had about the abilities of a woman, in the eighteenth century, remained quite disparaging. However debilitating such thinking was to the advancement of women in the field of arts, Woolf found men's opinions about women's emancipation more interesting than the emancipation itself (*A Room of One's Own* 31-57).

At that time, most writers and poets depended on private patrons. For a man, such an endeavour was an acceptable form of occupation. However, if a woman wished to pursue the arts, it was practically impossible. Society did not sanction a woman to inhabit such spaces. First of all, as was mentioned earlier, she was not thought capable of such a creative state of mind. Secondly, most women were confined to their homes and to motherhood, as is seen in Book One, in the chapter "The Data of Biology" of *The Second Sex*, where de Beauvoir points out the many biological differences that basically resulted in the confinement of a woman in her societally predetermined role as a wife and mother. And thirdly, most likely no one would undertake supporting a female author. It was considered entirely impossible,

and even socially unacceptable. Furthermore, the state of mind that is required for writing was not considered appropriate for the feminine realm. Thus, a woman was bound within the socially accepted perimeters which limited her mental activities. No matter how intellectual or intelligent a woman might be, her creativity was imprisoned by the prevailing hegemony.

Yet, at times, a woman's situation would be such that she would be forced to seek employment in order to survive. Such was the case, for example, with Aphra Behn in the seventeenth century. In an article titled "17th and 18th Centuries," it is suggested that Behn was "the first woman writer to earn a living by her pen." (*Women Writers*). The list of woman writers in the seventeenth century is very short compared to their male counterparts, and even shorter of the women who independently earned their living by it. Some women were fortunate to be born into affluent families with a father who believed in educating their daughters. Yet, even then it was a rare woman who wrote under her own name. Most female authors chose to write under a *nom de plume* in order to disguise their identity and avoid social stigma and labelling. For example, the Bronte sisters first decided to write under pseudonyms Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell because their form of writing, at that time, was not considered feminine. The same was the case with George Eliot, also known as Mary Ann Evans. Such compartmentalized gendering led the way for women to fight for space for themselves and their artistic expression. Especially, as their books were well received, although under a *nom de plume*. However, the acceptance was still proof of their capability. Furthermore, it highlighted the bias and prejudice that disallowed them entrance into the writing sphere.

According to Susan Hekman, at first, the eighteenth century feminist 'simply' sought "to achieve political equality for women." She goes on to point out how, since

the beginning of the women's movement, the idea of freedom has morphed along with the times. "Liberal feminism and socialist feminism allied feminism with the dominant political theories of the day" (*Feminism* 91) and that alliance can be witnessed in the various waves and expressions of feminism through the years.

According to Elizabeth Gillis, there have been three main periods, or waves, of Western feminism. The first wave was roughly from 1830 to 1920 ("Feminist Waves"). At that time, the emphasis was on "legal and social equality of women." The second wave began in 1960. It also "questioned traditional assumptions about gender and sexuality." Finally, the third wave started approximately in 1990. At that time, younger feminists rejected the ideals of their mothers. They focused on the "intersectional nature of identity." This present study is interested in the different waves of feminism only to the extent that they are reflected in the partition narratives. The Partitions themselves took place in the wake of the first wave, however, in terms of the narratives, this study is interested at the position of the authors in the timeframe they wrote ("Feminist Waves").

The most visible forms of feminist thought have been liberal, social, cultural and radical. It seems that these four aspects bring out the main emphasis and the progression of this particular ideology. First of all, it is liberal feminism which takes us back to the beginning. Its aim was, and still is, to achieve equality between men and women in the eyes of the law, at the workplace and in society in general. Cultural feminism adds a drive for more feminist behaviour in the world. It has created a social scenario where competition and comparing are no longer desirable behaviour. Furthermore, a cultural feminist encourages cooperation, inclusivity and kindness in all aspects of life. Yet, in reality, there are realms of life where such characteristics will not fit: for example, the corporate world and politics will never succeed without

fierce competition and aggression. A purely cultural feminist cannot survive in such a world. Socialist feminism seeks to take feminism a step further. It tries to replace capitalism with social reformation. And finally, there is radical feminism which seems to be the most visible and the most extreme form at present.

The form of feminism that is the most vocal and ubiquitous today, and especially in social media, is very radical. The media keeps feeding society narratives and pictures of rambunctious and radical feminists who have joined the ranks of the liberals in the West to take feminism to a new direction. In the light of the present day representation of feminism, it is imperative to separate true feminism from that which is being forcefully promoted today in social media. Understanding the difference is critical in order to not judge all feminism based on the radical fringe elements.

Up to this point, this study has focused mostly on Western feminism. Now it is time to realize that this ideology is not the same for everyone and everywhere, nor has it developed in the same linear fashion in different places of the world. Western feminism is quite different from that of South Asia, and particularly India. The basic tenets and goals are the same: equal value and equal opportunities for both genders. However, the reality for the female gender in India and the feminist goals are somewhat different.

The struggle for equality for an Indian girl starts even before she is born. That is, if she is allowed to be born. For centuries, the Indian patriarchal society has preferred male offspring, and this has resulted in decades of rampant sex determination tests and female foeticide and even infanticide to get rid of unwanted girls. According to a UNICEF Press Release by Alka Gupta on "Female Foeticide in India," that particular practice has acquired almost genocidal proportions. The fight

toward equality and freedom still goes on. The press release refers to The PCPNDT (Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act) Act of 1994, which was modified in 2003 to stop such sex selection. Moreover, the Mumbai High Court went even further by amending the Act by pronouncing "that pre-natal sex determination would be as good as female foeticide. Pre-conception sex determination violated a woman's right to live and was against the Constitution." (*UNICEF India*).

If a girl child is allowed to come to full term and be born, she is endowed, unbeknownst to her, with the burden of upholding and protecting the honour and reputation of her family, community, religion and nation. Patriarchy dictates that her life will be ordered and controlled by her father, or in the absence of a father, by a brother or an uncle. Ray and Basu point out in their article "Women and Partition: Some Questions," that "the earliest Hindu religious texts in India had prescribed strict rules governing women's behaviour patterns and her physical purity" (5). They go on to talk about *pativrata* (physical and mental chastity) which has developed and become part of "the principal ideology for women." That small baby girl is taught to adhere to these religious and communal rules. Her education starts by watching how her mother interacts with her father. She will learn that "women's bodies were the repositories of men's honour" (6).

The feminist fight in India has been a long one: from a woman's very right to breathe, to the democratic rights of women (Bhasin & Khan, *Some Questions on Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia* 2–3), to today's struggle toward emancipation. And now the ideology has entered the private realm of the home. Today, more women find their own path outside the home. They have entered the workforce and have often become financially independent. And this development has brought new aspects to the goals of feminism. As women work side by side with men,

they have come to realize their *double burden* or *double shift* (Bhasin & Khan, 10). They now work at home and outside. Such struggles and forms of inequality have become the emphasis for many feminist endeavours. There is a bona fide need for women not be repressed, for them to explore their choices and make decisions based on their own preference. They should not be coerced into taking on any particular role. Being an astronaut, a political leader or a stay-home mother should be respected on the same level.

As one can see, the focus of feminism in the West and in India are somewhat different, especially today. The basic and foundational principles remain the same, but the actual working out of those ideas seem different. It has become even clearer with the issues today's Western radical feminists bring to the forefront in social media. Furthermore, in India, women's struggle for freedom and equality has to press on even harder as they take on the patriarchal rules and regulations dictated often by different radical religious sects.

#### **5.4 The Role of Patriarchy in Partition Narratives**

Patriarchy, as an ideological system, has been the dominant thought in most societies for centuries. It promotes the idea of male domination, in a family, as well as in society. This ideology is responsible for the accepted rules of behaviour in the majority of cultures. Kamla Bhasin brings out in her book *Understanding Gender* (2003) that "Patriarchy is not the same everywhere. Its nature can be and is different in different classes in the same society; in different societies and in different periods of history" (20-21). The main idea behind it, though, is that man is superior compared to women. Today, Bhasin continues, most religions, as well as the media and educational institutions, sustain the patriarchal practices. Even as one looks at

partition narratives, the effect of patriarchy is obvious. In Finland, only men were called to enlist in the military to fight the Soviets. If women wanted to take part in the fighting, it was limited to paramilitary functions. Yet, most women remained home to provide for their family. On the other hand, Indian women, during the Partition of India, were often the ones who had to bear the burden of family honour, as well as the honour of the religion and the community. They were not even permitted paramilitary roles. Patriarchy had designated the woman to be the upholder of communal and religious purity. And since those patriarchal norms are taught to children from the beginning, "Most of us have internalised its values and are not always free of patriarchal ideology" (*Understanding Gender* 22). This internalization is evident in everyday life also, and too often boys are preferred over girls. The societal power structure has resulted in women being thought of as lesser beings.

Suranjita Ray describes patriarchy simply as that which "imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women" ("Understanding Patriarchy" 1). Annabel Mayoral also, in her comparative work "I Want my Ayah: Women at the Centre of Conflict in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* and Deepa Mehta's *Earth*" (a 1998 film adaptation of *Cracking India*), concurs with what has been said before about patriarchy, that "In patriarchal societies, women are seen as bearers of honour and culture, they are symbols of social and religious identities and their lives are highly conditioned by the pressure that they must preserve those ideals" (2). It is lamentable how often the attempt to preserve the purity of a community leads to female suffering at the hands of her own community. Knowing full well the gravity of woman's religious and sexual purity, men from other communities take unfair advantage of the physical and mental weakness of a woman in such uncertain times as during the Partition of India,

and "women become the means by which each side could take revenge on the other and the men would do anything not to be dishonoured" (2).

The inequality of men and women under patriarchy becomes blatantly clear, especially in the Indian partition narratives. In Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, the reader is introduced to Ranna, a friend of little Lenny. By telling Ranna's story, Sidhwa draws the attention to the unashamed polarity and discrimination of males and females even in death. She describes a Sikh attack which took place in Ranna's village. In preparation for what was to come, Dost Mohammed was telling some boys about death: "Stop whining like girls! ... What's there to be afraid of? Are you afraid to die? It won't hurt any more than the sting of a bee" (212). That would be true for most men and Ranna describes the swift execution of his father: "There was a sunlit sweep of curved steel. His head was shorn clear off his neck. ... Ranna saw his uncles beheaded. His older brothers, his cousins" (213). Unfortunately, the women and girls, the one's with the burden of family and community honour on their shoulders, were not so fortunate. After having been hit himself, now bleeding on the floor, Ranna sees his sister outside. "Ranna wants to tell her, 'Don't be afraid to die ... It will hurt less than the sting of a bee.' But he is hurting so much ... Why isn't he dead? Where are the bees?" As he was going in and out of consciousness, he thought he saw his eleven-year-old sister, Khatija, "run stark naked into their courtyard: her long hair dishevelled, her boyish body bruised, her lips cut and swollen and a bloody scab where her front teeth were missing" (213). Without a doubt, patriarchal praxis has left women and girls to suffer unjustly and unfairly in the hands of the enemies of their community. Such unfair treatment begs a question about the efficacy, or maybe usefulness, of the feminist ideology at a time like that. The first wave of feminism had accomplished a lot. In many countries, women had been granted the right to vote.

However, the basic human right to life was not a factor for the Indian woman who faced a fate worse than death.

## **5.5 The Role of Gender Politics in Partition Narratives**

A study of partition narratives has highlighted the significance of the theme of politics in literature. The concept of 'the Other' is invariably reflected in any political statement, be it about the government, religion, language, gender or communities. However, a full discussion of all the diverse areas of politics is impossible to accomplish within one research. Therefore, this study concentrates only on gender politics that focus on the debate about the function and relationships between men and women, especially in relation to partition literature.

Within gender politics is found the idea of conformism which defines a respectable individual as one who conforms to the rules of a society or a community. There are expectations placed on the members of a society that dictate their attitudes and behaviour. As has been discussed before, people are not islands to themselves. Rather, one's identity and role in society is largely defined in relation to others. Therefore, both acceptance and compliance are important aspects to most people. For the most part, the societal conventions are the guidelines that lead people through life, governing their greatest life decisions: marriage, parenting, work roles, clothing, and so on.

Within gender politics, this study attempts to highlight a few significant themes that pertain especially to partition narratives and how they portray the lives of women. Tragic events often seem to affect women and their daily reality either directly or indirectly. The event itself might not reach the women directly, but the repercussions can be felt on every level of society. That was the case with the

Karelian separation from Finland as well as with the Partition of India. Though Karelian women did not fight on the battlefield or all the Indian women were not present when the British left India after having divided it, their lives would never be the same. Their lives were irrevocably altered.

There are two compelling questions. First of all, why do people write what they write? And secondly, how much do their experiences reflect in their writing? Doubtlessly, some write for the purpose of processing their experiences. Maybe their pain is lessened in expressing it. Moreover, partition literature appears to stem from a deep seated root in a person's psyche. Each one of the authors selected for this study was born before or around the time of the Partitions and their writing is therefore, to a great extent, motivated, or even coloured, by their personal experiences. Therefore, this study examines the theme of gender politics in order to examine how, or to what degree, women's empowerment, the concept of separation and isolation and the role of women are manifested in the narratives chosen for this study.

### **5.5.1 Women's Empowerment during Partition**

According to Svetlana Fernandes, women's empowerment can be defined as "a state of being whereby a woman has control over her life, her body and wherein she is able to take decisions for herself and stand by them" (*Women Empowerment in India* 147). Prior to the two Partitions in question, many countries already had achieved female suffrage, including Finland. Indian women would have to wait for the right to vote until after the Partition in 1947. However, with or without the enfranchisement, the role divisions then were more clear than today. Most women had accepted their societal roles and sought no change, yet some were forced by circumstances to step into roles that had not belonged to them before the Partitions.

Fernandes' earlier definition for women's empowerment suggests that women should have had at least some control over their minds and bodies, however, one is left to wonder what kind of autonomy women actually did have. To what extent was any choice actually their own or was patriarchy the ultimate source of their choices? This is a relevant consideration for both India and Finland.

Unlike so many novels written about the Partition, Bhisham Sahni's narrative *Tamas* does not start with a nostalgic account of his childhood and the 'good old days' when the Hindus and the Muslims lived tolerantly with each other. Obviously, each one's motives for writing are different. As was suggested earlier, many authors have admitted that the recounting of their stories has helped them process the horrors they saw and experienced. In Sahni's case, he was already an adult at the time of the Partition. He was there to take part "in the *prabhat pheries* described in his novel." He was there "when the stone throwing began," (Bhalla, *Partition dialogues* 112).

*Tamas* is Sahni's riveting description of the delicate nature of the communal relations before the Partition. A community that had lived harmoniously, accommodating and tolerating each other, had its peace suddenly and violently disrupted when a carcass of a pig was left on the steps of a mosque. In the beginning of the narrative, the reader is introduced to two of the main protagonists: Nathu and Murad Ali. Nathu is a chamar, a low caste leather worker and Murad Ali is a Muslim politician. Murad Ali's act of deliberate religious offense serves as a catalyst to increase the rate of deterioration of the social cohesion that had existed among the diverse neighbourhood. Earlier, Murad Ali had paid Nathu to kill a pig and send it to the local veterinarian. Allegedly, the veterinarian needed it for an experiment. Nathu gladly received the payment of five rupees for the slaughter of the pig, thinking it

would be an easy assignment. However, the act of actual killing was a task that required persistence and ingenuity.

Murad Ali uses his political status to manipulate people's religious feelings; their religious pride. Being a Muslim, he is well aware of the aversion Muslims had to pigs. He also knows that this incident will escalate the unrest and the riots. Yet, he sees the expediency of such an encounter to achieve the political goals of the Muslim League. As one of the results the 1947 departure of the British, the Muslim League demanded their own country, suspecting that they would not have a voice in a country with Hindu leadership. *Tamas* is a narrative that describes the volatile nature of the situation. At the start of the narrative, Murad Ali is seen instigating communal conflict, and in the end, he is on the peace bus shouting slogans of communal unity and harmony. At times, hunger for power and greed for success manifests itself shamelessly in people's manoeuvres as they align their political ambitions for the most benefit.

Besides *Tamas* being an example of politicians and their cunning schemes to manipulate people, it can also be used to question the legitimacy of women's agency. Sahni points out the seemingly indifferent attitude of the British Deputy Commissioner, who is evidently more interested in the historical artefacts of Taxila than the communal conflict ravaging the country. Richard's dialogues with his wife Liza seem condescendingly simple, both toward his wife and toward Indians with his gross generalisations about their stereotypical characteristics. According to one of their conversations, the Deputy Commissioner was not pressed to stop the communal fighting. He tells his wife Liza how the Hindus and the Muslims "In the name of religion they fight one another; in the name of freedom they fight against us." Liza replies, "Don't try to be too clever, Richard. I also know a thing or two. In the name of

freedom they fight against you, but in the name of religion you make them fight one another. Isn't that right?" (50). Richard goes on to say, "It is not we who make them fight. They fight of their own accord." Liza probes further, "You can stop them from fighting, Richard. After all they are from the same racial stock. Didn't you say so?" Condescendingly, Richard answers his wife, "Darling, rulers have their eyes only on differences that divide their subjects, not on what unites them" (51). Sometime later, during another conversation, Richard again justifies his non-intervention. He casually comments to his wife, "Will it be less horrid if they stopped fighting among themselves and joined hands to attack me, to shed my blood?" (146). Such an insouciant attitude made Richard's representation of the Crown seem heartless and callous.

Finally, the incident that shocked Richard into action was the mass suicide in Rawalpindi district.

Harnam Singh and his wife Banto owned a tea shop. They were the only Sikh family in a Muslim village. Their son lived in another village and their daughter had married and moved to Thoa Khalsa. Even after the unrest began, Harnam and Banto decided to stay. They trusted their Muslim neighbours. However, one day, their good friend Karim Khan came by, and without stopping said, "Things have taken a bad turn, Harnam Singh. Your welfare lies in leaving the place. . . . Local people will not do you any harm but it is feared that marauders may come from outside. We will not be able to stop them" (216). Thus, the old couple abandoned everything familiar and fled, with only the clothes they were wearing, Harnam's double-barreled gun, some money and a few of her ornaments. While Harnam and Banto ran for their lives, their daughter Jasbir, along with her fellow Sikhs in Thoa Khalsa were preparing the gurdwara for the attack. "The atmosphere in the gurdwara was as solemn as water-

laden clouds" (231), and though the British cantonment was close, there were no British officers to control the situation.

Jasbir Kaur had been married in Thoa Khalsa. She "had inherited from her father the intensely devotional frame of mind" (247) and was one of the first ones to jump into the well to commit suicide rather than be captured by the rival community. Her parents had run for shelter, while Jasbir chose to fight to save her and her communities honour.

In "Community, State and Gender," Urvashi Butalia posits a question about women's agency as opposed to their victimhood. She interviewed Basant Kaur, a survivor from Thoa Khalsa, about the women who jumped into the well. The villagers, including Basant Kaur, had discussed the best course of action, and it appears that the decision was left to the women. At this juncture, one could point out the obvious role of patriarchy in the upbringing of girls into women. The internalisation starts from a young age. Children are taught the societal rules and expectations. These norms are ingrained in both genders. They grow up knowing their place in society. Boys learn from their fathers and elders how to behave around girls and women. Thus, the idea of male superiority is implanted as soon as the boy can understand what goes on around him. He imitates and learns from those close to him. It is possible that such established beliefs led the women of Thoa Khalsa to voluntarily jump in the well to preserve the honour of their families and religion. Perhaps they were conditioned since birth to do that which the society deems honourable. However, as Butalia does point out, the choice those women made makes one wonder whether they were acting in their own best interest or on behalf of the community (WS15). Yet, for many women those two options were possibly one and the same. Some might see the women's act of mass suicide as a violent act in itself; a

violent act which has been covered up by suggestions of valour and martyrdom. Society chooses to see it thus: "their act of offering themselves up for death becomes an honourable one, not only because they have 'saved' themselves from conversion to the other religion, but also because by doing so, they have saved the community from dishonour and dilution of its purity, which could have happened only through them" (WS16). Was their death by their own hand sanctioned in the name of tradition or communal honour? Was suicide in this case considered a noble act, like honour killings and the bygone custom of sati? Some seem to suggest that the jumping into the well was voluntary, but within which framework? Unfortunately, during the unrest that surrounded the Partition of 1947, their own men were unable to protect them, or ensure them that death would be easy and painless, like little Ranna was told by Dost Mohammed in Sidhwa's *Cracking India*. Rather, for women, torture, possible mutilation and agony would have been guaranteed. Did they have an option to fight back or was self-defence and escape their only route? Had patriarchy so raised these women that the only way of escape was suicide? Therefore, was it for that reason that the women decided to take their fate in their own hands? Rather than wait and let the enemy decide their fate for them, they jumped into the well and thus sealed their memory as martyrs of their faith.

In *Partition Dialogues*, Krishna Sobti and Alok Bhalla discuss Sahni's *Tamas* and his treatment of women in his work. According to Bhalla, Sahni "deals with the fate of women with sensitivity" (*Partition Dialogues* 161). Sobti adds by saying that, people who had to leave "had an established sense of themselves in the place where they lived, and were well-settled in their own homes or *subas*" (161). She further comments even on the women jumping into the well (*Tamas* 293). "The scene . . . was written with such restraint that it wasn't sensational. It made one weep, but it didn't

arouse one's desire for revenge. It's important not to appeal to one's aggressive instincts, not to arouse one's anger. A less mature novelist could have faltered" (*Partition Dialogues* 161). For Sahni, writing *Tamas* was not an exercise of exorcism. Rather, he said to Alok Bhalla in an interview that "Perhaps I merely wanted to recollect my past" (Bhalla, "Objectifying Troubling Memories").

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* gives us a slightly different focus on the Partition. Usually, the stories we read are filled with violent behaviour from one community toward another. Anil Sehrawat has pointed out in his article "Love and Sacrifice in the Time of Partition: A Study of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*," that Singh has not focused on the graphic presentation of communal and gender violence. Rather, against the backdrop of political manipulations and communal hatred, he has highlighted a different emotion, that of love and sacrifice. Yet his depiction of the Partition of India in 1947 and the events surrounding it is realistically bold (*American International Journal* 128-130).

In *Train to Pakistan*, the reader is introduced to the villagers of Mano Majra, a small village in the remote reaches of the frontier. It "has always been known for its railway station" (3), as it has the last train station before the Pakistani border. The very heart of the village beats with the rhythm of the daily train. The villagers are very conscious of the train. The early morning mail train driver blows the whistle to wake up the village. "The mullah at the mosque knows that it is time for the morning prayer" (4). Then, "By the time the 10:30 morning passenger train from Delhi comes in, life in Mano Majra has settled down to its dull daily routine." In the afternoon, when "the midday express goes by, Mano Majra stops to rest." and with the approaching "evening passenger from Lahore comes in, everyone gets back to work again." Finally, "When the goods train steams in, they say to each other, 'There is the

goods train.' It is like saying goodnight" (5). Thus, the train is Mano Majra's connection to the rest of the world.

However, Khushwant Singh has demonstrated the tragic metamorphosis of the meaning of the motif of the train in *Train to Pakistan*. That which was the epitome of peaceful and harmonious existence in the village becomes a stage for unfathomable atrocity. It unsettles the normal life in the village.

Early in September the time schedule in Mano Majra started going wrong. Trains became less punctual than ever before and many more started to run through the night. Some days it seemed as though the alarm clock had been set for the wrong hour. . . . Goods trains had stopped running altogether, so there was no lullaby to lull them to sleep. Instead, ghost trains went past at odd hours between midnight and dawn, disturbing the dreams of Mano Majra (81).

Twice, throughout the narrative, a ghost train arrives from Pakistan full of corpses. These trains bring along an eruption of communal violence to a village that had remained shielded against it by the determined efforts of this small community. Yet, they were helpless when faced by marauding masses from other villages who brought with them thoughts of hatred and revenge. Neighbours suspecting each other and getting caught in the rumours of communal frenzy elsewhere. Thus, the train becomes a symbol of division and death to those who previously embraced it as a symbol of peace, solidarity and continuity.

In the midst of his partition narrative of horror and tragedy, Singh has highlighted an unexpected human element: love. The two main protagonists have been given love interests. They are young girls who are unaware of the power they hold over these men. Without realising it, they are indirectly responsible for the

outcome of the narrative. One of the protagonists is Juggut Singh, a Sikh 'badmash' (a trouble maker), whose liaison is the blind Muslim weaver's daughter, Nooran.

Defying a court order that forbids him to leave the village after sunset (12), Juggut has a rendezvous with Nooran in the field outside the village. While there, they hear gun shots. Fearing her father will be alarmed, Nooran wants to rush home. On the way to the village, they catch sight of the perpetrators. It is Malli and his men.

Unfortunately, Juggut cannot testify against them. Doing so he would directly reveal his whereabouts at the time of the murder. By disclosing that he saw Malli, he would be incriminating himself. Yet, he chooses not to expose Nooran to her father or to the village. That silence costs him his freedom. Obviously, since Juggut was the socially determined suspect in the murder of Ram Lal, the Hindu money lender, who is killed by a group of dacoits led by Malli. He is now accused of murder. Nooran's testimony could clear him of any guilt. However, rather than bring open shame to her and her father by telling the police where he was at the time of the murder, he lies and is arrested. Thus, it is one of Juggut and Nooran's clandestine meetings that lands him in jail. In order to control the situation, without knowing the facts or having any witnesses, Hukum Chand, the magistrate and deputy commissioner of the district, orders the police to arrest Juggut. The evidence against him is his reputation and a set of broken bangles found in his courtyard.

The relationship between Juggut and Nooran reaches across the prohibitive religious lines. According to custom and society, a Muslim weaver's daughter should not marry a Sikh peasant. This alliance challenges the typically patriarchal hegemonic order. They cross age-old religious boundaries. Their liaison would not have had scope in times of peace in a small rural village, but it found some room for existence

in the tumultuous times of 1947. So often, during times of war or unrest, the traditional norms and standards seem to break or be challenged.

The other protagonist with a love interest is Hukum Chand. He is an older government official who has come to control the situation at this frontier village. Soon after his arrival in Mano Majra, he is entertained by a musical performance of a group of gypsies. As instructed by the sub-inspector earlier, the leader of the group leaves a young girl with Hukum Chand. Unexpectedly, his lecherous advances are interrupted by the sound of gun shots that ring through the air. They are the same shots that Juggut and Nooran hear in the field.

Iqbal, is yet another prominent character in the narrative. He is a communist social worker who just arrived to Mano Majra by train, having been sent there by his communist party, the People's Party of India (68). As Mano Majra is considered a vital point for refugee movements, it needs to be protected. Any trouble would prove disastrous. However, he is an outsider, and therefore, a person of interest. He is suspected by everyone, especially, as his name is common to three different communities: "He could be a Muslim, Iqbal Mohammed. He could be a Hindu, Iqbal Chand, or a Sikh, Iqbal Singh" (32). This ambivalence eventually results in his incarceration. Iqbal asks Bhai Meet Singh, the old caretaker of the gurdwara, "And would you mind looking after my things while I am away?" He goes on to comment about the ludicrous nature of this arrest: "They are arresting me for something. They do not know themselves for what" (56). Sheepishly, the two policemen suggest Iqbal not blame them, but rather, clear the issue with the magistrate, who had ordered the police to arrest him as a suspect. The fact that Iqbal was obviously innocent was of no consequence. He had arrived before the murder, at the same time, and on the same train, as a police party and the sub-inspector of police.

Singh's narrative appears to suggest that neither Nooran nor Haseena realize the role they play in the development of the storyline. Indirectly, they set in motion the events that eventually save the lives of hundreds of Muslims. Unaware of their effect on the situation, these young girls held the power to influence the outcome. Evidently, they did not plan and act independently from the social construct of patriarchy. Their characters were allowed in the narrative to add a human element to the men who are seen to perpetuate the social roles which are established by patriarchy. Therefore, it could be said that these girls lacked specific agency to make calculated decisions in order to affect the scenario. Rather, their roles facilitate the good-heartedness and benevolence that was at times manifested during the Partition and the violence surrounding it. A good example of such humaneness is seen in Hukum Chand. The reader is made privy to the changes that take place in him when he realizes that Haseena is much like his daughter:

She was singing a song he knew well; he had heard his daughter humming it:

*In the breeze is flying*

*My veil of red muslin*

*Ho Sir, Ho Sir.*

Hukum Chand felt uneasy. He took another whisky and dismissed his conscience. Life was too short for people to have consciences. He started to beat time to the song by snapping his fingers and slapping his thighs to each Ho Sir, Ho Sir. (29-30)

When the situation between the different religious communities in the village becomes increasingly volatile with the incoming Sikh refugees, the Sikh leaders of the village decide to send the Muslims of Mano Majra to a refugee camp in order to keep them safe. Thus, both Nooran and Haseena must also leave. At first, Hukum Chand's

attitude toward the escaping Muslims is very nonchalant. When he is told about the Sikhs' plan to attack the refugee train and send a trainload of corpses to Pakistan, he instructs the Inspector Sahib: "'Well, Inspector Sahib, let them kill,' said Hukum Chand wearily. 'Let everyone kill. Just ask for help from other stations and keep a record of the messages you send. We must be able to prove that we did our best to stop them.'" (*Train* 163). However, as he grasps the gravity of the situation and the danger Haseena is in as a Muslim, Hukum Chand "sank back in his chair. He covered his face with his hands. He beat his forehead gently with this clenched fist. He tugged at his hair as if he could pull ideas out of his brain" (166). Thinking of the two prisoners (Juggut and Iqbal), he devises a plan that might save Haseena, and without realising it, all the Muslims of Mano Majra. Thus, both Juggut and Iqbal, are released.

Hukum Chand counted on Juggut's genuine affection for Nooran. He knew that, given the chance, Juggut would try to save her, even by sacrificing himself. He was correct, "Jugga's immediate concern was the fate of Nooran" (173). Especially, after he heard that she was carrying his child. At this stage of the narrative, Hukum Chand seems to sacrifice his patriarchal position of authority at the altar of love. His mind is consumed with thoughts about the girl. He could not fathom why he had let her go. "If only she were here in the rest house with him, he would not bother if the rest of the world went to hell. But she was not here; she was in the train. He could hear its rumble. Hukum Chand slid off his chair, covered his face with his arms and started to cry. Then he raised his face to the sky and began to pray" (188). Ultimately, in the end of the narrative, both Hukum Chand and Juggut sacrifice themselves: Hukum Chand is broken at the thought of Haseena and Juggut literally sacrifices himself to save Nooran. Juggut's act of heroism saves, not only Nooran, but unbeknownst to him, also Haseena, along with a trainload of Muslim refugees.

It is remarkable how, in the midst of unspeakable tragedies, once in a while, one can find compassion and good-heartedness. The final pages of Singh's narrative demonstrate the possibility of change in a man's heart. Truly, at times, good does prevail over evil.

As has been said earlier, a few of the primary texts have used child narrators, or have told the story from a child's point of view. It seems that children have more freedom to question or challenge the ideas of patriarchy in society. Both Laila Hietamies and Eeva Kilpi employed this technique in their narratives. Kilpi's autobiographical trilogy traces her own life's journey from childhood to youth. Her narratives are a vivid description of a child's mind full of questions, doubts and fears as she saw the raging war and the two separate evacuations of Finnish Karelians into different regions of Finland. Hietamies uses the voice of a 7-year-old Laura to tell her particular stories. Laura's father died on the battlefield. Now she lives with her mother in a village which has only women and the elderly. In her innocence, Laura questions everything. She voices doubts and fears that adults are not allowed to ask and ideas that might sound childish and unpatriotic. For example, she has heard the word *Syväri* so many times in relation to a death of someone she loves, that in Laura's mind, *Syväri* literally means 'death' (*Hylätyt talot* , 22–26). Yet, it is only a lake in the Karelian Isthmus where much of the heavy fighting took place.

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* is also narrated from a child's point of view. Sidhwa herself was a 7-year-old child at the time of the Partition. Her Parsee family lived in Lahore. Being a child and a Parsee afforded Sidhwa the license to question the communal upheaval which took place prior to the actual Partition. Apparently, children begin their life's journey without prejudices. Inadvertently, they are taught societal rules and expectations by their parents, community and religious teachers.

Unfortunately, most children also learn the expected prejudices as negative attitudes and prejudices are passed on from one generation to another. Lenny "became aware of the religious differences." As children grow, they are taught to notice differences and make them an issue. She learned the concept of 'the Other' very early in life and she expresses her confusion about the situation, "It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves—and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all-encompassing Ayah—she is also a token. A Hindu" (101). Ayah and her admirers are the last bastion of harmony while the different communities brace themselves for hostilities. When the Muslims come looking for the Hindu Ayah, Ice-candy-man deceives Lenny to disclose Ayah's hiding place in the house. Knowing that Lenny cannot lie, Ice-candy-man takes advantage of her innocence. After Ayah is gone, throughout the rest of the narrative, Lenny keeps blaming herself: "I am the monkey-man's charmed monkey, the trained circus elephant, the snake-man's charmed cobra, an animal with conditioned reflexes that cannot lie..." (195).

### **5.5.2 Role of Women in Partition Narratives**

A gendered reading of *Cracking India* allows us to appreciate the few strong women that are brought out in the narrative. Through the eyes of the yet religiously and socially un-biased Lenny we are introduced to her Mother, Electric-Aunt and Godmother who use their affluent background to look for Ayah after she has been abducted by Ice-candy-man. However, Lenny's description of the dealings of these two women often brings humour into the story. In her childish credulity, Lenny connects Mother and Electric-Aunt's nightly trips to the burning of Lahore. She sees the kerosene in the car and her conclusion is that her Mother and Electric-Aunt are burning down the city. No one expected women to have such agency at that time. It

was incredible even to Lenny's limited understanding. Nevertheless, it seems that Mother and Electric-Aunt are challenging the societal boundaries of that which is acceptable. Finally, Godmother explains to Lenny that "Mummy and your aunt rescue kidnapped women. When they find them, they send them back to their families or to the Recovered Women's Camps" (251). The Parsee background of these women affords them relative freedom and courage to help women who have been abducted. Godmother also is shown to be an influential member of society. Over the years, she has built a "network of espionage" around Lahore. "It is in her nature to know things: to be aware of what's going on around her" (222). These women are strong and independent. Their clandestine attempts to help rescued women, as well as to find Ayah, is not characteristic of the role of women at that time. Their open meddling in the affairs of patriarchy was not readily tolerated. Nevertheless, Sidhwa has given them space to exercise their individuality in a society where patriarchal norms are usually strictly upheld. As one reads this narrative, one has to decide whether to look at these women as usurpers in a man's world or agents of change enabled by the chaotic reality of the Partition.

Apparently, though patriarchy still exercises its control over women and their behaviour within most communities in India, the events of Partition resulted in many Indian women being forced to step outside their domestic realm, as did Mother and Electric-Aunt in *Cracking India*. Yet, on a more personal level, according to Menon and Bhasin, in *Borders and Boundaries* (2007), it is stated that "many women claimed that before partition they were living lives within the domestic realm, but one effect of Partition was that circumstances, economic necessity and the need to rebuild homes and futures pushed women of all classes into earning or supplementing family incomes" (205). Women had to learn to survive and to help their families move on

after the basic foundations of their existence had been shaken. To rebuild their lives from practically nothing required often the financial input of the women as well. This kind of economic necessity gave many girls an opportunity to attend school, especially in the disciplines of nursing and primary education (206). The text also points out that "Karuna Chanana's 1993 study of family survival strategies post-1947 notes how Partition narrowed the physical space available to women, but enlarged their social space, so that traditional seclusion and marriage practices were changed, but also educational and employment chances; ..." (207). Thus, one can see that a woman's often involuntary and forcibly necessitated encroachment into the male realm was an irreversible result of the Partition.

Even so, the internalisation of cultural and social restrictions or boundaries over a long period of time often does result in self-imposed control of one's behaviour. Much like the learned self-censorship of the war-time Finns, the Indian woman has internalized the patriarchal attitudes toward women. It is also mentioned that Bibi Inder Kaur who, after having successfully boarded a ship from Karachi to Bombay, as her family escaped Karachi before the Partition violence broke out, thought about herself "I thanked god that my girls were unharmed and that my honour was intact. I boarded the boat and thought now even if the boat sinks I don't care, I'm not worried" (209). Urvashi Butalia suggests the same in her article "Community, State and Gender: On Women's Agency during Partition," that "many feminists assert today that women are essentially non-violent, . . .". Through Kaur's peaceful happiness in seeing her girls safe and her own 'honour was intact', one can observe a passive contentment in her attitude. Her anxious activity ceased as soon as she found her daughters. The patriarchal order was restored. She is a mother and thus her world revolves around her children. Butalia comments further on women and their place in

society, "that in communal strife they are at the receiving end of violence as its victims, it is their homes that are destroyed, their bodies violated, their men killed and they are left with the task of rebuilding the community" (WS13). Yet, if the opportunity to avenge themselves stared them in the face, many would possibly act on it in order to take revenge in some measure on the 'other'. Yet, there seem to be hardly any narratives where women took part in communal violence.

A gendered reading of partition literature also presents an opportunity to juxtapose the treatment of women in fiction in relation to the events in Finland during the WWII and the Independence of India. In Finland, especially in Finnish Karelia, during the Winter War of 1939, and the ensuing Continuation War, many villages were left without men. They had gone to war. Especially, during the Continuation War, after the majority of Karelians returned to Karelia, many villages were called 'women's villages' because there were no men. Women ploughed the fields and planted the potatoes on their own. However, they found strength in numbers. Thus, together they ploughed one field at a time and tried to rebuild Karelia that had been destroyed during the Winter War. There were many who had returned 'home' only to find their homes decimated by bombs. Nevertheless, the women pulled together to find places for all to live. Life was difficult, but they had decided to, and were determined to, survive. Yet, they anxiously waited for any of the men to come home on furlough. For some tasks, they lacked the required skill and strength.

Thus, most women were left with a great responsibility to not only take care of the home and bring up the children, but also to step outside of that which was familiar and comfortable. The same happened in most countries ravaged by war: for example, in the United States and England during the World Wars. Women were forced into man's work and thus enable themselves, as a gender or a class of people, to fit into the

new roles that the situation compelled them to fill. Inadvertently, many women found themselves empowered. The seemingly devastating circumstance had provided an occasion for some women to move toward more independent existence. However, such independence occurred mostly on an individual level. Still today, as a whole, the female gender continues the fight for freedom from the power of patriarchy.

In Finland, the burden of the family and the community which fell on women played out somewhat differently as compared to India. It was not the honour of the family or the community that was forced on women, but rather the physical survival of the family and the family farm when the man was gone. Women were forced into the public sphere. Most men were at war and many had already died. Women were left to care for the property. They found themselves performing both their own domestic duties as well as the jobs required to continue the war efforts. The home front, including everything from farms to knitting woollen socks for the soldiers to gun factories, was operated by women. And most often, it was a choice forced upon them by patriotism and duty.

Laila Hietamies' three novels are a part of five book series about a small village in Karelia. The novels span from the 1920s to the end of the Continuation War in 1945. As a whole, the books cover a continuing fictional account of the lives of the people in the village of Suontaa in Karelia. The narrative of the third novel in the series *Hylätyt talot autiot pihat* (*Abandoned houses deserted yards*) starts in 1944 when the villagers have returned to their village and are rebuilding. Much of the novel describes the events that took place in Vyborg, which used to be a vibrant city full of life and culture. Now it becomes the stage of one of the biggest tragedies in the history of Finland. After fighting for three and a half years to protect Vyborg, Karelia and the independence of Finland, losing Vyborg was a heavy loss to Finland. The

feeling of nostalgia that rose from the reality of losing Vyborg is expressed in the narrative when Vainio, one of the soldiers retreating from Vyborg, sees the Finnish flag being lowered in the clock tower in the centre of town. Vainio asks his fellow soldier: "What time is it?" He wanted to remember the moment when Finland lost Vyborg. He had seen the last Finnish soldiers cross the bridge as they left the city. Again he looks at the clock tower, but now a red Russian flag is being raised. Vainio lowers his head and his friend Kyösti wipes his eyes (238). Vyborg is lost. Hietamies has excelled in capturing the essence of loss in her narrative. The loss of loved ones, home, community, livelihood, as well as the land. It signalled that the end of the war had begun.

The next novel in the series, *Vierailta poluilla, oudoilla ovilla* (*On unknown paths, at strange doors*), is a description of small people and their afflictions in the midst of war. In this narrative, the villagers of a Karelian town called Suontaa have been scattered around Finland. According to the Moscow Armistice which Finland signed with Russia in September 1944, those Karelians who had returned to Karelia in the beginning of the Continuation War were forced to leave their homes again. This time permanently. *Vierailta poluilla, oudoilla ovilla* continues to follow the lives of the same main protagonists as their situations change. Some were fortunate to be placed in homes where they were welcomed with understanding and compassion, while others faced prejudice and hatred. As was the case with one of the protagonists, Hilikka, and her daughters. They had been placed in a small shack owned by a man who despised them. He was a lonely old man who did not trust them (21-22). Furthermore, as each one settled into their new life, the evacuees still carried within them a constant worry and uncertainty about the their loved ones who were retreating before the ever advancing Russian troops.

Martta, who is one of the main protagonists, is now living in Mynämäki, in a cabin, with her friend Helmi Elisa and Laura. The owners of the small dwelling given to Martta and Helmi Elisa are farmers who have been welcoming and kind to the evacuees. Although they are fairly comfortably situated, Martta constantly dreams of returning to Karelia. When the hostess offers them salad with their meal, Martta laughs. In Karelia, they did not eat salad, but it does taste nice. She is convinced that as soon as they return home she will grow it there also. However, all of a sudden, she becomes aware of how everyone is quietly looking at her. In her self-consciousness, she finally realises the implication of her words. To return where? The day before they had heard on the radio about the Russian offensive against the Finnish troops in Tali and Ihantala. The Soviets had broken through the Finnish lines. Now, more than ever, everyone wished for peace. But, peace, at what cost? No, Martta realises that there is no turning back. Life will go on elsewhere, on unknown paths and at strange doors (30-32).

The name of the novel *Vierailta poluilla, oudoilla ovilla* (*On unknown paths, at strange doors*) describes the general mindset of those Karelians who had to leave their homes. They would have to manage, start building their lives again, from the beginning. They were to tread on unknown paths and go through strange doors. The uncertainty of every-day existence was a constant companion to them. Martta's husband Captain Aarne has been badly wounded and she has come to Mikkeli to be closer to the military hospital. One evening she is talking with Mrs. Harju, with whom she is staying. These two women, whom fate has brought together, discuss their common feelings and fears brought on by the war. Their lives have been altered completely, including that of their husbands. They both have noticed the difference in them. Recently, Mrs. Harju's husband had come home on furlough, but since he

returned to the battlefield, she has not received even one letter. Martta and Mrs. Harju agree that something is wrong with him. They were happy before the war. Now their son is seven and the daughter is five. When Mr. Harju left, everything was clear. However, now when he comes home, nothing is the same. Either he has changed or she has. Martta asks cautiously, if he had ...? Mrs. Harju's words confirm it. He has had an affair, with an older Lotta. Mrs. Harju admits that she was very hurt. Her next statement encapsulates everything that is wrong with people and society after a war has devastated it. People change, they drift apart, and relationships, as well as marriages, disintegrate. Mrs. Harju comments on how war does that also. It separates families. Regular Finnish fathers, brothers, sons went to war. Now they come back unfortunate and fearful nervous wrecks who cannot sleep because they fear nightmares. And the wives and mothers are supposed to live with these men, and forget and understand. It is not right. (146). Martta concludes that the war had changed them all. Only one thing is sure: Nothing would ever be same (147). Such is the mindset of the Karelians whose lives were the most affected by the war and whose homes were severed from them in the final Partition of Karelia from Finland.

Hietamies' third novel is *Edessä elämän virrat* (*The rivers of life ahead*). This part of the sequence takes place in 1945. The war is over, but life is still very difficult. 1945 is a year characterised by meagreness and poverty in Finland, and even more so in the lives of the evacuated Karelians. In this narrative, Aarne is still in the hospital. Laura lives in Turku with Martta, and it appears that she is adjusting to her new life. However, in school, boys are cruel to her. She is not accepted because she is a Karelian. She lives in a dream world and her comfort is sitting by a tall tree by the river. Her imagination is her only friend. At times, she finds it difficult to separate the two worlds: reality and dreams. Laura's process of dealing with all the change left her

in turmoil full of self-inspection and loneliness. Finally, after an accident, where Laura almost drowned in the river, Martta and Aarne realise how far into her dream world Laura has drifted in her attempt to manage life. It seems that often historical events are discussed and examined from the point of view of society as a whole, excluding the role and contribution of women, as well as of children. Over the years, many have attempted to bring to the forefront the experiences and the suffering of women as an important aspect of partition narratives. Furthermore, children and their problems of processing everything they hear, see and experience during traumatic events are largely overlooked. Laura's inner agitation is an example of that.

Aarne and Martta have drifted apart during the years of separation. They both have changed. While still in the hospital, Aarne wonders how he will adjust to civilian life after almost five years at war, as his mind is plagued by the things he saw and did during that time. He had left home young and strong and now he is returning old and sick. The dreams he had about the future had been crushed. Now there is nothing left. Young Laura is not the only one with an inner turbulence to process. Aarne finds the senselessness of death overwhelming. Young boys have lost their childhood. Some say that war makes boys into men. But what kind of a man is left: Simo lost his eyesight, Kyösti lost his arm and Arttu lost his nerve. He had seen fear in a man's eyes. Is that what it is to become a man? Is fear reserved only for women? (116-121). Aarne has his family, yet his process of healing is a battle for him to fight alone. A thousand times, his mind has replayed the fear he felt when he was unable escape from behind the enemy lines; when he saw a Russian throw a grenade into a clinic full of wounded soldiers and friends. Again and again, he thinks what he could have done differently to save his men. How can he ever explain these feelings to his family? They will not understand. They were not there.

The adjustments people were forced to make required unimaginable mental strength. Throughout this study, it has become more and more evident that the partition generation, both in Finland and India, has been forced to do just that, to adjust. As for the villagers of Suontaa, so for the millions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs who lost their homes and lands, remembering their past with others, who suffered like them, brings some calm and comfort to their new existence.

### **5.5.3 Concept of Separation and Isolation in Partition Narratives**

At the time of the Partition, the prevailing form of feminism was the liberal one. It was the time to fight for the basic rights of women. However, the blatant abandonment of many women to their fate, suggests a question about the efficacy of this ideology. To think about the farmer's wife in Finland who had become responsible for her family and farm while her husband was gone; or the mother who buried her husband and three sons who all had died in battle; or the Sikh women who jumped into a village well in order to escape a fate worse than death at the hands of the marauding Muslim men; or the Muslim women who were abducted, raped and made to bear children of their Hindu kidnappers, and one is left to wonder if those women were given a choice? Did the Finnish woman want to take charge of the farm? Surely she did not want to bury her loved ones. Or did the Sikh women truly have a choice to whether or not to jump in the well? Besides, it is doubtful that the Muslim women sought to be abducted. Yet, such women are too often judged for having stepped outside of the norm, for no fault of their own. However, the Partition left them no choice. This begs the question whether these women were agents or victims in their situations?

Unfortunately, the fight for equality is often not evenly distributed or executed. Where were the women's rights advocates when women were abducted, or when they were brought back to their families who rejected them for having been defiled by the other community? It is overwhelming to consider that though the earliest victories for women's equality and liberation, as well as voting rights, were achieved already in the early nineteenth century; women were still the victims of such violence and suffering during the Partition. These few narratives, which have been studied during this research, do bear witness to how the reputation of a husband, family and community weighed heavily on the shoulders of the women.

Over and over again, a gendered reading of partition narratives brings up the question of choice. As feminism, in general, struggles to achieve equality for women, it also enforces certain common expectations on those who adhere to its tenets. Feminism, today, appears to dictate the acceptable forms of freedom for women; women have 'freedom' as long as they remain within the confines of the feminist ideology.

Furthermore, during the Partition, many thought that these women chose to be abducted. They were blamed for having willingly left with their kidnappers, as if they had wished for a fate worse than death. Those rehabilitated women not only suffered physically in the hands of their abductors, but, as Urvashi Butalia also draws our attention to, the anguish some of them felt when their welcome home was their own men grinding "their teeth and their faces would fill up with religious pride and righteousness" when they said, "Shame on these women." She goes on to say,

But had they ever tried to understand the predicament of these women: an oppressed woman, one who has always lived in purdah, one who has, before

this, not looked at a man other than her father and her brothers, and who now believes herself to be a loose woman, a bad woman, because she has lived with another man for months, she has lost her honour . . . who will take her back? ("Community, State and Gender" WS-20)

It was not enough that the acclaimed protectors of those women had let them down. It was not enough that they were left with no other way of escape, save suicide. For some, even that was not within their reach. As if the abuse they experienced was not yet sufficient, now they must face even more pain for having survived their ordeal. They have no rights to live because the boundaries established for them by society have been broken. A woman's life by itself, for herself, has no value. Her existence is appreciated only if she remains as society expects to see her—pure. Dead perhaps, but unviolated.

Moreover, a woman, who survives the ordeal of her abduction, finds herself separated from her family. She is forced into isolation, both mentally and physically. At her abductor's house, she finds herself as the object of contempt of 'the Other,' while she struggles to maintain composure and fights depression and despair. Thus, she constructs a mental rampart of protection, a place where she can escape her cruel reality. However, with time, her attitude toward her situation might change. As has been said before, women adjust, especially, if they have children. They are ready to experience any amount of suffering if it is to protect them.

The physical isolation of women in Finland left them largely unprotected and an easy target for physical violence. Their vulnerability left them defenceless, particularly against sexual predators: both Russians and Finns. The war between Finland and Russia lasted for four and half years, and for the most of it, soldiers lived

in trenches in the front line. For some, the constant bombing and shooting became an overwhelming reality. The trench war left them mentally drained and scarred. They lost whatever courage they had left, and they ran. These deserters seemed to have lost also the last remains of morality and propriety. Survival and self-gratification had become their main focus. The need for instant satisfaction led to stealing food and rape. Though such lawless behaviour is common knowledge, throughout this study, it has been problematic to discover any Finnish narratives detailing such incidents. Furthermore, unlike in India, religion hardly had a part to play in the Partition of Finland. Thus, it was not the 'religious other' that women were fearful of, rather, it was the man who had given his all at the trenches, and had lost all sense of decency in the process. As was pointed out in an earlier chapter, Hietamies has included one such incident in *Hylätyt talot aitiot pihat* (*Abandoned houses deserted yards*). Martta, who is pregnant, was startled by a strange man standing near her. The smell emanating from him indicated that he was a deserter. His words confirmed it—he spoke Finnish. He was a Finnish deserter. They had nothing left to lose. If found and caught, they would be shot anyway.

Yet, regardless of the angle of one's approach to the gendering of partition narratives, it appears, that the Partition has further perpetuated patriarchal norms and standards in regards to women. Paulomi Chakraborty comments in her article "Gender, Women and Partition" how "Partition played upon gendered relationships" that make up "women's relationships to their families, to their communities, to the nation and to the state" (41). As has been mentioned earlier, much of the honour of one's family, religion, community, and even the nation, especially during the Indian Partition, rested on the shoulders of women. This connection has often affected the way a woman is viewed and valued. It has also controlled her behaviour, dress, and

education. It has dictated whether she can be seen or heard. Such a set of strict boundaries have permeated the thinking of the whole society, both male and female. Chakraborty also points out "that women often had to face violence from family to state" (44). The very patriarchy that devised the rules for society also upholds them with strict adherence to the honour of the community, and different religious communities have in place meticulous, and often harsh guidelines to enforce the rules, both within one's family and the whole community. Thus, it seems that communal honour is valued over the well-being of an individual.

At times, the preservation of that honour might take on unusually cruel and gruesome forms. Men of a family might kill their own women in order to avoid them being abducted, kidnapped, raped and converted. Undoubtedly, such action during a time of distress can easily lead to a lifetime of agonizing memories and dreams, both in the victims and the perpetrators. Even today, the practice of honour killing exists in many cultures. However, the honour killing that took place during the Partition of India was somewhat different from today's practice. The purpose of it was to protect, not to punish and save face as it is today. While not condoning such practice in any setting, one can still see a difference in the killings of then and now. Such personal tragedies, for many, have been difficult to talk about: "communities are far less willing to speak about the fact that many women were killed by their own kinsmen to 'save their honour'" (Chakraborty 44). Butalia discussed in an interview with Ajaz Ashraf for *Scroll.in*, in 2016, that neither India nor Pakistan are so interested in their history as it pertains to the Partition. She said that, "Partition was the dark side of Independence for both countries. For Pakistan, it was a birth, and therefore, *kya zaroorat padi hai* (what is the need) to remember the bloody side of that birth. In India, it marked the triumph over the British and becoming a nation of its own."

(Ashraf Interview). Thus, besides the actual day of Independence, there are no memorials or monuments to remind people of those who perished during the Partition. For many, those memories are too painful to even remember, let alone build a monument to. The history of the refugees is not recorded, and even the memory of them is becoming more obscure with each passing generation.

## **5.6 Post-Partition and Women**

Partition narratives and their portrayal of women compel one to consider the strength exhibited in the women of the Partition generation. They were resilient because they had to be, not because of an ideology. They had to adjust and move forward, or perish. These narratives leave a reader admiring those women whose foremost thought, at that time and in those circumstances, was often that of protecting themselves and their children rather than the honour of the community and the nation. It has been well said that, "All of us can and have to participate in the process of finding the meaning of feminism for ourselves" ("Some Questions on Feminism" 21).

In the process to discover one's own position in the feminist narrative, it behoves one to examine and understand the cost many women, who went before, have paid for the freedoms that are available to all today. Urvashi Butalia, points out "that women have and often do play out multiple and often overlapping identities." Some acted as women in fear of rape and abduction; some as members of a particular community trying to preserve the purity of the family and the community; some assisted in the rescue efforts, and yet others "resisted rescue, their agency was perhaps on behalf of themselves and their children, born and unborn." Nevertheless, "the women's 'heroic' steps in offering themselves up for death are valorised, while the abductions are glossed over" ("Community, State and Gender" WS-24). Seldom is

history told objectively. More often, there appears to be an underlying bias which represents the hold patriarchy exercises over national narrative.

The examination of some of the well-known Finnish and Indian partition narratives for this study seem to have discovered two different trajectories for women in these two nations. There are innumerable accounts of the tragic fate many Indian women faced having been abducted, raped, converted, and in many cases, after recovery, rejected by their own families. Such was the experience of countless women in Northern India. (Southern India was largely unaffected by the Partition violence). Their Partition experience was not over on August 15, 1947. Many of the women who had been abducted by the enemy community were forced to marry their abductors. Gradually, they grew accustomed to their isolated existence. In quiet submission, they bore children and slowly adjusted to their new life.

Unfortunately, for many, their tragedy was not yet over. Some women experienced two partitions or dislocations. First of all, when they were kidnapped, they were severed from their families and communities. Weeks, months, and sometimes even years passed before anyone came looking for them. In many cases, no one ever came. Nevertheless, those who were found, by the rescue and rehabilitation agencies, were often forcibly removed from their young children. Thus, they were dislocated, yet again. One such story is about Buta Singh. His narrative is recorded by many. Here is a version that Alok Bhalla recorded in his *Partition Dialogues* in 2006 as Krishna Sobti had related it to him. Singh's wife had been abducted and now he lived alone. After some time, during a riot, a young Muslim girl ran into his house trying to escape a mob. He allowed the girl to stay in his house for a few days. Initially, they did not speak to each other. He cooked for her and protected her. "He defended her with great courage and warned his neighbours not to harm her."

They developed a relationship and eventually married. After a while, her brothers came looking for her and insisted on taking her back to Pakistan. No amount of pleading helped. Thus, the girl was forced to leave Buta. In desperation, he followed her to Pakistan. However, her brothers refused to let her go, and the law sided with them. They also warned her not to speak to the judge on behalf of Buta. Thus, the matter was settled. Buta was distraught and finally ended his life (159–160). The girl was given no choice. It seemed to not have occurred to her that she could choose? Had she been so 'programmed' to imbibe the societal norms and rules that even the basic volition, that is every human being's right, was denied her, but its possibility was never even acknowledged!

In his compilation of short stories about the Partition of India, Bhalla has included another story of "lamentation and consolation" (Introduction xxiii). This narrative also highlights the tragedy and suffering that often accompanied many rescue and rehabilitation efforts of kidnapped women. This account is Rajinder Singh Bedi's short story "Lajwanti." In it, Bedi highlights the amalgam of acceptance and rejection while illustrating the silence victims were often forced to endure. This story is about Lajwanti and her husband, Sunderlal. Prior to her abduction, Sunderlal abused her. Everything about her enraged him. However, after she was kidnapped, he was guilt-ridden and found solace as "the secretary of the newly formed rehabilitation committee for abducted women." During Lajwanti's absence, he had been a vehement advocate of acceptance by the families of kidnapped women. Yet, even to him, when faced with the decision to finally accept Lajwanti back, the only justifiable way was to deify her. It was the only way to deal with the shame resulting from her impurity. Lajwanti found this unbearable. Sunderlal made her into an idol: "he enshrined Lajo like a golden idol in the temple of his heart and guarded her like a jealous devotee"

(42). Parvinder Mehta points out that Lajwanti's "suffering is never heard and she is marginalized through enforced muteness" ("A Will to Say or Unsay" 40). She goes on to comment that Sunderlal, by "Idolizing Lajo as a Devi, a goddess, and never touching her, deprives her of any vestigial individuality, yet gains sympathy and respect from others." Ultimately, Sunderlal is unable to challenge the societal norms of acceptability and "Lajo's recovering is not merely incidental, but also symbolically constitutive of covering shame" (42). Mehta concludes her article with a comment that "the enforced silences of women in such narratives, especially those written by women writers, attempt to decode the inaccessible stories to reveal patriarchal assumptions and question the nationalist-statist framework that denies female agency and address" (49). One is inclined to agree with Mehta in concluding that, especially in partition narratives, it is essential to find the female voice and agency and bring them to the forefront. The subaltern woman must be heard. She must be given a platform to bring to light the private and personal accounts of women and how they survived the often life-changing events during the Partition.

Not only were many women and young girls rejected by their own families after they were brought back (often forcefully) from their captivity, but so were their children. The typical purpose of the forceful abductions, rapes and conversions was to soil the purity of the other community and their religion, and not only of the women involved. Therefore, the outcome of the numerous rapes achieved their intended goal, women became pregnant. A child born from such a union would be a sign of 'pollution' and 'dilution'. Anis Kidwai was a social activist and a mother, who worked with the recovery and rehabilitation program of the Indian government. In her book *In Freedom's Shade* (2011), she reiterates the problem with the program of recovery and rehabilitation of women and girls. After having filed a missing person's report, time

would pass before the person was found on the other side of the border. Urvashi Butalia highlights the fact that "In the interim the women would often have married, or become mothers and settled in their new homes" ("Community, State and Gender" WS17). Thus, the state agencies, after having located some of these women, would face a problem. "The majority of the girls did not want to go back." They knew they had been 'soiled,' "they had lived with, married, borne children to the men of the other community, they had therefore 'diluted' the 'purity' of the community, how could they now be taken back?" (WS17). However, the safety and well-being of their children was foremost on minds of these women, and often, they chose to remain with their abductors because of their children. They had adjusted and settled into the new life with the other community. "The 'mother instinct' overruled any other option." Furthermore, those children posed yet another problem for the state. "The women could be, in many ways, 'repurified'—because they had been forced into their situations—and brought back into the family, religious and national folds, but a child of a Muslim father and Hindu mother made things more difficult" (WS18). It seemed obvious that such children should be left with their fathers. It is unfortunate that children too often pay for the actions of adults. Children who returned 'home' with their mothers invariably faced the stigma of having 'mixed' blood in them.

The treatment of the recovered women and their children of 'mixed blood' serves as reminder of another group of women who suffered tremendously due to their association with 'the Other.' John Simkin discusses the German occupation of Norway during WWII. Many Norwegian women were selected by The German SchutzStaffel (SS) to be human incubators. The SS used Norwegian women to create a blonde and blue-eyed Aryan super-race. Suitable SS officers were commanded to impregnate previously chosen Norwegian women who were considered to have 'pure

blood.' The children that were born of this union were taken to homes run by the SS. Even illegitimate children were applauded, as long as they were racially valuable. Those children were groomed to become part of the Aryan master race who would repopulate Germany. However, the WWII ended. Nazi Germany lost, and as a result, the Nazi *Lebensborn* (Spring of Life) program of 1939 was terminated and thousands of *Lebensborn* children were left to the state in Norway. They were harshly vilified by the Norwegian government. After the war, Norway's exiled pre-war leaders returned and the women who had given birth to the *Lebensborn* children were called 'German whores.' Still today, one woman remembers the harassment that she faced as a child. Simkin interviewed a woman, who wished to remain anonymous, who stated that "I don't want to be buried in a grave; I want my ashes to be scattered to the winds—at least then I won't be picked on any more (*Spartacus Educational online*). The children who were born to this program were considered German bastards. "A leading psychiatrist advised that a large proportion of the 8,000 (officially registered) children must be carrying bad genes and therefore would be mentally retarded; 'genetically bad,' he said, they 'belonged in special institutions'." Rob Sharp, who was interviewed by Simkin for his article in (*Spartacus Educational online*), comments thus on the *Lebensborn* children, "As a result, hundreds of children were forcibly incarcerated in mental institutions. Here they were often abused, raped and their skin scrubbed until it bled." Sharp also comments on the attitude of the Norwegian government by quoting a ministry of social affairs at that time, "To believe these children will become decent citizens is to believe rats in the cellar will become house pets." Many of them "never recovered from the stigma of having a German father. Some were put in mental asylums as Norwegians feared they would spread German genes and create a hostile 'fifth column'" (*Spartacus Educational online*). As was remarked earlier, it is so often

the innocent children who pay the price for the actions of adults. The case of the *Lebensborn* children was a cultivated outcome of an evil mind. One cannot even imagine the mental torture, the humiliation, and the emotional trauma those unfortunate women and children had to endure!

Anis Kidwai aptly describes the conundrum faced by so many girls after the Indian Partition was over: "These bastard children on whom the burden of shame has been foisted for all time; these adolescent girls whose essence is now only carnal hunger; these deranged young women whose whole being is a fervent appeal - as long as they live, they will remember those malignant times" (*In Freedom's Shade* 282).

Most narratives one hears about women during the Indian Partition are tragic. However, there are also some that attempt to restore one's faith in a better future for humanity. Debali Mookerjea-Leonard points out in her article "Difficult Choices: Work, Family, and Displaced Women in Partition Writings," that "often the loss of male breadwinners in inter-community violence, compelled many formerly homebound women to seek paid employment outside the home in an effort to forestall the family's economic collapse" (91). This scenario is applicable to both Finland and India. Some were compelled or forced to make a change in their lives and others saw it as an opportunity of which they gladly availed in order to change their lives toward a more personal independence. Mookerjea-Leonard also comments on "the quiet courage of women" as they took the necessary steps to ensure the survival of their families. The economic situation after the Partition made "their employment outside the home not only acceptable but also respectable" ("Difficult Choices" 92).

Earlier in this chapter, it was discussed how WWII and the subsequent Partition of Karelia from Finland brought a change in the lives of Finnish women.

They were forced to step outside of their domestic sphere. Similarly, many Indian women, whether voluntarily or by force, were placed in a situation where they acted in opposition of, or outside, their socially accepted and expected roles. Bibi Inder Kaur is an example of a woman whose life was changed forever by the Partition.

Bibi was given a chance to change her life as mentioned in *Borders and Boundaries*. At the time of her death, in 1996, Bibi "owned three houses, in Delhi, Amritsar and Dharamshala" (220). When young, she joined Miranda House college in Delhi in order to finish her education which she had started in Karachi. And her subsequent career lasted until she was 75 years old. Her "independence gave her perspective on the past and on relationships, allowed her to situate herself as a woman in a society undergoing enormous change ...". Yet, not everyone was pleased with her opportunities, including her husband. After the Partition, her husband's medical practice failed. This propelled Bibi forward in pursuit of her own independence. "For it was not that Bibi Inder Kaur met with no resistance: as she says, she needed her husband's permission even to pay her tuition fees from her own salary, but no false 'sense of obligation' kept her from her pursuit." Bibi "recognized that change was beneficial for her, but that it meant persevering, not giving up—" (222). Thus, Kaur's life is an example of social and economic change that was prompted by the Partition. Unfortunately, similar positive narratives are very few.

The trajectory for women in post-Partition Finland was rather different. Finland lost the war, yet kept her independence. However, Russia demanded Finland pay a war debt for the damages caused to Russia. Ironically, that unreasonably large war debt propelled Finland forward and helped her rapidly develop different industries. Russia demanded Finland pay \$300,000,000 in materials: for example, power stations, electric engines, locomotives, railway engines, schooners, icebreakers

and wooden houses, and so on. "Approximately 340,000 railroad carloads were needed to deliver all reparations." The last trainload crossed the border on 18 September 1952 ("Finnish war reparations," *Wikipedia*). Having exhausted her resources during the war, Finland was on the brink of extinction with such a burden. Nevertheless, the demand required a united effort. Everyone who was physically able worked to fulfil the debt. This meant that women, yet again, had to step out even further from their domestic sphere and work in factories. Thus, unlike in many other war-torn countries, where women replaced men during war, Finnish women, even after the war was over, remained in their roles outside the home in order to enable Finland to meet her financial obligations to Russia.

It appears that the outcome for women in India and Finland, in the 1940s, differed from each other due to the historical events that took place at that time. Finland was involved in a war, and as a result of men being gone, women were forced to take an active part at the home-front in preserving the nation's independence. On the other hand, in India, the religious antagonism between different communities resulted in an unimaginable physical suffering for hundreds of thousands of women. The strength and will power required for many of those women to survive throughout the horrendous ordeal were remarkable, as the protection of their children was often their foremost motivation and priority.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Today, one can observe a change in culture and in society. Women have endured pain and suffering through the ages in the hands of patriarchy, be it for honour, retribution, greed or plain malice. However, they have risen, again and again, like the phoenix from the ashes, looking forward to a better and more hopeful future.

The three Indian male authors, along with Bapsi Sidhwa, have presented a sensitive and compassionate portrayal of the experiences of people, both men and women, during the Indian Partition. Their narrations seem possibly more factual and emotionally moving than politically motivated, and they leave their audiences with feelings of empathy and compassion. The reader will close these books with an attitude of awe and respect for the resilience with which many women continued to live and look forward to the future.

The Finnish authors, whose narratives contributed to this study, have communicated the determination which propelled the Finnish Karelians to look ahead, labouring to build a future for their family in a new home surrounded by challenges and trials. Many women who lost their fathers, husbands or sons had to focus on survival, and especially the future of their children. Needless to say, love has been a strong motivator, even in the face of suffering.

In this chapter, this study has looked at partition narratives through a lens of gendered ideology and attempted to examine whether or not it has affected the worldview of those who took upon themselves to preserve the version of history which official records dismiss. Today, in many places, the feminist ideology has become a radical and violent movement that has lost sight of the fundamental struggle for political, legal and social equality for women. Furthermore, this study has tried to understand the women's liberation movement in India, where the basic right to life has very often been denied a girl child. Throughout history, undoubtedly, Indian women have not asked to be 'nominated' as "the upholders of the spiritual private life of 'traditional' India" (Ray and Basu 3). However, the fight for the rights of women in India has been long and hard, and today, fewer and fewer girls are burdened with the preservation of that traditional and spiritual private domain. More girls get educated

and are career oriented. They are allowed to get themselves educated and take up paid employment. The patriarchal system has allowed them that space.

Furthermore, in today's rapidly changing, politically charged social arena, it appears, that the more the radical elements of the feminist ideology attempt to impose their views on women, the more they give the impression that they unwittingly fall into the same monstrous system of patriarchy? Is it now the feminist voice that substitutes the dominant male one of yore? Is it not again the forceful dictate of an external voice mandating what the woman should do rather than giving her the sole responsibility of intelligently coming to her own conclusions. Thus, an individual woman does not really have a choice. A woman who does not want autonomy or independence from her husband is considered or compared to a subjugated slave. Possibly, the extreme feminists of today are not happy to do household chores, especially if there are small children involved. Therefore, to justify their own choices, they make it their mission to 'liberate' all women from breastfeeding their children and to relinquish their role as wife, mother and homemaker to more socially celebrated and independent roles. Yet, should women not have the freedom to decide if domesticity is in their lives of personal interest or not. They ought to be empowered in order that they are not so dependent upon the social system that they are unable to follow their individual desires.

As important as feminism is in terms of women's rights to individuality and freedom of choice, it seems that the few partition narratives, which were chosen for this study, have not been used as a platform to further gendered, patriarchal ideals. Rather, they have contributed to the narration of history like no official history could have done, often from a woman's perspective.

This study has provided an opportunity to better understand human suffering as it took place in individuals' lives amidst a violent Partition of India and a long war between Finland and Russia, which resulted in the slicing away of Karelia from Finland. Yet, not only has it portrayed the suffering, but also the resilience with which humanity survived, once again.

In conclusion, it does seem that one of the most important facets of feminism is, or should be, a woman's freedom of choice. Whatever form of feminism one chooses to emphasize and promote, the main focus should be choice. A woman should be able to choose her own path, her education and career. She should decide for herself if she wants to be married or be a mother. Those should be her choices. It is her life. Yet, too often those who advocate feminism do not allow opinions different from their own. This is seen more and more in society today. It seems evident, that the media has become the main promoter of what is perceived as acceptable, or expected behaviour. If a woman decides that she wants to stay at home with her children, then it should be her life choice. A home can be, and is, a workplace. Sadly, it seems to be unavoidable that a woman who chooses the career of a homemaker and a housewife is too often thought of as less valuable. She is deemed to be wasting her life spending it only on her children. The woman does have freedom of speech, but her choice is dictated by others. If her choice is not according to the majority view, then it is not the right one.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

- John McCrae (1919)

Throughout human history, nations have sought and fought for independence and sovereignty from oppressive regimes. This study has focused on two nations—India and Finland—that struggled for independence in the twentieth century. Although these two countries are geographically far apart and their cultures far removed from each other, the commonality of their struggle, the manner their terrains were torn apart, the timing, the impact of their respective wars to preserve national entity, and the effect on their women link and bring them together in a singularly unique fashion.

WWII provided both countries an opportunity to pursue or protect their independence. Finland had managed to obtain independence from the Soviet Union in 1917 and was, in 1939, forced to protect it valiantly against Russia because Joseph Stalin had attacked Finland. Due to St. Petersburg's close proximity to the Finnish border, he wanted to protect it from a possible foreign invasion through Finland. At the same time, during WWII, India was experiencing her birth pains and finally, in

1947, she achieved her independence from the British. Shashi Tharoor suggests in *The Era of Darkness*, that the fervent opposition by the Indian Nationalists, as well as the expense of WWII, further fuelled England's desire to quit India. Thus, ultimately Gandhi's Quit India Movement was brought to fruition (75).

An unfortunate result of both of these events was a Partition which affected and changed millions of people's lives. Though Finland was able to keep her independence, she was forced to cede part of Finland to the Soviet Union. Almost half a million Finnish Karelians were evacuated and had to be absorbed into other parts of Finland. They had to make a choice: either stay in Karelia and become Russian or leave and start their lives over again elsewhere in Finland.

Similarly, the Independence of India caused a massive relocation of people. The political gods had cast the dice and drawn a new boundary senselessly slicing through homes and land that had stood for generations. Overnight millions of people had to leave their familiar lives behind and relocate. Since the Partition of India was mostly affected by religion, the migration of millions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs ensued. Hindus and Sikhs living in the newly established Pakistan relocated to India and Muslims in Northern India escaped to Pakistan.

In many cases, 'escape' is the appropriate word to describe the sudden departure that took place. Due to lack of foresight, many were apprehensive to leave their homes and neighbourhoods. They would not believe that their neighbours and friends would now turn on them. For generations, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs had lived as one community. They had shared each other's joys and sorrows. But now, everything changed. Lifelong pledges of friendship were extinguished overnight and morphed into ugly displays of communal hatred.

This study examines and analyses novels and short stories written by Finnish and Indian Partition survivors. Therefore, it seems that though most of the narratives are fictional, it is reasonable to propose that they are largely based on real events. Thus, they give the reader a glance of everyday reality and overall situation in the country at the time of the Partition. Laila Hietamies and Eeva Kilpi have dedicated their lives to literature. Through their narratives they have attempted to assert their Finnish Karelian heritage. They have attempted and succeeded in reminding their reader about the past and their apprehensions, if not fears, that what happened in 1944, might happen again. Similarly, the Indian authors have succeeded in portraying the volatile situation that was so pervasive in Northern India in 1947. Alok Bhalla, Bhisham Sahni and Khushwant Singh present the male perspective of the events in their narratives, and their portrayal of the fate of many women is remarkably compassionate. Their point of view seems to support the observations recorded by Bapsi Sidhwa in her narrative.

The study is concerned with the ponderance of two principle strains of thought. The first begs to delve into investigation of up to what extent might society and culture contribute to the functioning of memory. Furthermore, how the psychological aspect affects the narrative technique of an author, and in the ensuing case to consider the manner of that effect. The assumption proposed is that culture and memory are intrinsically related to the form of storytelling. Culture affects memory; consequently, memory affects narrative.

The second deliberation put forth is to consider the role of women during the Partition, in particular their reaction and response to the deprivation and brutality they were unwillingly subjected to. At the onset of this study, it was suggested that although Finland and India are culturally and socially vastly apart, the fundamental,

primary human response to tragedy transcends those differences into an almost identical emotional reaction. The loss of a spouse, parent, child, or sibling appears to be a profound grief that arises regardless of geography, caste or religion.

Through a gendered reading of the research material, this study attempts to probe the unwarranted alterations that violent circumstances have had on people, and women in particular, in India and Finland. Therefore, the study has put forth the proposition that regardless of nationality, social background or religion, that when accosted with adversity, calamity and affliction of a personal nature, almost all women (regardless of social role) will react in much the same way.

This study has dealt with novels by Laila Hietamies: *Edessä elämän virrat* (*The rivers of life ahead*), *Hylätyt talot autiot pihat* (*Abandoned houses deserted yards*) and *Vierailta poluilla, oudoilla ovilla* (*On unknown paths, at strange doors*); and by Eeva Kilpi: *Talvisodan aika* (*The time of Winter war*), *Välirauhan aika - Ikävöinnin aika* (*The time of Interim peace - time to yearn*) and *Jatkosodan aika* (*The time of Continuation war*); as well as with Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*; Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*; along with Lalithambika Antharjanam's "A Leaf in the Storm," Salil Choudhary's "The Dressing Table," Rajinder Singh Bedi's "Lajwanti," and Vatsayan S.H.'s "Getting Even" from Alok Bhalla's compilation of short stories.

The second chapter highlights the ubiquitous presence of ideologies and political perspectives in literary narratives. In other words, a narrative is impacted by a predisposed philosophical lens composed of presuppositions and interpretations that are formed by both social norms and personal experiences. Both the authorial intent

and the reader's interpretation take place within the purview of their ideological framework.

This study has adopted the framework of comparative studies to assess and analyse some partition narratives from India and Finland. Along with the comparative theory, some aspects of psychoanalysis and feminist criticisms have also been employed.

The development of comparative studies has shifted the focus of the discipline from an isolated local narrative to a global one. Furthermore, globalisation has widened the previously limited scope of this particular literary theory. As the world changes with the times, so does literature. It evolves to match the prevailing ideologies. As one considers that Finland is a small and homogenous country, any change in politics or ideology is inclined to have a more widespread effect, while the situation in India is different. The mere size of the country poses a challenge to any ideological change. The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, described it like this: "There is unity in diversity." Nirmala Jain points out in her article "Comparative Literature: The Indian Context" that literature in India is a product of multiracial and multicultural conglomeration. Therefore, she suggests that maybe comparative Indian literature should start with the comparison of national literatures, since the Indian literature cannot be understood as a singular entity. In multilingual India, literature should extend past the boundaries of language, religion and culture (82).

Furthermore, the merging of comparative literature and cultural studies worldwide has brought a change in the study of literature. Sisir Kumar Das has suggested in his article "Muses in Isolation" that "The study of national literature is

not enough for any nation" (6). Today's comparative discipline provides a platform for a more multi-faceted and open-minded approach while combining comparative literature and area studies which transcend national and linguistic boundaries (Spivak *Death of a Discipline* 4).

The psychoanalytical theory has provided this study some insight into the role of memory in partition narratives. The Partition of India and Finland's loss of Finnish Karelia are difficult topics for many, and those who experienced the atrocities, the physical and mental pain, often remain silent. Their wounds are deep and their memories are painful.

Furthermore, there are influences, both external and internal, that affect the writing of partition narratives. The accepted norms that have been inculcated in a person since birth have become the internal force determining what is 'normal' and acceptable. Thus, the external seems to have become the internal, and most of the Partition generation, still, over seventy years later, adheres to the code of silence and bears the pain of those memories to their graves.

Everything is written and read from a certain perspective. Yet, throughout history, ideologies have changed and so have viewpoints. Through a gendered reading of the texts, this study has investigated the role and value of a woman in society during the time of the Partition.

Chapter three has provided a short outline of the historical circumstances that led to the Partitions in Finland and India. To better comprehend the differences in the partition narratives of these countries, it has been important to point out some of the divergences in the history and politics that preceded these Partitions.

The collective consciousness is established by that which a community or a nation experiences together. Finland has been ruled by both Sweden and Russia over the years. Finally, in 1919, she achieved independence from the Soviet rule and was forced to defend that independence during WWII. Though she maintained her independence, she ceded Karelia to Russia forcing almost 450,000 Finnish Karelians to relocate elsewhere in Finland.

Similarly, India has been ruled by others. Her last foreign ruler was Britain. In 1947, that long reign came to its end and India achieved her independence from the British. However, the freedom came at a high cost. Millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to relocate: Muslims from India to Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan to India. The loss of life, land and property was incomprehensible.

History tends to repeat itself. Therefore, it is important to be acquainted with the events that resulted in the indescribable human suffering which can be witnessed in partition narratives.

As one considers the distinct cultural and social divergences between Finland and India, it needs to be understood that their respective social conditioning has grown out of a upbringing that enforces certain norms and standards. It may seem that one cannot compare how children and girls in particular, are brought up in Finland and India as the foundational principles are rather different. These countries may appear poles apart. Yet, apparently, in the 1940s, both Indian and Finnish girls were taught that the domestic sphere belonged to women and a girl would do well to learn her proper place in society and remain there. At that time, it was expected and normal for the man to be the primary breadwinner in the family and for the woman to take

care of the home. Possibly such teachings are one of the main reasons why one can notice similar reactions in both Indian and Finnish women under such unusual and often inhuman circumstances.

It has been said that culture is a characteristic set of values, traditions, norms, beliefs, manners, attitudes and habits of any given people. The worldview of a society, to a large extent, defines a culture and one of the basic characteristics of it is its dynamic nature. It keeps changing with the passing of time. However, cultural change is often not very obvious in people who lived through that turbulent time in their nation's history. One might often judge some of them as backward and old-fashioned, a sort of hindrance to progress. Yet, the younger generations are the ones who lack understanding and tolerance. They expect their parents and grandparents to understand and respect what matters to them, while dismissing, or completely disregarding, the weightier experiences the older generations endured for the freedoms enjoyed today. It appears that the younger generations are quick to ignore the heavy burdens their ancestors still bear in the deep recesses of their memory. Furthermore, often they sense the reluctance of today's generation to be made privy to their painful history, which in turn, prompts them to want to shield their children and grandchildren from the unpleasantness of history and sacrificially bear their disquieting memories in silence.

In India, during the times of the 1947 Partition, the good of the community outweighed the importance of an individual. For generations, people of different social circumstances and religions had lived in harmony. Yet, practically overnight, communal passions were aroused and neighbours became vicious and mortal enemies. In *Tamas*, Sahni portrays the sudden disruption of that communal harmony when a Muslim politician deliberately incites communal violence by having a carcass of a pig

placed on the steps of a mosque. It is a depiction of corrupted minds leading blind masses to commit atrocities they will never be able to erase from their memories. Unfortunately, that same communal strife is still noticeable today. Furthermore, it seems that younger generations have internalised some of the communal tensions which they witnessed in their parents and grandparents. It has become an inheritance of sorts, which was passed down from generation to generation to be maintained or, in many cases, even intensified.

The Indian mind can be very fascinating. It is admirable how it can compartmentalise situations and people without passing judgment from one compartment to another. A.K. Ramanujan, in his article on the Indian way of thinking, uses his own father as an example of such compartmentalisation. His father is a devout Hindu at home and a famous professor at his university. He is able to keep the two spheres separate. His every day work duties do not interfere with his devotion to his religion ("Is there an Indian Way of Thinking" 42-43). However, such a skill or characteristic is not always found in those who survived the violent dissection of North India. The events left a deep impression on their minds and that impact dramatically altered them and their world-view for the rest of their lives. Their past has permeated all aspects of life, from an identity to a survivor.

In Finland, during WWII, behaviour was controlled by that which was good, appropriate and socially acceptable for the society as a whole. Usually, such conduct was enforced by social shaming. Since the time of the Swedish occupation of Finland, 'shame culture' has been a strong social catalyst, a powerful motivator or inhibitor in historical recording. The Swedish clergy quickly learned to manipulate people by threatening them with consequences of sin and the consequential shame. Such treatment by the religious leaders influenced the whole society for centuries. The fear

of being singled out and ostracized affected behaviour, as well as the way people communicated: what, how and with whom. Still, during WWII, the government was able to steer speech and communications according to what benefitted the nation as a whole. Such censorship worked on the Partition generation, who, for the most part, were more nationalist and loyal patriots than the younger generations today. Finland had to remain united and one. They understood that only through collective efforts they could achieve their common goal, to remain independent.

Beyond question, the continuous restriction on free speech has resulted in a society which frowns upon loose and unrestrained communication even today. Among the Partition generation, topics like violence, sex, religion and politics are still found unacceptable. Anything unpleasant, either individually or socially, is to be avoided. Furthermore, in relation to partition narratives and other unpleasant memories, it appears that time helps people to distance themselves from their experiences while affording them an opportunity to manage fears and hopes for the future.

Therefore, one must question the rationality of such continuous constraints on communication. Along with new changes in society and governmental budget cuts, the unnatural reservedness has led to an even more serious problem in Finland. People used to discuss their problems, fears, anxieties or apprehensions with their parents, friends, teachers, or spiritual leaders. However, today many of the avenues of discussion have been eliminated, leaving people, and especially the elderly and the youth, to deal with their fears and emotions alone. Society is more concerned about their international ego than their own citizens. The sacrifice offered by the Partition generation is glossed over. In addition, schools have lost their counsellors and

pervasive technology has developed a society that is technologically advanced yet emotionally crippled and unable to express the ever amassing emotions.

Furthermore, the constant suppression, whether conscious or unconscious, of unpleasant memories too often results in psychological repression which manifest itself in depression and possibly violent behaviour. This was clearly seen in Finland after the war. Soldiers came home and found it impossible to adjust to their life at home. The four and a half years of fighting and living in the trenches left many psychologically unable to cope with the normal life they had left behind earlier. In *Edessä elämän virrat*, Hietamies describes the emotional brokenness of a soldier. One of the protagonists, Aarne, is going to return home soon. His friend, Elina, a nurse with whom he had a sexual encounter, tells him how his wife, Martta, like so many other wives, will have to deal with Aarne's ghosts. The mothers and wives will have to pick up the emotional pieces and try to make their men whole again. Aarne knew she was right. He hated himself for it, for the ghosts that would never leave him. He knew he would go through life half the man he used to be, trying to free himself of the relentless war memories (127-128).

The concept that a 'culture of shame' leads to a 'culture of silence' often leaves people reluctant to talk about something that they feel would shame them. This appears to be the case with many partition narratives. During the Partitions, people might have been forced to commit acts that are too painful and shameful, and no matter where one is, shame inevitably leads to silence. That kind of silence is a societal construction. It is a silence that one can find in the recounting of many partition narratives and it leads to a question about the role of memory in all of it.

Näre and Kirves, in *Ruma Sota (The Ugly War)*, put forward the idea that human memory is built in such a way that it can turn something awful into something good, or suffering into heroism (10). Similarly, in her article "The Reality of Repressed Memories" (1993), Elizabeth Loftus suggests that memory is malleable, as well as, highly susceptible to outside influences (530). Therefore, it can be noted, especially in Finland, that the wartime government-imposed censorship quite possibly led to a significant degree of repression of memories. The ensuing silence about the violent events during Partition is a manifestation of that repression. It is feasible that the scarcity of narratives about deliberate violence toward civilians, and especially women, during war is a result of both the strict internalisation of governmental censorship and the safeguarding repression of unpleasant memories. The subdued nature and the persistent adherence to societal preferences still mark those who lived through the war. However, it is a characteristic that is less often consciously passed down to the next generation. Hence, today's society and cultural norms are different.

Anneli Ilonen was interviewed for this study. When asked about violence toward civilians during war, she responded cheerfully. Her response was an emphatic 'No.' During the four and a half years of war, her only experience of any inappropriate behaviour was an incident with a local painter who was working at their house. She was only twelve at the time. Her answer could be indicative of the self-protecting nature of memories.

DePrince suggests, in her article "Motivated Forgetting and Misremembering," that "Individuals are sometimes exposed to information that may endanger their well-being. In such cases, forgetting or misremembering may be adaptive" (193). Such forgetting can be seen both in Finnish and Indian narratives. Apparently, the motivation in Finland is both personal and national. First of all, those

who choose to stay quiet, or forget, do so to guard their own emotions, as well as the unity and morale of the nation. In her trilogy, Eeva Kilpi comments on the role of memory. Her narratives often seem to question the veracity of her own memories. In *Välirauhan aika*, she describes her memory as a switch which turns on and off by itself, as its function is to protect her (360).

In Finland, women who served with the Lotta Svärd organisation often faced smear campaigns for their patriotism by the leftist political parties. Lottas were accused of promiscuity, although, the organisation frowned upon loose sexual relationships between Lottas and soldiers. If caught in an illicit affair, she would be immediately dismissed. Nevertheless, at the end of the war, Finland was forced by Russia to disband any organisations that were patriotic. One of the stipulations of the 1944 Moscow Armistice was the dismantling of Lotta Svärd. Subsequently, due to the vilification by the leftists, for years after the war, Lottas felt ashamed for having served their country. They burned their uniforms and other 'incriminating articles' in order to hide their association. Their silence was purely motivated by self-preservation. Furthermore, the part Lottas played during war was belittled. Their reputation was deliberately tarnished and it took decades before the truth was revealed. Today, the women who took part in the paramilitary efforts during WWII are finally appreciated and respected. They are considered true patriots.

In India, in a parallel way, the reason was not only personal, but also communal. As a nation, India is too large geographically and too diverse culturally and politically for one person's version of history to truly affect the official, national account. Though all of India gained independence in 1947, it was mostly the Northern states that were changed by the Partition violence. Therefore, the official history seldom gives way to the personal and private.

Urvashi Butalia's research into Indian Partition has called attention to the frequency by which adults tried to shield their children from the reality of the Partition. They chose silence as one of the means to keep the painful memories and the hurt from permeating the younger generations. Some had to face the sting of shame for having protected their own women from 'the Other.' An example that has been recounted by many is the story of Basant Kaur and her family (*The Other Side of Silence* 45). For fear of abduction and rape, in 1947, more than ninety women jumped into a well in Thoa Khalsa to escape a fate worse than death. Kaur also jumped, but there was not enough water in the well to drown all of them. She survived. Furthermore, Bir Bahadur Singh witnessed his own father behead his sister for the honour of the community. Butalia relates yet another story. It is of Mangal Singh, who martyred his whole family fearing forceful conversions. "Having done this 'duty' Mangal Singh crossed over into Amritsar where he began a new life." There he met his new wife and started a new family. Still, he was left alone to deal with the pain of his past. "He had a new family, a wife, children, grandchildren, all of whom had heard, and dismissed, his stories" (46). He was alone with his haunting memories. To many, stories like that of Mangal Singh, probably sound fabricated. To imagine such violence perpetrated by one's father or grandfather must be beyond belief. Undoubtedly, a dismissal would be easier than reality.

In Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, little Lenny's curiosity allows the reader a closer look at some of the societal traditions which are not so frequently discussed. Lenny is shocked to find out that her new ayah, Hamida, comes from the courtyard next to her home. That house had always puzzled her. It is a house for women who had been rescued from their abductors. "At night we hear them wailing, their cries verging on the inhuman" (224). Surprisingly, Lenny has understood that the abductions, as with

her Ayah, often "had less to do with fate than with the will of men" (226). Thus, it is impossible to hide the truth from children. They see what is happening, and they try very hard to understand. Lenny's perspective has not yet hardened into an adult frame of reference. Therefore, though she is young, there is so much compassion and understanding in her little heart for Hamida: "I get out of bed and press her face into my chest. I rock her, and Hamida's tears soak right through my flannel nightgown" (227).

Laila Hietamies, like Sidhwa, uses a little girl as one of her protagonists in all her three novels. She employs the 7-year-old Laura's voice to tell her particular stories. Laura's father died on the battlefield. Now she lives with her mother in a village which has only women and the elderly. In her innocence, Laura questions everything. She voices doubts and fears that adults are not allowed to ask and ideas that might sound childish and unpatriotic. Her desperate cry for help in her loneliness is a cry that can surely be heard from the lips of many Finnish Karelians as they try to make sense of their new surroundings in Finland.

Many have chosen to tell their stories, but the majority has not. It seems that most household partition narratives remain shrouded in silence, whether for self-preservation or the protection of loved ones, of children, from the pain of having to associate with the past. Also, they have wanted to protect their families' reputation. Therefore, the stories have been limited to family circles. Perhaps it is partly due to these private household stories that the religious difference has persisted so long. Possibly this is the answer to Butalia's question, "Why so many second and third generation Hindus and Muslims after Partition have come to internalize notions of 'us' and 'them'?" (*The Other Side of Silence* 12). It appears that both antagonism and 'culture of silence' are easily passed down in secret, along with unofficial stories of

suffering and revenge. The feelings of injustice and bitterness are hushed and carefully bottled and privately transferred from the grandparents to the parents and from the parents to the next generation.

Today, there is no such lingering communal hostility between Karelians and the Finnish mainstream population. Maybe, the Finns who had to receive Karelians into their homes harboured more feelings of jealousy and distrust than hatred and animosity. Even after the war, the hostilities were limited to verbal and emotional abuse, not physical violence. In contrast, it is incomprehensible how the Indian Partition developed into such large scale communal violence and something that, by nature, should have been peaceful and inclusive turned out to be so detrimental. Perhaps the religious beliefs of a person or a community have such strong ties to the identity of that community that, when challenged or attacked, it will react in kind.

A gendered reading of partition narratives has afforded this study the opportunity to examine how women from different backgrounds and worldviews respond to tragedy. It also has provided a look at patriarchal stereotypes and how they relate to partition literature.

Undoubtedly, a female author might have a more favourable tone toward women in her narration, however, Alok Bhalla, Bhisham Sahni and Khushwant Singh have approached women in their stories with empathy. Apparently, they have not subscribed to the dominant patriarchal stereotypes or any gender bias in their narrative styles, at least not overtly. It seems that the lack of any clear feminist ideology highlights another aspect of womanhood. It is the courage and determination of Finnish and Indian women in the 1940s that helped them to prevail against all odds. Women of the Partition generation were strong and resilient. They had to adjust

and move forward or perish. Their priority was their family and the family's survival in the face of communal and national upheaval. In Finland, their husbands, fathers and adult sons were at war; and in India, many women were forced to bear the heavy burden of family, communal and religious honour. Yet, they all did it because they had to. They had no choice. Or at least the majority chose their given lot with a ferocity that was passionate and self-owned.

The world came to a halt during WWII. Women in the West volunteered and filled in the gaps left in the workforce in the absence of the enlisted men. Politics were put aside as women had no time or inclination to engage in politics or ideological debates. Their sole focus was survival. It seems that war and the Partitions left them no choice. Therefore, as one considers partition narratives in the light of the feminist ideology, it seems that the most important issue is that of a woman's freedom of choice. Whatever one's form of feminism, the main focus should be choice. The choice of her path through life should belong to no one but to the woman herself.

It seems that in Finland, the role of Karelian women before the war (and the Partition of Karelia) was somewhat different from the role of women in the Partition of India. It was not the honour of the family or the community that was forced on women, but rather the physical survival of the family and the family farm, while Finland plunged into poverty because of the war. Though these women's experiences might have been quite different, it appears that they had similar feelings and fears for their children and family. A woman is a woman, no matter where she is. She cares and has the capacity to empathise with other women in hard situations because she understands the position and role of a woman in her society.

The outcome for women in Finland and India, in the 1940s, differed from each other largely due to the nature of the historical events that took place. Due to Finland's war, the majority of men were gone and women were forced to take an active part in preserving the nation's independence. The opening chapter of Hietamies' *Hylätyt talot autiot pihat* describes the situation. "It is a women's village" (1). Men are at war and women are left behind to fill the void. In India, the situation was different. It was the religious antagonism between different communities that led to an unimaginable physical suffering for hundreds of thousands of women. The strength and will power required for many of those women to survive throughout the horrendous ordeal were remarkable.

The narratives used in this study, both Finnish and Indian, do not bring out or emphasize the future advancements of women due to their changing life situations, but rather highlight the daily struggles women had to endure during the time surrounding the Partitions. The difficulties Finnish women faced were mostly of hard work and loss of loved ones and possessions, not the physical violence done to their bodies, as was the case in India.

In Finland, when the war debt to Russia had been paid and life returned to normal, women were expected to return to their earlier place in society. Many did settle back into their domesticity, but also many did not. The small window of opportunity was enough for many to seek permanent employment outside the home. They had to struggle to find footing in the workforce, which, up to that point, had been dominated by men. That struggle for female independence goes on still today. Though women have never been able to enjoy the same security and opportunities as men, still, plenty of women have succeeded. They have climbed the corporate ladder one rung at a time. However, their male counterparts are very vigilant. They are

waiting for the women to make a mistake, a mistake that would afford men the opportunity to reclaim their predominance in the professional domain.

The fate of Indian women portrayed in partition literature in relation to the 1947 Partition draws one's attention to the all-encompassing violence women had to endure during that time. Furthermore, if a woman survived through it all, she was often forced to find employment outside of her domestic sphere. Maybe her husband and father had been killed. Maybe she had been first abducted and later returned, only to be rejected by her own family upon her return 'home.' Nevertheless, she had to find sustenance, for herself and her children.

In conclusion, throughout this study, it has become clearer that society, religion and culture are intricately intertwined. People learn the rules of society from those around them: parents, relatives, school, and so on. Those norms and standards are important guidelines for acceptable behaviour and they affect every aspect of life.

Culture is a feature that contributes to a person's identity. Each society has its characteristic culture, its values, beliefs, habits, customs, and worldviews, and each passing generation adds something to the already existing one.

In the beginning of this study, it was proposed that society and culture affect memory and memory affects narrative technique. During this study it has been established that memory can be impacted by one's desire to protect self and those who are part of one's life, as well as by outside influences. Those external influences that affect one's character and nature can vary greatly, depending on the construction of societal and cultural norms. Self-preservation is common. It is an essential quality in a human being to want to live, and not just that, but to live a satisfying and fulfilling life.

In the 1940s, in Finland, a person's memory was affected by governmental censorship, the need for national unity against a powerful enemy, as well as the influence of 'shame culture.' People choose to remember accordingly, and even narrate their stories adhering to those very same guidelines. For example, the lack of narratives concerning violence toward civilians and women indicate just that. Such stories would tarnish the reputation of those involved and of the nation. However, it is not for others to judge why someone chooses to not relate their memories that are painful. Whether it is for self-preservation, or due to time really changing the intensity of such memories, it is their right to choose whether to remember or to forget.

The other proposition in the beginning of this study was to examine women's response to suffering and tragedy and whether different backgrounds and cultures result in similar responses. The narratives used have shown that one of the main concerns of a woman in the face of danger is ultimately for her children. She will protect them and provide for their future, no matter what the cost. In India, one has seen women at times make drastic decisions thinking of their children. The most disheartening narratives are those of women who were abducted, kidnapped and raped. Yet, when rescued, if given a choice, they fought to stay with their kidnappers because of their children. No matter the grim beginnings of those children, the mother would choose to remain with them. An example of one such woman is an account called "Exile" by Jamila Hashmi (*Partition of India*, vol. I, 39-53). It is a story about Bahu had been abducted by Gurpal. She has three children: two boys and a daughter, Munni. In her loneliness, Bahu keeps dreaming about her life before. However, she has understood that she cannot go back, even if given the chance. Though her mother-in-law fears that Bahu will leave them, Bahu's conclusion seems to be that, "Who will accept a woman who has been despoiled? Besides, Munni is now with me. She now

stands as an obstacle between me and my relatives on the other side. The distance between them and us is very great" (45). Munni has become her purpose for living. Another example of a mother's compassion and desire for the best for her children is seen in Jyotirmoyee Devi's Bengali short story "That Little Boy" which was translated by Debali Mookerjee. It is a story of a young woman in Delhi. Her name is Raj and she is a refugee. One day while walking to a bus stop, a beggar woman with a small boy approaches her and her friends. Seeing Raj's chunni, the beggar asks her about her home and where she is from. Evidently, she recognizes her Punjabi origin. The day Raj's family had to leave Lahore, her mother was left behind. The family presumed her dead, which would have been the honourable fate. However, the mother survived, yet now with a small son who was not Raj's brother. The beggar recognises Raj to be her daughter. She also understands what would happen to Raj and to the rest of her family if they were to find out that the mother had survived and come to Delhi also. The stigma that would be attached to her loved ones would be more than she could bear. "But the beggar woman did not advance any further, for either the money or the peanuts. Holding her son's hand, she slowly retreated. It seemed like she said 'Ah, meri Raj' ("That Little Boy" 134). Without any obvious hesitation, she disappears as quickly as she had first appeared in front of Raj. Raj had also recognised her mother when she heard the beggar whisper her name. "Yes, Raj had recognized her. She had probably known it the moment the woman whispered her name ... Her eyes filled with tears. In a voice, silent like the wisp of a breath, Raj uttered, 'Ma.' Yes, it must be Mother" (136).

Both stories highlight the amazing capacity that women have to adjust to changing circumstances, no matter how difficult they might be. Salil Choudhary, in

his short story, "Dressing Table," also suggests that the ability to adjust seems to be a gift all women possess.

The reality that man is not an island to himself (Donne *Devotions upon emergent occasions*) is clear from these narratives that describe the cohesion and interrelatedness of communities. These stories are part of history and, as Bapsi Sidhwa said to Alok Bhalla in an interview, "One also writes because one feels that history will teach people some lessons, urge them not to repeat old mistakes" (*Partition Dialogues* 237).

This study has demonstrated that there is a close link that society, culture and memory have in relation to narrative styles of partition narratives. Culture defines a society, and the worldview of that community will determine, to some extent, the contents of memory and how memories are shared with others. Diverse cultures, in different nations, do vary and their value systems are divergent. Yet, the aspects which influence memory the most are both internal and external. The desire to protect self and one's family, is a strong motivator or an inhibitor and it guides one's narration of stories that have affected the whole family, community and the nation. No matter what the culture, much of the motivations for remembering or forgetting are the same: self-preservation.

Human response to tragedy is universal. This study has demonstrated the resilience and courage of women when faced with unimaginable odds. The determination of a mother to protect her children when cornered by life's circumstances is admirable. She does what is necessary with little regard to her own suffering.

The narratives used for this study are a witness to the fact that it is lessons that we learn from the past that guide us, or should guide us, on our forward journey through life. We truly should learn from the past in order not to repeat it. There are stories that can lead us on a path of tolerance and acceptance, toward a future where men are not governed by greed and lust for power. Authors like Alok Bhalla, Bhisham Sahni, Bapsi Sidhwa and Khushwant Singh have produced works that highlight the everyday lives of ordinary Indians that were abruptly forced into sequence of events that altered their existence forever. Similarly, Laila Hietamies and Eeva Kilpi have provided us with a glimpse of the life of a woman in a pre-Partition Finnish Karelia and their fight for survival when war ravaged through the country of Finland. Not only have we seen death and destruction in the wake of these two Partitions, but we have also seen how nations, communities and individuals can, once again, rise up from the ashes, like the mythological phoenix.

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