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An Itinerary of Silence:
Saadat Hasan Manto's Gendered Narratives of the 1947 Partition of British India

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B.A., Emory University, 2015

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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By Pooja Rajesh Mehta

The 1947 Partition of British India marks both the largest peacetime migration and the most grotesque fascination with gendered violence. The independence of India from Great Britain in 1947 was a pivotal point in the history of the South Asian subcontinent, a culmination of the ongoing strife between India's Muslim and Hindu population with an ultimatum: how long could both religions live together until violence and power eventually separated them into two distinct communities? The answer was quickly with the Indian Independence Act of August 1947, sparking widespread violence that the national archives of both nations would be unable to acknowledge. The widespread sexual violence would attempt to be rectified through the repatriation of abducted, or lost, women; however, the female experience of Partition would remain silenced even if the woman were rehabilitated into her community. Because the archive cannot acknowledge the female experience (and therefore the agency of women), the history of Partition consists of gaps, gaps that only literature can call attention to. The following thesis seeks to shed light on the trauma incurred from the 1947 Partition of India through an intertextual analysis of the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto. A writer who experienced the displacement of Partition, Manto viewed literature as an "ornament" constructed by writers, a view that values the narrative as a means of informing gaps in the political production of history. An in-depth analysis of five of Manto's short stories, all portraying the female experience, will explore the woman as a subaltern figure in relation to the gendered violence that characterized the entirety of Partition. Through attention to the portrayal of gendered violence in Manto's fiction, the thesis will trace the silencing of women's narratives and the appropriation of women's bodies in the 1947 Partition of British India.

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Introduction

The 1947 Partition of British India: A Subaltern Studies, Feminist, and Literary Approach

The year 1947 marks the largest peacetime migration in world history. When Great Britain released its reign on the subcontinent in August 1947, it guaranteed the creation of the state of Pakistan and, thereby, a partition of what had been British India; however, what should have been a peaceful establishment of two postcolonial states resulted instead in a bloodbath of genocidal and gendered violence. Over the course of the Partition of British India, an estimated 20 million people were displaced (Zamindar 6), 200,000 to 2 million lives were lost (Butalia 3), and approximately more than 75,000 women were sexually assaulted in the creation of two South Asian nation-states, India and Pakistan (Butalia 3). The number of women who became victims of rape during what should have been a peaceful movement for independence has yet to be determined. Government publications offer only estimates of the numbers of women raped, abducted, or impregnated as a consequence of rape. These numbers are dynamic and ever changing in various accounts of Partition, as women who survived the violence did not always offer testimonies of sexual assaults due to the pervading social stigma surrounding rape. In addition to the numerical uncertainty regarding the number of women's experiences, there is a lack of consensus on the number of deaths that occurred during the Partition of British India. Conjectures that more than 200,000 people died and nearly 60 million people fled to Pakistan have plagued Indian reports (Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting). If the estimate of 60 million refugees in Pakistan is true, then 15% of 390 million people, the population of British India at the onset of 1947, was displaced within a span of twelve months. While the creation of India and Pakistan as two independent

nation-states was not a moment of declared war, the violence that accompanied this split was genocidal in nature and the widespread violence against women was particularly gendered in nature.

The gendered violence that characterized the Partition of India undoubtedly highlights the systemic, cyclical targeting of women as well as the appropriation of the female body as an objectified Other. The range of sexual violence experienced by women – "stripping; parading naked; mutilating and disfiguring; tattooing or branding the breasts and genitalia with triumphal slogans; amputating breasts; knifing open the womb; raping, of course; killing fetuses" – depicts how women's bodies suffered from communal hostilities (Menon and Bhasin 43). Self-Other constructions and processes of Othering are "constantly present and on-going" in international relations, and the Partition of British India was no exception (de Buitrago xv). Self-other constructions dominated national and communal rhetoric; in each case, a "view of hierarchy is part of other processes, the self being typically placed above the other" (de Buitrago xv). The self-other construction is crucial to identity formation, and in the Indian subcontinent, the creation of national identity was crucial in the creation of its two new states, India and Pakistan. While the bureaucratic decisions that led to the formation of two new nation-states constructed self-other identities along religious lines, the violence that coincided with the Partition of British India illustrated how the Other's identity was the woman's identity, regardless of religious affiliations. Across all religious communities, men sexually assaulted women, killed women, and abducted women; this gendered nature of violence epitomizes the way in which women were Othered and targeted because of their gender. Despite the widespread sexual violence, the narrative of women's experiences is

left out of national histories. As Kamla Patel, a survivor of the Partition who published a memoir many years later, asserts:

> It was as if the demons had come down on earth… it is when the demon gets into Shivji that he dances the tandav nritya, the dance of death and destruction… it was as if this spirit had got into everyone, men and women. Partition was like a tandav nritya… I have seen such abnormal things, I kept asking myself, what is there to write, why should I write it… (qtd. in Butalia 105)

In the above memoir, Kamla Patel compares the Hindu God of Destruction's dance to the "spirit," or mentality, of Partition. As a volunteer who helped rehabilitate abducted and raped women in the aftermath of the violence, she notes the difficulty in communicating both her experience and the experiences of the women she worked with. The incommunicability that Patel endured is not altogether unfamiliar with the unsettling realm of sexual violence. Despite her significant involvement with women's rescue groups in the years following 1947, Kamla Patel simply "could not accept what [she] saw during that time" and consequently could not formulate the words to record gendered accounts of violence (Butalia 105).

The incommunicability of the women's experience of Partition raises the question of its historiography. When the gendered violence remains inaccessible and incommunicable, as acknowledged by female survivors such as Kamla Patel, how does one begin to understand the the women's experience of Partition? The following thesis endeavors to shed light on the gendered trauma incurred from the 1947 Partition of India through a literary lens, arguing that literature recognizes and depicts women's narratives

in ways in which the patriarchal nation-based historiography does not. Through an intertextual analysis of five of Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories – "Colder than Ice," "Bitter Harvest," "The Return," "The Dutiful Daughter," and "A Girl from Delhi" – this thesis will explore how Manto constructs his stories to acknowledge the women's experience of gendered violence and will argue that the female body is an archive of its own experiences.

Without an understanding of the production of Partition history, however, the historiography of Partition cannot be tackled. Colonialism and nationalism played fundamental roles in the creation of Partition, and in order to trace the itinerary of the silencing of women's experiences, a brief introduction to critiques of Partition historiography is necessary. Through a succinct analysis of the critique of Subaltern Studies and feminist scholarship on Partition, the idea of the woman as a subaltern figure will be examined and traced to understand the silencing of the women's narratives.

Ranajit Guha, the founding editor of Subaltern Studies, understands historiography through the eyes of Marxism – namely, the consciousness of the working class. Guha writes for the early Subaltern Studies movement against colonialist and nationalist historiographies. The nationalist historiography is an "elite [and bourgeois] consciousness," and thereby a historiography which relies solely on the nationally produced archives (Guha, "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency" 82). Elitist historiography of the archives ignores its obvious lacunae, the very lacunae created by the archive itself. Guha argues that the history that is written into the archive is a history of the elite, the dominant powers in the region, and as such, the archives reflect the history of the colonial and the national, but not the subaltern. Rekindling the term subaltern from Italian

Marxist political Antonio Gramsci's article "Notes on Italian History," Guha defines the subaltern as a definite entity which constitutes "the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the 'elite'" (Guha, "On Some Aspects" 44). The writing of Indian national history had been controlled by colonial and nationalist elitism, and Guha argued that this kind of historiography "cannot possibly transmit, analyze or acknowledge the kind of changes or contributions brought by common people themselves as individual subjects were independent from the elite groups" (qtd. in Louai 6). Guha's concept of the subaltern entailed namely the peasant, the working class, and the poor, figures whom the Indian bourgeoisie failed to represent in its historiography (Louai 6).

The concept of the subaltern was further complicated as it entered the discourse of postcolonial feminist critic, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In her work on subalternity and gender, Spivak reconsiders the subaltern figure through an exploration of capitalist politics and labor. In 1990 interview, Spivak clarified that she uses the word "subaltern" because it is "truly situational" (Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic* 141). She asserts the following concerning her use of the complicated, contested term:

> Subaltern' began as a description of a certain rank in the military. The word was used under censorship by Gramsci: he called Marxism 'monism,' and was obliged to call the proletarian 'subaltern.' That word, used under duress, has been transformed into the description of everything that does not fall under strict class analysis. This is so, because it has no theoretical rigor. (141)

Although she does not specify the classification of subalternity, Spivak remains concerned with gender and subordination of Indian women in her monumental essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" She explores the complexities of Britain's 1829 abolition of *sati* (the self-immolation of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres) to encapsulate the politics of invisibility that characterize the field of Subaltern Studies. Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" – one of the most influential theoretical works in the field of Postcolonial Studies – questions whether the third-world woman can secure any agency in a society that constructs her gendered domination. Spivak argues that to gain an understanding of the subaltern woman, the notion of what the woman "*cannot* say becomes important" (82). It is also important, she asserts, to acknowledge "our complicity in the muting," otherwise, the "historical silencing of the subaltern" will go unnoticed (66). In the particular case of Partition, the hegemonic nationalist account heavily documents the discourse of "male leaders and participants in the Independence movement," a disconcerting characteristic for Spivak who theorizes that, because of the male-dominated discourse, the "subaltern as female cannot be heard or read" (63). Spivak notes how the silence of females in the hegemonic archive leads to a purely masculine approach to historiography where women are intentionally ignored. In a passionate cry at the end of her essay, she writes, "The subaltern cannot speak" because "all speaking, even seemingly the most immediate, entails a distanced decipherment by another, which is, at best, an interception. That is what speaking is" (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak? 64). Gayatri Spivak equates speaking with the ability to be heard and read, which entails visibility and accessibility – neither of which the woman, as subaltern, can access. Despite various appropriations of its use, the term "subaltern," in this thesis,

will signify the gendered subaltern, specifically, the figure of the woman whose narrative of Partition is unrecognized in the national archive.

The invisibility of women in the sociopolitical arena is further theorized in postcolonial scholar Partha Chatterjee's *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Chatterjee's argument does not question Spivak's claim that the "subaltern as female cannot be heard or read" (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak" 63). Rather, Chatterjee is primarily concerned with the way in which the woman, as a female body, shapes the agenda of Indian nationalist politics in the early 20th century. Chatterjee argues that by resituating the women's question in an "inner domain of sovereignty," 20th century Indian nationalism separated the woman from the material world (Chatterjee 177). He believes that the question of nationalism embeds the question of women in the realm of tradition, marked by sanctity and spirituality. By reinforcing the woman as a symbol of the inner domain, Indian nationalist politics consequentially reinforced the woman as a subaltern figure (Chatterjee 177). The female body, characterized by its incalculability and impermeability, became a societal construct in a society fascinated with forging tangibility where there was none.

Through the exploration of the concept of the subaltern, it is evident that Subaltern Studies does not strive to recreate a history from below, but rather to recognize silences in existing histories which point to an alternate history altogether. As Spivak argues in "Can the Subaltern Speak?", the "theorizing intellectual [cannot represent]… those who act and struggle" (32). What the intellectual can do, however, is draw attention to the silences of "those who act and struggle" through deviant archival resources, such as literature. The goal of Subaltern Studies, in tracing the itinerary of

silence, is to recognize an alternate history from the state's production, a history, which, in the case of the Partition of British India, is filled with mass madness and gendered violence. According to the nationalist domain, the violence of Partition was seen as either a byproduct or a trivial, momentary lapse into madness. The rationale of the masses cannot be explained through the archive, which seeks to trivialize the grand scale on which violence occurred. Tracing an itinerary of women's silences in an attempt to recreate a gendered narrative is therefore implausible due to the lack of acknowledgement of the agency of the subaltern woman. By understanding woman as a subaltern figure, the historiography of Partition comes to light in a new way. In her collection of interviews with survivors of Partition, feminist Partition scholar Urvashi Butalia writes:

> The history of Partition, as I knew it, made no mention of women. As a woman, and a feminist, I would set out to 'find' women in Partition, and once I did, I would attempt to make them visible. That would, in a sense, 'complete' an incomplete picture. There are, of course, no complete pictures. (Butalia 100)

In analyzing her interviews with survivors, Butalia recognizes that, until she embarked on the journey of collecting oral narratives, the available archive of the Partition lacked the obvious, necessary mention of violence against women. In turning to Michel-Rolph Trouillot's analysis of understanding silences in historical narratives and what these silences reveal about power and the production of such narratives, the historiography of Partition epitomizes the gender dichotomy and the resulting disproportionate power dynamic. In his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Trouillot argues, "Silences are inherent in history because any single event enters history with

some of its constituting parts missing…. They reflect differential control of the means of historical production" (49). To control the historiography of women's experiences in the production of history, however, assumes that the producers of historiography can acknowledge the existence of such experiences. What Butalia so critically recognizes is that no "complete picture" of Partition exists, as the subaltern experience can only be narrated through the eyes of the subaltern, and the task of the theorizing individual is to recognize and call attention to these experiences.

The lack of women's experiences in Partition narratives, however, is not a discourse altogether ignored. In addition to Urvashi Butalia's work on oral histories and women's narratives, monumental scholarship has been published tracing the history of Partition through a gendered lens. In *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, a significant social history of the Partition, Ritu Menon and Khamla Basin introduce a "gendered reading of Partition through the experiences of women" (Menon and Bhasin 254). Through first-hand accounts of female survivors, they weave a primary and historical account of the role of gender in the Partition of India. The two authors compile records on women's roles in partition to offer a theoretical analysis on the gendered nature of Partition. They also argue how governmental policies during the aftermath of Partition represented attitudes not dissimilar to Partha Chatterjee's argument of the national patriarchal attitude situating women in the "inner domain," as symbols of the nation. Menon and Bhasin argue that the violence against women demonstrates the way in which women's bodies were objects to be claimed and exchanged. Attacks against women specifically targeted female anatomy, and such "forms of sexual violence charged with symbolic meaning [was] indicatory of the place that women's sexuality

occupies in all-male patriarchal arrangements of gender relations between and within religious communities" (Menon and Bhasin 41). Through attacks on women's sexuality, women "became the respective countries, indelibly imprinted by the Other" (Menon and Bhasin 43). Menon and Bhasin critically introduce the "vessel of honor" argument, asserting that "women's sexuality symbolizes 'manhood'; its desecration is a matter of such shame and dishonor that it has to be avenged" (Menon and Bhasin 43). By stating that attacks on women symbolized attacks on men, Menon and Bhasin introduce a pivotal consideration of gendered violence in Partition scholarship, a consideration that many of Manto's stories will explore.

Voicing concerns on the women's question, Veena Das explores the work of mourning and scenes of suffering in women's experiences of Partition through her essay, "Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain." Concerned with social suffering and transactions between language and body, "especially in the gendered division of labor," Das engages in dialogues of women's experiences of Partition to explore how the "appropriation of bodies of women as objects on which the desire for nationalism could be brutally inscribed" (Das, "Language and Body" 68). She also theorizes that "forms of mourning find a place in the recreation of the world in… discursive formations in post-Independence India" (68). In her rethinking of Saadat Hasan Manto's short story "The Return," which this thesis will explore in Chapter 3, Das argues against Menon and Bhasin's vessel of honor argument, asserting that despite the

> societal context of this period, when ideas of purity and honor densely populated the literary narratives, as well as family and political narratives, so that fathers willed their daughters to die for family [or patriarchal]

> honor rather than live with bodies that had been violated by other men, *this father wills his daughter to live even as parts of her body can do nothing else but proclaim her brutal violation.* (77)

Das' engagement with the concepts of patriarchal honor, language, and body are key concepts that place her in the midst of prominent scholarship on Partition. Das writes that "in asking women to narrate their experiences of the Partition, [she] found a zone of silence around the event. This silence was achieved either by the use of language that was general and metaphoric but that evaded specific description of any events so as to capture the particularity of their experience" (84). By engaging with Menon and Bhasin's interviews of survivors, Das argues that the "sliding of the representations of the female body between everyday life into the body that had become the container of the poisonous knowledge of the events of the Partition perhaps helped women to assimilate their experiences into their everyday lives" (85). Touching on the problematic concept of rehabilitation of abducted women, Das engages with multiple aspects of the women's experience of Partition that Manto's short stories highlight.

In her pivotal essay "Human Rights and Global Violence Against Women," radical feminist Catharine MacKinnon also struggles with how violence against women is written into history, as well as the factors that determine the historiography of gendered violence. "When what happens to women also happens to men… the fact that those it happened to are women is not registered in the record of human atrocity" (43). In order to be written into the patriarchal nationalist history, the violence must have happened to men as well. MacKinnon's argument is vital in understanding how violence is written into the records of Partition. By stating that the violence was an outburst of madness or

moment of triviality, the gendered aspect of the violence is eliminated from the record. MacKinnon further asserts that "what is done to women is either too specific to women to be seen as human or too generic to human beings to be seen as specific to women" (43). In another essay from her collection of women's rights essays, she questions the recognition of the agency of women: "If women were human… would we be raped in genocide to terrorize and eject and destroy our ethnic communities, and raped again in that undeclared war that goes on … in what is called peacetime?" (MacKinnon, "Are Women Human?" 41). MacKinnon's assertions force one to reconsider the very nature of the gendered violence of Partition. MacKinnon argues that "rapes are grasped in either their ethnic or religious particularity, as attacks on a culture, meaning men, or in their sex specificity, meaning as attacks on women. But not both at once" (MacKinnon, "Human Rights and Global Violence Against Women" 48). In relation to Partition, MacKinnon's theory on rape exemplifies how the Other of Partition is conceptualized as either the neighboring religious community or the figure of the woman.

The grotesque sexual violence of Partition, however, cannot be completely explained or narrated by any theory, despite the substantial scholarship surrounding the figure of the subaltern woman and the silenced narratives of women's experiences. Although the historical, theoretical, and archival analyses of Partition offer an explanation of the obvious lacunae in historiography, no such analysis can substitute or encapsulate the voices of the subaltern who occupy these lacunae. As Das argues, "Some realities need to be fictionalized before they can be apprehended" ("Language and Body" 69). Just as Das analyzes Manto's "The Return," feminist scholar Jill Didur explores fictional accounts of Partition, or "fragmented representations of the 'everyday' events of

partition," in order to "illustrate how they challenge and disrupt the meta-narratives and deterritorialize nationalist discourse" (Didur 13). According to Didur, the "historiographer cannot merely use alternative sources for historical research if she or he seeks to question the concept of the nation-state and the power relations implicit in the modernist project of writing History" (Didur 43). Referring to Gyanendra Pandey's work on Partition, Didur argues that "Pandey's reading of the value of representations of 'the everyday' in literary and autobiographical narratives ensures that women… will continue to be cast as the passive 'victims' of the events of History rather than collective subjects who negotiate their relationship to their context on an ongoing basis and make history" (Didur 56). In his essay "In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today," Pandey claims, "Writings on Indian politics need to foreground this state-centered drive to homogenize and 'normalize,'" contending that " 'fragments' of Indian society" are not recognized in the vantage point of the "official" archive (28). Didur, however, argues that Pandey does use "fragments of textual representation… as evidence" (Didur 56). According to Didur, a close reading of the literary provides an "alternative narrative of historical events" to rethink historical narratives as a whole, not to simply contemplate the place of the literary in history as a recovery of marginal voices (Didur 42).

The nonfictional accounts of Partition, including the oral histories of female survivors as collected by Butalia, Menon, Bhasin, and Zamindar, are necessary in understanding the greater picture of Partition; however, it is the literary archive that offers an unsettling illustration of violence that even survivors are unable to

communicate. In her essay on national literatures and the politics of gender in fictional accounts of Partition, Rosemary Marangoly George maintains:

> Unlike other disciplines, literary criticism has no compulsion (except for convention) to confine itself to the rubric of the nation. Some Partition fiction, I argue, adopts the vocabulary, tropes, and aesthetics that we now readily recognize as endemic to the fictionalization of diasporic situations. Yet gender prescriptions in this fiction do not automatically change when the cartographic certainties of nationhood give way to the flexible and mobile spaces of the diasporic. (George 140)

In her work with Partition, George sees "South Asian Partition-themed fiction" as the "quintessential national literature documenting the birth pains of the nation(s)," but also as a diasporic narrative (George 135). Her reliance on fiction as a means of informing the accepted rhetoric of the nation coincide with Aamir Mufti's categorization of Saadat Hasan Manto's fiction. A trained anthropologist and literary connoisseur with an avid interest in forms of inequality, Mufti proposes to read Manto's collection of short stories as a "series of literary attempts to dislodge, from within, the terms of the attempted nationalist resolution of the question of collective selfhood and belonging" (Mufti 178). Mufti further argues, "Manto's stories offer an ironic rewriting of this pervasive familial (and atemporal) semiotic of nationalism that makes it available for a historical interrogation" (Mufti 179). Mufti's reading of Manto as a figure whose work transcends time remembers Manto as one of the most moving short story writers of Partition.

One of the most influential thinkers and fiction writers of the Partition period was Saadat Hasan Manto, a literary genius who witnessed the unfolding of Partition from the

early 20th century to years following the official declaration in 1947. Arguably one of the greatest and most controversial short story writers of the 20th century, Manto defends literature as priceless, timeless, and purposeful. Born on May 11, 1912, in the Ludhiana District of the Punjab province of British India, Saadat Hasan Manto belonged to a line of Kashmiri Muslim traders who had migrated from Kashmir and settled in Amritsar (Jalal 29). Manto's father, Ghulam Hasan, was a staunch believer of Islam and a lawyer-turned-judge in the Justice Department of the Punjab province (Jalal 29). Manto's mother, Sardar Begum, was Ghulam Hasan's second wife, and by the time the children of Ghulam Hasan's first wife completed their education, Ghulam Hasan had little means left to offer the same standards of education for Manto. At his father's encouragement, however, Manto learned Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and English in a home geographically and emotionally distant from his father (Jalal 31). In a home with his mother and sister, Manto grew to be sympathetic to the feminine cause, noticing the distaste with which his father and other members of his father's family treated his mother (Jalal 32). Following the death of his father in 1932 and the marriage of his sister shortly after, Manto suffered mentally and financially, as his mother had given away much of their finances as part of his sister's dowry (Jalal 47). The decisive moment in his literary career came when he met Abdul Bari Alig, a socialist historian famous for his anticolonial history of the British East India Company's rule (Jalal 37). An unlikely mentor for Manto, Abdul Bari Alig took 21-year-old Manto under his wing, amplifying his literary prowess by acquainting him with works of Victor Hugo, Anton Chekhov, Oscar Wilde, and many Russian thinkers (Jalal 40). Under the influence of his literary role models, as well as the

influences of his community, childhood, and family, Manto began writing pieces of fiction, seeking to portray in-depth elements of the human psyche.

Through his exploration of human nature, Manto portrayed the conventional and the unspoken actions and emotions of his fellow humans. He was particularly interested in exposing the experiences of the subaltern woman. In an address at Jogeshwari College in Bombay in the early 1940s, he asserted,

> In my neighborhood if a woman is daily beaten by her husband and if she cleans his shoes the next morning, she is of no interest to me. But if after quarrelling with her husband, and after threatening to commit suicide, she goes to see a movie, and her husband is terribly worried, I am interested in both of them." (G. Narang 5)

Manto's fascination with the inexplicable facets of human consciousness dominated his fictional works; he aimed not to explain, but to depict human suffering, pain, and loneliness, just as he had experienced throughout his lifetime (G. Narang 6). He remained sensitive to the feminine cause, portraying the subjugation of female suffering at the hands of the patriarchal society surrounding him. After moving to Bombay to expand his literary career, Manto was forced to migrate back to Punjab – specifically, to the Pakistani side of Punjab – after the 1947 Partition of India. Witnessing firsthand the widespread gendered and communal violence and displacement of peoples, Manto pled, through his fiction and through public addresses, for the end of such merciless killings of fellow human beings, condemning the savagery and barbarism around him (Jalal 57). Similar to the very literary figures he studied, Manto was charged with obscenity for portraying scenes of rape, violence, and prostitution in his stories. Similar to his literary

idols, however, Manto refused to be restrained from continuing writing, for, as he argued, "literature is not a commodity" but rather a means of pure artistic expression, neither real nor unreal (H. Narang 72). He avidly believed that "literature is the pulse of a nation, a community – literature gives news about the nation, the community to which it belongs, its health, its illness" (H. Narang 72). Manto considered literature as didactic, something to be understood seriously – for Manto, writers are burdened with the need to write either for or against the social problems around him (H. Narang 73).

The sociopolitical nature of Manto's fiction engages histories and experiences of bodies not captured in the national, state-produced archive, particularly the archive of the Partition of British India. The following chapters will explore the way in which Manto's short stories encapsulate the figure of the violated woman. In order to provide context for the fictional narratives of Manto, Chapter One will provide a history of Partition. The second chapter will look at Manto's stories "Colder than Ice" and "Bitter Harvest," both of which depict the cyclical nature of rape and the construction of woman as Other. Chapter Three will continue the self-other exploration of man versus woman, and through the stories "The Return," "The Dutiful Daughter," and "A Girl from Delhi," the chapter will examine the aftermath of 1947, particularly the problematic Abducted Persons Recovery Bill, the repatriation of abducted women, and the disillusionment of Partition politics.

Chapter 1
A Working History of the Long Partition: Colonialism, Independence, and Bureaucracy

Partition: the action or process of dividing into shares or portions; distribution among a number (Oxford English Dictionary). In this working definition, partition is finite, the results are capable of being counted, and the act lends an air of finality. In the case of the Partition of British India in 1947, however, the South Asian country was not divided along a definite border; it split on the premise of colonial politics fused with nationalist sentiments. Partition brought about the division between Islam and non-Islam in the subcontinent, forcing civilians to choose one of the two identities. The year of Partition does not mark the end of an action, but rather, the result of Orientalism, the British philosophy of rule; the year 1947 also registers the beginning of what would be an ongoing conflict between the two new nation-states, India and Pakistan. In this chapter, the history of the Partition of British India will attempt to be traced. Because writing the "history of an event involving genocidal violence" is difficult and risks raising contradictions, the chapter will not claim an official history of the events leading to Partition (Pandey, *Remembering Partition* 5). Through the various scholarly analyses of Partition, the background that this chapter provides will rely on the idea of a "long partition" as the most vital understanding of how the two states came into being, as it encompasses political and personal histories and consequences that exist even today (Zamindar 2).

Author Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar first coined the term "long partition" in her book *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* to urge readers worldwide to "stretch [our present] understanding

of "Partition violence" to include the bureaucratic violence of drawing political boundaries and nationalizing identities that became, in some lives, interminable" (2). In tracing the oral histories of Muslim families in the aftermath of violence and displacement, Zamindar sets aside nationalist agendas to examine the long-term effects of these political decisions in both the political and personal spheres. Invoking the displacement and violence that led to the 1947 declaration of independence and Partition, as well as questions of refugee settlement and recovery of missing persons, Zamindar's concept of Partition as the "long Partition" has captured the essence of the 20th century history the subcontinent. The idea of a "long partition" will be used to describe the events, both colonial and anticolonial, that led to the end of imperialism and the creation of an independent India and Pakistan (Zamindar 2).

During the colonial period of the Indian subcontinent, the British adapted Orientalism as their philosophy of rule. Although the early phase of colonialism may have been a period of "military aggression and economic plunder," it was not one of "heavy-handed social intervention by conquerors imbued with a sense of racial superiority" (Bose and Jalal 63). Headed by William Jones, a British scholar of ancient India, Orientalism was the study of "exclusivist high traditions of both Hinduism and Islam" (Bose and Jalal 63). It was not simply a regard for Indian culture and civilization as inferior; rather, it neglected the religious and cultural practices of the majority of the people and privileged the study of what was seen as higher culture. In their familiarization with the Orient, the British learned Hindi, which is now one of the national languages of India, and adapted concepts of Indian culture to British customs. According to South Asian scholars Ayesha Jalal and Sugatha Bose, one of the main

attributes of South Asia that the British appropriated was the caste system. Bose and Jalal maintain, "If indeed the Indian caste system, as we know it today, was largely a nineteenth-century colonial invention, then it must be regarded as one of the more important changes brought about by the colonial social engineering," (61). The caste system, a practice of upper Brahmanical Hinduism, was a rigid social structure that limited social mobility at birth. The British did not invent the caste system; rather, they formulated the concept of "divide and rule" that stemmed from the caste system to aid their administration. During their rule, the caste system was standardized, appropriated, and reconstructed; the British Raj transformed a set of cultural rules to a judicial system as a means of collecting revenue from the native population. In addition to their monetary goals, the divide and conquer strategy reinforced societal divisions amongst its constituents.

In a society wherein a diverse spectrum of cultures, religions, and customs coexisted, the caste system became an identifying marker of Hinduism, and those who remained unidentified by a caste was an Other, an outsider of the subcontinent, an outsider of British colonial rule. In addition to religion and caste as an identification factor, the geography of the subcontinent played a vital role in the creation of identity diasporas. Dr. Kazi Said-ud-din Ahmad, an eminent geographer and scholar from the University of Punjab, acknowledges that the combination of geography and politics may appear "strange," but physical and geographical unity are not interchangeable in the subcontinent (63). Although it appears as one whole region, South Asia is home to a diverse geographical environment, which has influenced human activities and widely different outlooks on life across remote parts of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Ahmad

64). In other words, the "continental dimensions and domestic variations in South Asia, of language, caste and religion, and the local peculiarities and sensibilities of these communities" are a defining characteristic of the entire region, a characteristic not unnoticed by the British Empire (Khan 9). The "might of the ruling power" and the "will of the people inhabiting a particular region" drove a wedge between imperial interests and regional interests, such as in the case of the 1857 Uprising. Local leadership catapulted agrarian protests throughout the northern provinces and accumulated eastern support across subordinate social classes in order to protest the British tax collectors. During the months of June and July 1857, the British Raj experienced its first instance of inner turmoil. The uprisings began in Meerut, spread to Awadh, and soon encompassed most of North-Central India, the western Maratha territories, and portions of the Punjab province (Bose and Jalal 72). The British were quick to end these revolts and place their troops in exclusive charge of artillery, but not before local leaders successfully demanded 500 million rupees and a new 2:1 ratio of Indian to European troops on ground (Bose and Jalal 72). Through the 1857 Uprising, the oppression of colonialism became a forefront issue in the Indian political scheme and fueled the colony's path to independence.

As seen through the diversity of the subcontinent, it is imperative to elicit Dr. Peter Gottschalk's caution against "reductionist rhetoric" (Gottschalk 30). From his ethnographic studies of religious communities in South Asia, Gottschalk proposes to recognize the "individual as conglomerate of various identities" who has "multiple group affiliations," especially in the subcontinent (2). The history of empire in the region is one muddled with violence and power preceding the arrival of the British, from the early invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni to the establishment of the Mughal Empire, but the

history is also characterized by the coexistence of a multiplicity of people, language, religion, and even geography. It is this "conglomerate of various identities" that led Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the All-India Congress Party who would later become the first prime minister of independent India, to argue that there is no uniform Indian identity and that India is a fragmented society. Rather, India is the "continuity of a cultural tradition of 5,000 – 6,000 years old," a characteristic that was crucial in leading to the end of British imperialism in the subcontinent (Nehru 34).

By the end of the Second World War, the outcome of the 1857 Uprising had deeply shaken the hegemony of the British Raj. The economic and social consequences of the Second World War both altered the archaic colonial system of governance and undermined British imperial power in its colonies (Khan 13). Combined with the internal political friction of the early 20th century of British India, which stemmed from colonial policies and a fragmentation of Indian identity, anti-colonial sentiments in the Indian colony emanated contradictory ideologies (Bose and Jalal 102). Religious sensibilities informed both the Hindu majority and Muslim minority, although neither had viewed their religious communities in terms of numbers before the arrival of colonialism. Congress Party member Maulana Mohamed Ali complained as early as 1912 that the majority Hindu community had mobilized its religion to form a national identity, leaving behind a key portion of its population, the Muslim minority (Bose and Jalal 102). The creation of the Other within the greater national discourse wedged great acrimony between the two religious communities. Although an Other does not necessarily imply a numerical minority, in the case of British India, multiple forms of othering created an Other based on religion, race, and gender and pitted the two prominent Indian political

parties, the All-India Muslim League and the All-India Congress Party, against each other in their visions for an independent, British-free India.

Although the two political parties began debating the structure of an independent India, they were unable to reach a consensus on the political makeup of the state. The Government of India Act of 1935, passed by the British parliament in an attempt to maintain British rule in the changing political conditions, created a provincial and federal level of government (Bose and Jalal 127). The provincial level called for all government departments to be brought under the control of elected Indian ministries and, if necessary, the direct control of the British governor if necessary (Bose and Jalal 126). At the federal level, representatives of the princely states would "counterpoise" the elected representatives, a strategy imposed by the British to negate possibilities of any majority nationalist power (Bose and Jalal 126). Both Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the Congress Party, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League opposed the 1935 Act; however, the new limits placed on the government favored representation of the Congress Party, as evident in the Congress Party's electoral triumph in the 1937 provincial elections (Bose and Jalal 127). The Congress Party's appeal to a more unifying India created resentment and opposition in the Muslim League, and by 1939, the All-India Muslim League denounced the provincial ministries of the All-India Congress Party and searched for a new support base to better safeguard Muslim interests in the British Raj (Bose and Jalal 129).

It is this growing discontent that Gyanendra Pandey characterizes as the "First Partition" (*Remembering Partition* 14). In his rendition of Partition, Pandey states that "there are several different conceptions of 'partition' that went into the making of the

Partition of 1947" (14). Pandey's conceptualization of the First, Second, and Third Partitions are not necessarily chronological; instead, they are instrumental in visualizing and articulating the long process of Partition. Until the decade leading up to the 1947 declaration of Partition, the idea of a separate Muslim state was not present in Indian politics – it was instead a matter of political representation for the Muslim minority. The Muslim population in British India did not cohesively support the founding of a new state based on religious homogeneity in the manner that the Congress Party embraced (Hasan 41). Instead, leaders of the Muslim League, under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, coined the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which demanded a Muslim-majority region consisting of two autonomous wings, one in the east and one in the west, entailing "minimal disturbance" to the demographic distribution of Hindus and Muslims in the subcontinent at the time (Pandey, *Remembering Partition* 25). During the period of 1940-1947, the events of the "First Partition" unfolded, including the two-nation theory and a number of Nationalist Muslims who called for Hindu-Muslim unity, not believing that the partition of these two religious communities would solve the problems of economic prosperity and political stability that faced British India (25). Proponents of the unclear, nonspecific, two-nation theory, however, called for Muslim dominance in the Muslim-majority zones throughout British India without any movement or displacement of people (25). Though united in their belief for greater Muslim political dominance, these proponents of the two-nation theory clashed in their notions of what these Muslim-majority zones would resemble. Would the Muslim dominated eastern and western provinces of Punjab and Bengal be split within (Pakistan taking portions of each province that contained a majority Muslim population), or would the provinces simply become the

eastern and western wings of Pakistan (including portions of the provinces that were Hindu or Sikh majority)? Inexperienced with the central governing of a nation-state, the Muslim League and the Congress Party failed to successfully resolve their religious and political tensions with both each other and within their parties, leading to national anxieties that would culminate in 1947.

The year 1947, what Pandey conceptualizes as the "Second Partition," denoted the division of the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal – Punjab was divided into East Punjab and West Punjab, while Bengal was divided into East Bengal and West Bengal (*Remembering Partition* 31). East Punjab and West Bengal would become provinces claimed by India, while West Punjab and East Bengal would become provinces claimed by Pakistan. In March 1947, Congress Party leaders, resenting the Muslim League's proposal of the two-nation theory, argued that the Partition of India and Pakistan was the lesser of two evils, despite voting against the Lahore Resolution of 1940. What neither the Congress Party nor Muslim League realized, however, was that the call for separate religious communities would foster severe consequences; demands for the establishment of separate states in various provinces of the subcontinent soon plagued the capital. In forming the eastern and western provinces of Punjab and Bengal, the government set a precedent of self-determination of religious communities, reinforcing the opinion that the Other, minority communities did not belong in lands that had now been designated as either Muslim or non-Muslim. In the month after the Congress Party's declaration of Partition, Sikh and Bengali leaders began voicing concerns of the anticipated split of their regions. Recorded in the *Daily Report*, the United States Central Intelligence Agency's Foreign Broadcasting Information Service,

on April 18, 1947, Sir Khizr Hayat, former Premier of the Punjab, issued a statement "opposing any scheme involving the partition of the Punjab," arguing that it "will be ruinous for all communities if the province is divided" ("Opposition to Partition").

Despite varying responses from Indian leaders, Lord Louis Mountbatten, Great Britain's final Viceroy in India, announced on June 3, 1947 that August 15, 1947 would be the official date for the transfer of power, simultaneously accepting the partition of British India as proposed by the Muslim League ("Gist of Mountbatten's Speech"). Violence was already growing, however, at an alarming rate, particularly after the declaration of the partitioning of the Punjab and Bengal provinces. Viceroy Mountbatten, too, realized that the transfer of power from the British Empire to Indian hands came too late "rather than too early. Communal tension and rioting had assumed proportions of which I had no (idea)" ("Gist of Mountbatten's Speech"). In July 1947, the legislatures of Punjab and Bengal met to vote on whether their provinces should be divided, and a brief excerpt from *The Daily Report* on July 6, 1947 states, "The Partition Council proposes to finish its work by the first week of August, reports the United Press of India, which learns that the steering committee has been asked to submit its own report and that of the various committees of experts by the end of July" ("Partition Council"). Amongst those in the Partition Council was Cyril Radcliffe, a British judge assigned as Chairman of the Boundary Commissions whose task was to draw the borders of the two new states of India and Pakistan (Hodson 325). Given only 40 days to remake a map of South Asia, Radcliffe was unable to complete the map before the set date for independence, and the borders of India and Pakistan were not announced until August 17, 1947, two days following Partition (Hodson 351).

By the time the border between Pakistan and India was drawn, calls for revenge on the Other dominated communal rhetoric, as civilians either sought refuge in their new homelands or refused to believe that their first homeland would no longer belong to their religious community. It was not until August 1947 that the geographical provinces of Pakistan would consist solely of West Punjab and East Bengal, creating a nation of fear in other Muslim-dominated provinces throughout India (Bose and Jalal 156). On August 6, 1947, the Partition Council held its last meeting with Viceroy Mountbatten in hopes of creating an arbitration tribunal in the near future to govern the division and discussing the establishment of refugee camps for respective minorities ("Partition Council"). The bureaucratic discussions were disconnected from reality. As if the violence of Partition had not already begun, leaders of both the Muslim League and Congress Party were speaking of arrangements to "enable officers of the two governments to visit affected areas and refugees in the opposite dominion… to provide them with an opportunity of discussing problems of relief" and to take steps "to look after… property of refugees who are unable to return to their villages or towns because of the hostile attitude of the majority community" ("Partition Council").

In Pandey's final, "Third Partition," the year of 1947, the violence peaked to the scale of a war, although no war was officially declared (*Remembering Partition* 35). Uprooting of families, slaughtering of men, rape and abduction of women and children, and mass religious conversions characterized the year and many months to follow. On August 15, 1947, India and Pakistan were established as separate sovereign states; on this date, though, the location of the Punjab border between the two new states remained unclear. The true meaning of partition was not realized until after independence was

declared (*Remembering Partition* 40). The temporality of Pakistan caused an upheaval in politics; neither side of bureaucracy or community was sure whether Pakistan would remain a sovereign nation or whether the state would collapse shortly afterwards, and this uncertainty played a major role in the establishment of the Pakistani constitution and government, which have undergone several drafts and multiple military dictatorships since 1947.

The "Third Partition," as characterized by Gyanendra Pandey, encompasses the mass-scale violence of 1947 as well as the lingering memory of that violence in the nation today (*Remembering Partition* 35). The bureaucratic decisions that brought about the official specificity of Partition did not immediately affect the general population, a fact that Saadat Hasan Manto captures throughout his fiction. In his short story "The Great Divide," Manto depicts the ambiguities and apprehensions surrounding the idea of Partition:

> For some time now, there had been rumours that a war would break out between India and Pakistan. Actually, the moment Pakistan was born, it somehow seemed to have been decreed that there would be a war. When it would take place, no one in the village could say. If someone asked Karm Dad, he always made the cryptic answer, 'It will be when it will be, why waste time worrying about it now? (136)

The political commentary of Manto is rampant in his fictional works, and as seen above, he does not simply portray real, human nature – he experienced it, and he understood it. The largest peacetime migration in history was recorded through the eyes of not only bureaucratic documents and tabloids, but through eyewitness accounts in the forms of

literature and survivors' testimonies. Through his work of fiction, Manto captures the genocidal violence and gendered nature of violence, as well as the borderlessness of guilt and enmity that accompanied it.

The following analyses of Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories will explore the female body as a site for the appropriation of power and as a silenced archive; the analyses will also examine the immediate acts of gendered violence as well as repercussions and long-term, life-long consequences suffered by both the woman and the state. After one month of the founding of India and Pakistan, both governments met to discuss the ongoing violence and the possibility of reconciliation. In January 1948, during the midst of the recovery of abducted women, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru stated that "this matter concerning our women will not be forgotten, either by our country or the world, and the longer it continues, the deeper will be our sense of shame" (Pandey 165). The equivocation between "our women" and "our sense of shame" is a direct example of how the woman symbolized the purity and sacredness of the nation. If the woman's body was violated, so, too, was the body of the nation. The woman's raped body was a physical reminder of the nation's mark of impurity, and through the call to rehabilitation, nationalist efforts strived to erase this mark and wipe clean its tainted history. For the remainder of the decade, negotiations were dealt on Indian and Pakistani soil to clarify the exchange of abducted persons at the border, and on December 15, 1949, the problematic Abducted Persons Bill was passed in attempts to reclaim the bodies of women, the vessels of national honor. Despite bureaucratic efforts to repatriate women, or to return abducted women to their paternal homeland, the products of rape –the children and new families that mass migration, conversion, and violence brought about –

could not be reconciled. Only those who experience the trauma understand the lived experiences of women, children, and families, and no national archive can explain or attempt to repair these experiences. After all, how does one undo an experience one has already lived? As Vazira Zamindar argued, Partition is better understood as a "long partition," a lived experience with no specific demarcations of time. The prolonged effects of Partition exist even today, among such lived experiences, but also among lacunae in South Asian memory and migrant diasporas throughout the world. There was no clean break, no clear division or distribution of land or culture amongst India and Pakistan; so, although the specificity that placing a date on an event is lost, Partition cannot be fully conceptualized without taking into account the interconnectedness and prevalence that the two states hold today.

Chapter 2
Widespread Sexual Violence: Othering of Female Bodies

When the creation of Pakistan as a separate state was announced alongside the independence of British India, the citizens of the subcontinent cried out in madness and uncertainty. The migration of people across an imaginary border had begun prior to the August 1947 official establishment of the Indo-Pak border. Accompanied by an undue amount of terror, confusion, and anger, migration of the masses included the mass rape of the Other's women and girls in efforts of annihilating the Other, the perceived enemy.

The mobilization of rape as a means of inflicting terror and shame, especially in a patriarchal society wherein the integrity of women lays in their relation to men, signifies an overall intention of each religious community to eliminate the Other. Amidst the mass violence of Partition, however, the particular nature of gendered violence against women as a means of eradicating future productions of the Other carried a genocide-like quality. According to many in the non-Muslim community, the Muslim community was an Other, a separate entity from the whole of India who chose to divide a unified nation. Likewise, according to many in the Muslim community, the non-Muslim community was an Other, a separate entity from the ideals of Islam who refused to acknowledge Muslim representation in its national rhetoric. By creating their own into an Other, both communities justified committing mass killings and rapes in the name of eliminating a threat to each of its national security. Although the nature of genocide was not defined until the following year's Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the intent to destroy a group solely based on the group's differences from the self is the fundamental nature of genocide. According to the 1948 UN Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the term

genocide is defined as the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group," by means of "killing," "causing serious bodily or mental harm," "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life… to bring about its physical destruction," "imposing measures intended to prevent births," or "forcibly transferring children" (United Nations). In cases of war, genocide, and mass violence, women's bodies become targets of sexual violence to men of opposing communities. "Gendered acts of genocide," according to scholar Azra Rashid, "vary from silent acquiescence to active policies to repress women's capability to reproduce, whether through murder, forced labor, or starvation. But the most common form of sexual violence against women is rape, used against 'enemy' populations as the ultimate means of control, dehumanization, and shaming" (265-266). While working with official records of history and accounts of genocide, however, the suffering and painful experiences of women are often overlooked. "The feminist task," writes Azra Rashid, "is not only to resist and challenge the patriarchal account of genocide, but also to make visible the differences in women's experiences and the repressive mechanisms that create those experiences in the first place. Such visibility and representation can help demystify the marginalized Other, specifically women" (263-264). Violence in the form of rape occurred throughout the years leading up to and following 1947; however, during Partition, the "marginalized Other," as Rashid lightly argues, was the woman, not the Other religious community. Anthropologist Veena Das has noted that the communal ideology upon which political and religious lines relied does not address "the question of the alchemy by which communal ideology… becomes transformed into violent conflict" (Das, "Introduction" 5). Kavita Daiya also reflects the concern that the "story of ethnic

violence – during Partition and after – is often narrated as one of the conflict between communalism and national secularism" (Daiya 37). As the arguments of each of these scholars maintain, the true Other of Partition was the woman. The woman's body, a body which men of all communities perpetrated violence against, lay beneath the surface of communal hostilities, where the perceived Other was the neighboring community. While Chapter 1 asserted that communal ideology played a central role in sparking violence, the following chapters more specifically argue that the particular violent targeting of women extended beyond communal hostilities.

In the case of Partition, the widespread sexual assaults of over 75,000 women are genocide-like in nature (Butalia 3). As seen in the definition of genocide in the UN Geneva Convention, the crime of rape or sexual violence is not explicitly stated as a crime of genocide; however, Lisa Sharlach argues, in "Rape As Genocide: Bangladesh, the Former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda," that the "Genocide Convention should be expanded to include mass rape" because the "intent to destroy people on the basis of sex should… merit the same status under international law as the intent to destroy people on the basis of ethnicity, nation, and religion" (90). Rape, she notes, is a problematic realm in international law because it is "difficult to prove, there is no corpse left as evidence, and war crimes tribunals and domestic courts seldom prosecute soldiers [or civilians] for rape" (Sharlach 90). Additionally, the stigma associated with rape and "the shame and the silence surrounding sexual violence make investigation of the political uses of rape difficult" (Sharlach 90). During Partition, rape was a tool of implementing genocide-like violence on the perceived Other, but acts of sexual violence also stemmed from the mob-like mentality of madness that enveloped the minds of men in all communities.

Saadat Hasan Manto's textual politics of rape continue this discourse on the obscenity of rape crimes, but more importantly, the illuminate themes of female identity, revenge, and othering. A connoisseur of literary realism, Manto chose to represent the familiar, uncanny, and everyday experiences of Partition. The routine violence throughout the 1940s hyposensitized Manto and his humanist approach to literature, leading him to vent his frustrations with human nature through short story writing. Through a literary analysis of his short stories "Colder than Ice" and "Bitter Harvest," this chapter will problematize the concept of the Other, arguing that the true Other of Partition was all communities of women, regardless of religion, and as such, women's bodies were appropriated as loot.

2.1: "Colder than Ice"

Published in 1950, "Colder than Ice" portrays a Sikh couple in the midst of violence and widespread looting. The story begins with Ishwar Singh's return to his wife, Kalwant Kaur, at the end of what appears to be a long day. Kalwant Kaur, noting the "anxiety and confusion writ large on his handsome face," asks repeatedly where he has been all day. At a loss of words, Ishwar Singh only replies with "I don't know" and "I feel strange" (Manto, "Colder than Ice" 19). Kalwant Kaur argues that her husband has changed in the last eight days and accuses him of looting more gold from the city than he has led her to believe. He responds jokingly that he has been "in the bed of [his] enemy's mother" before continuing to seduce his wife (19).

On the surface, the opening narrative of the story details a routine exchange between a husband and wife; however, the looting of gold ornaments from the "houses of the Muslims in the city" alludes to the widespread violence and mob mentality of the Partition era. Kalwant assumes that her husband's silence and grief exist because of the efforts he has undertaken to loot houses of their enemy in the city. She accuses him of withholding the money he has looted, but Ishwar Singh, at the mention of entering the city, "went pale" and refuses to acknowledge any such efforts (20). As the couple attempts to make love, the narrative breaks: "But there was something wrong" (21). Ishwar Singh, unable to "ignite the fire in his loins," "[feels] cold" and "drops of cold perspiration [appear] on his brow" (21). Kalwant Kaur, frustrated, realizes the truth of the matter – her husband has committed adultery. She demands Ishwar Singh to confess: "Before you swear by the Guru, don't forget who I am. I am Sardar Nihal Singh's daughter," she exclaims (21). Kalwant Kaur, momentarily destabilized from her

marriage and no longer bound by duty or affection to her husband, identifies with the first male in her life, her father. By asserting herself as the daughter of Sardar Nihal Singh, Kalwant Kaur implies that, because of her husband's infidelity, her identity now relies on her paternal lineage. She does not identify as Kalwant Kaur, a woman, but as "Sardar Nihal Singh's daughter." Despite her pleading, Ishwar Singh is unable to answer, and Kalwant Kaur, in a fit of rage, unsheathes her husband's *kirpan*, or sword, and plunges the weapon into his neck. As she continues pulling his hair, scratching his face, and cursing him, he finally admits:

> When they began to loot Muslim shops and houses in the city, I joined one of the gangs. All the clash and ornaments that fell to my share, I brought back to you. There was only one thing I hid from you." (22)

Ishwar Singh begins to relay the story behind his torment, a story that begins with a gang of local Sikhs (and potentially Hindus) looting local Muslim-owned homes. Ishwar Singh's moment of rampage and gang-like behavior is exemplary of the mob mentality that overcame the nation in the years of Partition. The mass madness of communities blinded men and women alike, creating a moral deficit within the nation. Ishwar Singh continues his story, confessing that, in the midst of his looting, he committed yet another crime:

> There was this house I broke into… there were seven people in there, six of them men whom I killed with my *kirpan* one by one… and there was one girl… she was so beautiful… I didn't kill her… I took her away." (23)

Thinking the girl had fainted, he carried her to a canal outside the city, laid her down in the grass, and raped her in a fit of mindless fury. Upon completing the act, Ishwar Singh realized that the girl whom he had raped was already "a heap of cold flesh" (24). After conveying his story, Ishwar Singh asks for his wife's hand, but when she places her hand on his, Kalwant Kaur realizes that her husband, too, is "colder than ice" (24).

Through "Colder than Ice," Manto brings several unanswered questions to attention. The dead girl remains unidentified – her identity as a Muslim, Sikh, or even Hindu is not confirmed through Ishwar Singh's narrative. As will be seen in the following short story, "Bitter Harvest," Bimla, a Hindu girl, describes herself as Hindu before a Muslim man begins to attack her. In "Colder than Ice," however, Ishwar Singh grabs the body of a girl who is already deceased. She is unable to provide Ishwar Singh or the reader with her religious identity, even though Ishwar Singh believes she is Muslim since he has found her in a Muslim home. Because she is the only girl in a house of six men, it is very possible that she may be a hostage, a Hindu or Sikh girl whom the six Muslim men have abducted, attacked, and killed. The unfamiliarity with the girl's religious affiliation raises a pivotal moment in the discourse of violence. Manto's story does not "subvert the myth of national community based on religion;" rather, it "undercuts various elements of that ideology" (Koves 2148). The opaqueness of the girl's religious identification in "Colder than Ice" undercuts the justification of violence that the national myth accepted. While Ishwar Singh justifies his use of violence as a means of omitting the Other's community, he consciously fails to realize that the tru Other was the figure of the woman, not the Muslim community. Across communities, men were slaughtered mindlessly, but women were taken and sexually violated without a

second thought about their identity or religious affiliation. The female body became a good, something to loot and enjoy, just as gold ornaments, jewelry, and cash were objects subject to loot. The appropriation of the female body as loot dominated the mentality of Partition, and as Manto depicts, religious differences were not the only grounds for violence. In the chaos of Partition, as seen through Ishwar Singh's involvement in gang activity and mass rioting, the spirit of misogyny dominated and gave way to widespread, mindless sexual violence.

"Colder than Ice," however, does more than portray misogynistic motivations of violence against women. The juxtaposition of Ishwar Singh's two women, Kalwant Kaur and the girl whom he rapes, unsettles the way in which the woman as a subaltern figure welds agency. As Ishwar Singh's wife, Kalwant Kaur does not pose the independence of an unmarried, twenty-first century woman; however, she exacts revenge on her husband for his adultery as well as for the crime he has committed against an innocent young girl with the very weapon marking her husband's masculinity, the *kirpan*. The *kirpan*, a mandatory article of Sikh faith, resembles a knife or sword and acts as a reminder to promote justice and protect the weak (*Sikh Coalition*). Literally, the word *kirpan* is a combination of two words in the Punjabi language: "kirpa" for kindness and "aan" for honor and self-respect (*Sikh Coalition*). The act of violence, when committed with the *kirpan*, is an act of protection and honor, and both Ishwar Singh and Kalwant Kaur are cognizant of this aspect of the Sikh faith. When Kalwant unsheathes her husband's *kirpan* and plunges it into his neck, Ishwar Singh cries out, "Kalwant, with this *kirpan* I have killed six men… with this *kirpan* with which you…" (Manto, "Colder than Ice" 22). Ishwar Singh's voice falters, and his inability to complete his sentence signifies the

unthinkable nature of his wife's agency. As he acknowledges, the *kirpan* which Kalwant has plunged into his neck is the same *kirpan* he has used to kill six men, men whom he believes were Muslim, men whom he believes that by killing, he has performed a favor for the Sikh and Hindu communities. Now, Kalwant has produced the same weapon "like a wild and demented creature," invoking the same masculine strength, honor, and bravery of her husband when he used the *kirpan* to kill six Muslim men (22). While her initial rage was sparked by Ishwar Singh's admittance to committing adultery, Kalwant makes no effort to withdraw the *kirpan* from her husband's neck and nurse his wounds, further defying the expectations of a good, repentant wife. Instead, Kalwant "[shakes] him violently" before her husband discloses his ultimate realization – the girl whom he had raped was dead all along (24). Engrossed in her husband's convoluted story, Kalwant's anger evolves from that of a betrayed wife to that of an advocate for all violated women. Although the reader is not told what becomes of Kalwant after placing her hand on Ishwar Singh's cold, dead hand, the agency that Kalwant displays in killing her husband is indisputable.

Kalwant Kaur's voice and actions juxtapose the lack of agency of the girl who Ishwar Singh kidnaps and rapes. The juxtaposition of these two female characters provokes the reader to challenge modes of female representation in Partition fiction. The death of the unnamed girl counters the passionate act of violence committed by Kalwant Kaur. The young girl's literal death, which occurred some time before Ishwar Singh encounters her body, mirrors the moral, emotional death of Kalwant Kaur. The immobile, unconscious, soundless body of the unnamed girl epitomizes the appropriation of women's bodies as loot and objects of sexual pleasure. Her lack of agency, as

represented through her death and postmortem rape, unsettles the way in which women were considered vessels of honor by society. Ishwar Singh's attack on the young girl was not a purely political or communal act of violence against the Other's religion or community; the unnamed girl's lack of religious identification signifies how, in the mass violence and mob mentality of Partition, the female body became the Other, the "luscious fruit" that men felt inclined to "gorge" on (23). The objectification of the female body as an object to be dismantled depletes any agency she may pose, and it is through the character of Kalwant Kaur that Manto must depict a woman with agency, a woman who must muster a symbol of masculine pride to exhibit her agency.

Through the heavy use of dialogues, Manto disengages himself as a narrator and allows the dialogue to dominate scenes of violence and confession. The narrator's sole purpose is to narrate, not engage in moral authority or opinions of any sort. According to Jill Didur, "the tension between text and context that impinges on fictional accounts of partition demands that the reader theorize representations of experience, taking into account the gap between the text and its historical referent" (Didur 56). Manto allows the reader to do just that – theorize representations of violent experiences based on their historical referent, Partition. Instead of serving as a moral commentary, the story acts as a piece of evidence (Koves 2151). Following the dialogue between Kalwant Kaur and Ishwar Singh, the reader forms his or her own judgment, and as a narrator, Manto adopts a "critical distance" from the narrative, offering his story its own sense of agency (Koves 2151). As evidence, the short story is more than a piece of fiction; "Colder than Ice" forces the reader to confront both the "brute"-like nature of violence against women as well as the agency of women, neither of which can be sufficiently recognized through a

historiography of Partition that lacks literary analysis ("Colder than Ice" 21). By allowing the story to serve as an agent of its own, Manto enables the reader to confront unsettling narratives of Partition that are crucial contributions to the archive.

2.2: "Bitter Harvest"

In contrast to "Colder than Ice," "Bitter Harvest" opens in the midst of violence and rioting. Qasim, a Muslim man, enters his home, limping with a bullet wound in his thigh, to find the body of his wife lying in their courtyard. Thoughts of revenge immediately enter his mind, and he begins searching for his daughter, Sharifan. As he pushes open the door to her bedroom, what he finds is "so horrifying that he almost [faints]" (Manto, "Bitter Harvest" 143). Sharifan's nearly naked body, with "small upturned breasts pointing at the ceiling," lay on the ground (143). His ability to scream vanishes, and Qasim turns his face away and says "in a soft, grief-stricken voice, 'Sharifan,'" after which he "picked up some clothes from the floor and threw them over her. He did not notice that they had missed their target by several feet" (144). Running out of the house, axe in hand, he begins to move "like molten lava," disregarding the bullet wound in his leg, through the deserted streets of the city (144). Molten lava, which moves slow enough to spare onlookers from death, flows both dangerously and often unpredictably. Qasim's movement mirrors these elements; he does not know what he is in search for, only that he is on a quest to avenge his wife's death, and more importantly, his daughter's virtue. After killing three Hindu men in the street, he continues hitting them "like a man demented," or in other words, unlike a man and more "like a wild beast" and "like an animal gone berserk" (144). In his portrayal of Qasim's animalistic behavior, Manto's narrative is a commentary on the dehumanization of Partition violence.

As he encounters neighbors and fellow residents, Qasim proceeds to swing his axe wildly. Despite stumbling upon a pile of dead bodies, Qasim shouts obscenities and

runs through the city, the image of his daughter Sharifan's body "seared [into] his eyes" (144). With the thought of his murdered daughter in mind, Qasim begins to hurl "abuse at the mothers and sisters of his enemies" as well as their daughters (145). He enters a Muslim neighborhood, but he quickly retreats and swings his axe at a small house with an inscription in Hindi on its front door. A young girl who "could not have been more than fourteen or fifteen" opens the door, and when Qasim asks who she is, she responds, "I am a Hindu" (145). At the girl's response, Qasim flings away his axe, pounces on her "like a wild beast, throwing her to the ground," and attacks her for nearly a half hour "like an animal gone berserk" (145). The girl loses consciousness, and when Qasim releases her, he closes his eyes but sees instead the body of his dead daughter. Just as he did with Sharifan's dead body, Qasim attempts to cover the Hindu girl's body with a blanket. A "stranger" then enters the room from behind, demanding to know the identity of the intruder in his home. As Qasim turns to face the entrance, the homeowner screams in disbelief, and the following exchange takes place:

> 'Qasim!' the man screamed in disbelief.
>
> Qasim blinked his eyes; his face wore a blank expression. He couldn't even see properly.
>
> 'What are you doing in my house?' the man shouted.
>
> With a trembling finger, Qasim pointed to the blanket-covered heap on the floor, 'Sharifan,' he said in a hollow voice.
>
> The other man pulled off the blanket. The sword fell from his hand; then he staggered out of the house wailing, 'Bimla, my daughter, Bimla.' (146)

The narrative ends as Qasim, unable to voice or express his actions, watches Bimla's father, who is not a "stranger" to Qasim after all, run outside. In an ironic twist of events, Bimla's father runs outside in the same manner as Qasim after finding the body of his dead daughter. The cyclical nature of sexual violence continues, and Manto leaves the reader assuming that there is no end to this cycle of revenge.

Through his depiction of the madness of violence, Manto illustrates the attitudes toward gendered violence that enveloped patriarchal society. In interviews with male perpetrators of violence, scholars Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin record the real, unthinkable attitudes prevalent in the actions of Manto's fictional characters. One interviewee, Harjit Singh, recalls, "I cannot explain it, but one day our entire village took off to a nearby Muslim village on a killing spree. We simply went mad" (58). In an account of the violent struggle between Hindu and Muslim religious communities, author Shail Mayaram interviews a retired army captain who confesses, "We took away the women. That was the system… Women do not have any religion after all" (191). Mayaram argues that the abduction of women was a "policy of terror, an exercise in which the state-turned mob transgressed domestic space and invaded the formerly inviolate – women's bodies" (191). In both interviews, the men who perpetrated sexual violence viewed women's bodies as objects to be appropriated for male pleasure, and women's individual identities were erased in favor of a communal identity.

This erasure of individual female identity is a key facet in "Bitter Harvest," as Manto's lack of authoritarian narration once again prompts the reader to pay attention to the dialogues in order to theorize the agency of female characters. The only characters with dialogues, however, are the male characters, Qasim and Bimla's father, as well as

the mob of men that Qasim encounters in the streets. The women's experiences of violence in "Bitter Harvest" are represented through the voices and actions of men; the female experience of violence exists at the intersection of the private and public domains. The rapes of Sharifan and Bimla in "Bitter Harvest" are neither a solely private nor solely public matter. The men who rape Sharifan remain unidentified. The lack of identification signifies how none of the communities was completely devoid of guilt; the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities each committed crimes against their perceived Other's community, and in "Bitter Harvest," the reader is forced to reconsider Sharifan's perpetrators' religious association. As opposed to the rape depicted in "Colder than Ice," the rape of Bimla in "Bitter Harvest" is very much motivated by communal hatred. Although it is unknown who attacked Qasim's wife and daughter, Qasim assumes that the perpetrators are non-Muslim, so he leaves to exact revenge on the first non-Muslim family he finds. He approaches Bimla's home because the sign on the wooden door is written in Hindi, not Urdu – a sign that Qasim takes to signify a Hindu home. After he receives confirmation from Bimla herself, Qasim forces entry and attacks her "like an animal gone berserk" (Manto, "Bitter Harvest 145). Qasim views Bimla as a vessel of honor for the Hindu community. Instead of finding and attacking his daughter's perpetrators, Qasim fulfills his revenge on who he believes is the Other's daughter. When confronted with the realization that he has just attacked his friend's daughter, Qasim wears a "blank expression" and trembles, pointing at Bimla's body (146). The only word he can say is his daughter's name, Sharifan. Through Qasim's dialogue, the narrative indirectly challenges the morality of revenge. Revenge on his neighbor's

daughter does not give Qasim relief from the grief of his family's deaths – it only exacerbates his disillusionment with death and pain.

The cyclical nature of revenge that Manto captures in "Bitter Harvest" leaves no one innocent; in Manto's fictional representation, Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims were all guilty of perpetrating violence of sexual nature on their neighbors. Men of all communities committed violence against women of all communities, and though Manto does not directly argue such, his array of male characters of all religions portrays the reality he witnessed. In another short story published after the date of independence, "A Tale of 1947," Manto's character Mumtaz, a Muslim man, voices what Manto attempts to argue in "Bitter Harvest":

> Don't tell me a hundred thousand Hindus and the same number of Muslims have been massacred. The great tragedy is not that two hundred thousand people have been killed, but that this enormous loss of life has been futile. The Muslims who killed a hundred thousand Hindus must have believed that they had exterminated the Hindu religion. But the Hindu religion is alive and well and will remain alive and well. And after putting away a hundred thousand Muslims, the Hindus must have celebrated the liquidation of Islam; but the fact is that Islam has not been affected in the least. Only the naïve can believe that religion can be eliminated with a gun. (157)

Mumtaz's proclamation as he immigrates to Pakistan from India is powerful as it captures the futile Othering of the 1940s. The Other was never the neighboring religious community – it was the woman. In both "Colder than Ice" and "Bitter Harvest," the

count of unconscious female bodies is high. The bodies of Sharifan, Bimla, Ishwar Singh's unnamed girl, and even Kalwant Kaur carry evidence of sexual violence that is not communicable through male consciousness. The juxtaposition of unconscious female bodies with male-dominated dialogues signifies how the female body is an archive of its own, unreachable and inexplicable to those who have not experienced the violence. As Azra Rashid argues in "Gender and Genocide: A Research-as-Creation Project," "women's experiences in genocide [or genocide-like violence] are varied and rooted in specific, local histories" (264). To understand these experiences is beyond the capability of a historiographer, but a literary author has the power to at least draw attention and create discomfort with accepted patriarchal histories. According to Kavita Daiya, "the aesthetic representation of this history not only illuminates the discursive production of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh women as ethnic citizens and embodied "honor" identified by Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, but also challenges it" (Daiya 67). Through his representation of the physically and emotionally violent experiences of women in "Colder than Ice" and "Bitter Harvest," Manto certainly challenges the view that women were targeted as embodiments of honor; the unthinkable cyclical nature of violence acquiesced to the dehumanizing appropriation of women's bodies as targetable objects of sexual violence. Manto's stories in the following chapter explore and problematize yet another way in which women were targeted – abduction.

Chapter 3
Repatriation: Exchange and Displacement of Women's Bodies

According to the International Red Cross, in the months following the passing of the Indian Independence Bill in the British Parliament on July 18, 1947, five million Sikhs and Hindus lived in what would be the Pakistani side of Punjab, and approximately five million Muslims lived on the Indian side. The mass exodus of these populations from each side of the Indo-Pak border continued even after the official declaration of independence on August 15, 1947. In the midst of the ongoing communal violence, on August 18, 1947, Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Liaquat Ali Khan of Pakistan met to discuss the steps necessary to recover abducted persons. Unfortunately, violence surpassed bureaucracy; the prime ministers' plans for repatriation did not recognize the scope of the violence surrounding them. The exchange of human bodies became a desired commodity and occurred in ways uncanny to the Marxist sense of exchange value. The Indo-Pak border became a site for the exchange of the mentally insane, women, and children, much as goods and governmentally property are transferred across a trade border. The use value that the government placed on female bodies in particular symbolized their view of women as vessels of national and patriarchal honor. Returning to postcolonial theorist Partha Chatterjee's argument, the concern with the female body and its placement in the politics of Indian nationalism situated the woman in the inner world, a world that reinforces her status as doubly subaltern and places her on a spiritual pedestal. The association of women and the inner domain of sovereignty not only fueled the gendered nature of violence, but fueled bureaucratic attempts to retrieve what they thought was rightfully theirs: the Muslim woman from India or the Hindu or Sikh woman from Pakistan.

Efforts to rehabilitate and provide relief for missing persons were not enacted by the government alone. It is important to recognize a few noteworthy attempts. On August 31, 1947, Lady Mountbatten coordinated the formation of the United Council for Relief and Welfare in Kashmir, the northernmost region of India under property conflict between the two nations, to send government relief to women and children who had become victims of violence (Von Tunzelmann 331). The Mountbattens, however, remained in India only briefly following the end of British reign, and combined with the limited geographical scope of Lady Mountbatten's efforts, the United Council for Relief and Welfare remained fairly stagnant (Von Tunzelmann 331). Less than one month following the birth of India and Pakistan, on September 3, 1947, the governments of the newly formed nations continued their earlier discussion regarding the necessary steps to recover abducted persons. The results of this joint dominion conference led the Indian government to establish the Emergency Cabinet Committee, appointing the first Indian Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation of Refugees. Shortly afterward, on September 21, both prime ministers issued a joint statement from New Delhi (Khan 3). Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan stated, "I am determined to pull out every Muslim from east Punjab and plant him properly in Pakistan… The problem here before us is not only the consolidation of Pakistan, but a revival of the glory of Islam in the Indian sub-continent," to which Prime Minister Nehru agreed (Khan 3). The statement further assured refugees of protection by soldiers of their own religion, while simultaneously dissolving the Punjab Boundary Force. By implementing both Indian and Pakistani troops in place of the pre-Partition Punjab Boundary Force, the governments indirectly established their inability to

collaborate and exemplified that the two sides would not work as a single unit of control in the repatriation efforts.

While the debate surrounding the protection of persons along the arbitrarily drawn border continued, the two governments were capable of agreeing upon one supposed priority: the recovery of abducted women. On November 17, 1947, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution stating that there was "nothing more heinous than the abduction of women" and that "every effort must be made to restore women to their original homes with the co-operation of the governments concerned" (Menon and Bhasin 69). Between December 1947 and July 1948, 9,362 women were recovered from India and 5,510 women were recovered from Pakistan (Menon and Bhasin 69). Over the course of the following eight years, approximately 30,000 Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh women were recovered by both countries altogether; of this total, roughly 94% of women recovered from India and 89% of women recovered from Pakistan were less than 35 years old (Menon and Bhasin 99). Despite bureaucratic attempts to govern the repercussions of the mass violence it enacted, author Vazira Zamindar argues that their efforts were futile. She notes that it is important to question the following regarding the mass migration of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims in the subcontinent: "What role did these institutions play in the shaping of the Muslim [and Hindu] exodus?" (Zamindar 21). Zamindar reminds readers that the bureaucratic pieces of legislation did not truly repatriate its exodus; instead, they deepened the suppression of subaltern narratives.

The Abducted Persons Recovery Act in particular, despite its patriarchal, noble attempt to "save women," dismissed the agency of women who had suffered at the hands of violence. It is through the post-August 1947 short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, and

many of his literary peers, that capture the ways in which the exchange of women's bodies illustrate the true nature of post-Partition legislation. The post-August 1947 short stories of Manto trace "abducted" persons' itineraries of silence as well as depict the masculine fascination with the female body and the idealization of women as vessels of male honor in the Indian state and family.

Committing to the argument that literature is powerful, dangerous, and political, many of Manto's literary peers similarly understood literature as an archival narrative through which a subaltern narrative is revealed. In the short story "Lajwanti," author Rajinder Singh Bedi represents the incommunicability and inaccessibility of narratives of violence through tracing the silence of Lajwanti, a woman returned and rehabilitated into India following the mandated exchange of abducted persons at the border. The plot of the short story illuminates the dominant patriarchal attitudes that resulted in the abduction of women. Grassroots efforts to search and return women were minimal compared to numbers of the community who refused to accept their women back into their homes due to the tarnished honor they now carried. Bedi captures the common patriarchal reaction of many families who rejected the return of their female relatives:

> …but among the kidnapped women there were those whose husbands, parents, sisters, and brothers refused to accept them back as their own. After all, they could have chosen suicide! Why hadn't they saved their chastity by taking poison? Why hadn't they thrown themselves into a well and drowned? They were cowards to cling to life so… (20)

Bedi's response to the views expressed by the relatives who refused to allow their female relatives – mothers, sisters, wives, daughters – to return home counters the accusation

that the women were cowards: "How could the dead know what courage it needed to face the cold, hostile world of the living in a hard-heard world in which husbands refused to acknowledge their wives?" (Bedi 20). The fact that these women had not killed themselves willingly, or had been killed forcefully by their own families to begin with, were courageous in the very fact that they still lived. Though the Abducted Persons Recovery Act allowed them no choice, no agency with which to express their wishes, whether those were to return home or to remain in the new state with their abductor.

As shown through the case of Lajwanti, the abductor need not necessarily treat the woman he claimed terribly; Lajwanti, when her husband Sundar Lal asks whether her abductor had beaten her, responds no, a fact that is evident in her healthier figure. Sundar Lal, who used to beat his wife regularly to prove that he was not "unmanly," is shocked by this response and vows to never beat her again. In fact, he hardly speaks to his wife in a tone harsher than one would speak to a puppy. He considers his wife a devi, and as seen through the account of Hardiman, devis are to be placed on a pedestal and respected with the utmost care. Bedi writes, "Sundar Lal made her feel like something fragile, like glass which would splinter at the slightest touch" (29). The complete reversal in her husband's behavior and attitude only further displaced Lajwanti in her own home. Despite his wife's wish to "tell him everything," Sundar Lal exclaims, "Leave the past alone… the blame rests on the head of our society, which withholds from you and the other devis the respect you all rightfully deserve!" (Bedi 29). With no medium through which to communicate her experience, Lajwanti was forced to withdraw into herself, unable to be an agent in her own rehabilitation process. The author's attempt to trace her journey of rehabilitation is ruptured with the interplay of the patriarchal interjections of

Sundar Lal, and Lajwanti's silence only points to a silenced narrative, one that is forced to remain in her own body and cannot be recovered. Tracing an itinerary of silence in an attempt to recreate a narrative is therefore implausible due to the lack of acknowledgement of agency of the subaltern woman.

The very question and act of repatriation inform how silences are created and reinforced. The need to repatriate women stems from the concept that women are property, mere vessels of the nation's honor and thereby owned by the patriarchal community. The "national interest comes to be equated with the integrity of the state and its boundaries; and the preservation of the latter comes to be proclaimed the primary concern of the nation" (Pandey, *Remembering Partition* 160). In understanding this explanation of national interest, it is clear that Prime Minister Nehru's declaration that the return of abducted women developed from conscious politicized efforts to reclaim women, because reclaiming women signified reclaiming the state's borders.

In the short stories to follow, Saadat Hasan Manto explores the reality of repatriation and the practical reality of the textual, bureaucratic decision of displacing and recovering human bodies as stolen objects. The politics at play in the following texts – "The Return," "The Dutiful Daughter," and "A Girl from Delhi" – depict the fragility of borders, both literal, geographical borders and invisible, emotional borders within relationships. Through descriptions of bodily mutilation, female beauty, and loss of consciousness, Manto continues his portrayal of the female body as the Other as well as a silent vessel of lost agency. The immediate aftermath of violence was not characterized by peace. Rather, madness remained rampant and closure remained a distant future.

3.1 "The Return"

The November 1947 resolution by the All India Congress Committee stating that there is "nothing more heinous than the abduction of women" and that "every effort must be made to restore women to their original homes with the cooperation of the governments concerned" enacted a host of volunteers along the border to retrieve the live bodies of women who were missing. The exchange of women as retrievable properties occurred across towns mainly in the state of Punjab. Adhering to Manto's theme of borderlessness, particularly the borderlessness of neighbor and enemy, his short story "The Return," published in August 1948, relays the story of a middle-aged Muslim man, Sirajuddin, and his frantic search for his kidnapped daughter in the wake of their crossing the India-Pakistan border.

"The Return" begins with the details of Sirajuddin's crossing of the border, from Amritsar, India to Lahore, India. The geographical distance between the two cities is a mere thirty miles; however, the "special train" on which Sirajuddin's family embarked arrived "eight hours later" (Manto, "The Return" 50). Although the narrator does not further explicate this seemingly minute detail of the family's migration past the following sentence, "Many had been killed on the way, a lot more injured and countless lost," Sirajuddin's family's eight-hour journey across a distance of thirty miles is an allusion to the mass violence on trains and displacement of people (Manto, "The Return" 50). As captured in the historical novel *Train to Pakistan* by fellow writer Khushwant Singh, the most commonly used method of transportation across the Indo-Pak border was train, and the most commonly attacked vehicle of transport was train. *Train to Pakistan* depicts the bloodshed that occurred on the territorial border between India and Pakistan, despite the

peaceful intermingling of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus in the same small village, Mano Majra, situated by a train station just on the Indian side of the declared border. Trains carrying Muslims from India into Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan into India became "ghost trains," meaning that they arrived at their destination, or stopped along the way at Mano Majra, with zero passengers alive (Singh 77). As the bloodshed and frequency of the ghost trains continued, Singh portrays how Muslims in the village move to Pakistan filled with regret:

> One day, a train stops mysteriously in the sidings and several hour later the flames of a mass cremation leap into the night sky, confirming the villagers' ghastly suspicions: 'The village was stilled in a deathly silence. No one asked anyone else what the odor was. They all knew. They had known it all along.' (Singh 84)

It was along this train route that Sirajuddin's family was attacked and separated. Sirajuddin awakes in Lahore the following morning, not on the train but lying on the "bare ground, surrounded by screaming men, women and children" (Manto, "The Return" 50). He slowly remembers the events of the preceding night, and Manto relays his thoughts realistically, with the use of ellipses to signal a stream of consciousness: "attack… fire… escape… railway station… night… Sakina" (Manto, "The Return" 50). His final key realization is that his daughter, Sakina, is missing, and he spends the next hours shouting her name and looking for her amongst the crowd of injured, dying people. "Then it came to him in a flash – the dead body of his wife, her stomach ripped open" (50). In an "image that wouldn't go away," Sirajuddin remembers the bodily mutilation which led to his wife's death; in an untold description, the ripping open of her stomach

symbolizes the ripping open of the very organs which marked her body as female. Although not specified, the manner of ripping open a woman's stomach inevitably included the ripping out of her uterus, so that if she were to survive the bloody attack, she would be unable to produce more children of the Other race. The perpetrators of such gendered violence were motivated by the belief that the elimination of women's abilities to reproduce children – either by death, removal of organs, or marriage into the perpetrators' religion – would prevent the future existence of the Other. Contempt for the perceived Other was ingrained so deeply that violence against the other religion took on a gendered meaning, an attempt to cause bodily harm, inflict poor quality of life, and prevent the birth of future generations. Rape was not an inevitable, collateral damage of war; it was the eminent expression of contempt in the case of Partition. According to scholar Azra Rashid of Concordia University, women in wartime are "reduced to merely sexual and sacrificial objects to gratify the male soldiers" (Rashid 268). In the case of Partition, there was no formal declaration of war, and soldiers were not dispatched until the recovery of abducted persons began; however, the posing of male saviors in the search for missing women and the violent targeting of a specific gender is relevant, as seen in the continuation of "The Return."

Sirajuddin, with no luck in finding his daughter, approached a group of eight young men armed with guns who claim to bring back "women and children left behind on the other side" (Manto, "The Return" 51). The appearance of power as portrayed by these young men, who "said they brought back women and children left behind on the other side" signifies the lack of institutional power during the moment of Partition; the governments of newly independent India and Pakistan had hardly began, and civilians

sought the need to dictate chaos, even resorting to trusting complete strangers who appealed to their sense of belonging to a particular religious identity. In this post-Partition era, power was dispersed in the same sense of French philosopher Michel Foucault's later theory on relational power. The dynamic, multilateral nature of power in the period of Partition exhibited the weakness of the bureaucracy that had sprung the entire Partition into play. According to Michel Foucault's "The Subject and Power," power is ultimately inherent in relationships. In other words, power is welded by individuals and dispersed across all ends of the power spectrum. A philosopher, social theorist, and literary critic of the 20th century, Foucault was concerned primarily with power and knowledge, and the relationship between the two which is welded by social institutions for control. Power, in Foucault's work, is "exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free," and the transitive nature of power is inherent in all social existence (Foucault 790). Foucault elucidates that free subjects are "individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized" (Foucault 790). Through Foucault's understanding of relational power, the masses of men, such as those whom Sirajuddin encounters in the truck, can be understood as free subjects attempting to seek temporary power during the lapse and failure of government to wield power. When Sirajuddin approaches the men, he offers a description of his daughter, "'She is fair, very pretty. No, she doesn't look like me, but her mother. About seventeen'" (Manto, "The Return" 51). In a moment of parental pride, Sirajuddin sparks the interest of the young men. With this knowledge of Sakina, the men promise the father, "If your daughter is alive, we will find her"; however, they do not promise to bring her back. Through their

newfound knowledge of Sakina, and presumably of many other lost women, the men in the truck possess power and status in the refugee camp. The only reminder of his daughter Sakina is her dupatta, which Sirajuddin had saved in the moment that Sakina was separated from him but did not give the soldiers whom he entrusted the recovery of his daughter. The dupatta, a symbol of female chastity, signified Sakina's modesty so intensely that Sirajuddin wished to save it without realizing that in the moment he bends down to preserve it, Sakina could disappear in the chaos.

As the eight young men continue to recover many women and children from Amritsar, they come find a girl on the roadside, who begins running when the men stop their truck. They jump out of the truck and chase after her, and upon closer inspection, they find that the girl's physical appearance matches the description that Sirajuddin had given them of Sakina. They ask her to confirm, and she responds, confessing that she is "Sakina, daughter of Sirajuddin" (Manto, "The Return" 52). Like Kalwant Kaur in the story "Colder than Ice," Sakina identifies herself not as simply Sakina, a woman, but as a woman in association with a male relative. The agency that she forgoes is a marker of her feminine identity; for Sakina's existence to be acknowledged, the authority of an older male relative, her father, must vouch for her existence. The young men from the truck seem to accept her identity, as they are "very kind to her," offering her milk and a jacket in replacement of her lost dupatta.

The reader learns in the following paragraph, however, that Sirajuddin has still not heard any news about his daughter, although several days have passed since the men from the truck supposedly saved Sakina. When he sees the men at the camp one day, he asks about his daughter, but they respond in ominous synchronization, "'We will, we

will'" (Manto, "The Return" 52). At this point, the narrator has successfully jilted the reader's sense of security; the men have interacted with Sakina and offered her shelter, but they have lied to her father. Where is Sakina? The men's promise to Sirajuddin at the beginning of the story rings in Sirajuddin's ears: "'If your daughter is alive, we will find her'" (Manto, "The Return" 51). If the logical contrapositive of the statement is taken, it reads, "if we do not find her, your daughter is dead." In terms of pure logic, Manto has constructed a crucial sentence in the story – if the men do find her, no logical conclusion follows on what will become of Sakina.

Later that evening, Sirajuddin witnesses four men, different from the first group of men who promised the return of his daughter, carrying a young, unconscious girl into the refugee camp's hospital. He follows the stretcher and in a moment of literal clarity, as a "light was switched on", Sirajuddin recognizes the girl as Sakina (Manto, "The Return" 52). He introduces himself to the doctor, who takes Sakina's pulse and pointing at the window, instructs Sirajuddin, "Open it" (Manto, "The Return" 53). At the sound of the command, the girl on the stretcher moves for the first time, groping the "cord which kept her shalwar tied round her waist" with "painful slowness" and unfastening it, pulling down the garment and opening her thighs. In irony, her father shouts with joy, "'She is alive. My daughter is alive!'" (Manto, "The Return" 53). The doctor, as the omniscient viewer, breaks into a "cold sweat," realizing what Sirajuddin does not, or refuses to, acknowledge: Sakina's subconscious movement indicates that she has been raped so repeatedly that the only trigger in her consciousness is the male command, "open it." The referential pronoun "it" referred to the window in the doctor's statement, but Sakina understands "it" to signify her sexuality, the ultimate indicator of the trauma she has

experienced at the hands of the Muslim men, men of her own religion. This crucial detail is a key illustration that the Other was actually the woman. Although the men who find Sakina are of the same religion, Sakina becomes Othered and targeted solely because of her gender. Since she is also of Muslim faith, the reader assumes that the men will safely return Sakina to her father; however, because women were Othered across all religious lines, Sakina's gender is what differentiates her from the eight Muslim men.

Through the narrative of Sakina's recovery, Manto identifies several factors marking the loss, or absence, of her agency as a free-willed individual. Throughout the entire plot, Sakina, although the central female character of the story, is absent in both mental consciousness and physical presence. Her mother, Sirajuddin's wife, is simply an "anonymous massacred wife," among the many "missing mothers, wives and daughters" (Chand 310). The only characters with vocal prowess are male characters, including her father, Sirajuddin, the doctor, the armed men who rape her, and the men who carry her immobile body to the hospital. Literally, Sakina has no voice in the story; even when the men who chase her down the roadside ask for her name, the narrator paraphrases her speech for the reader, granting her no dialogue in narration. In addition to her lack of voice, and therefore, lack of ability to be heard, Sakina, when not running from or being raped by her rapists, possesses no physical consciousness either. The narrative, despite centering on the recovery of Sakina, revolves around the physical and vocal prowess of predominantly male characters. Sirajuddin's regaining of consciousness, movement through refugee camps, and ability to plead, or speak, for his daughter's recovery are all pivotal markers of agency, none of which are attributed to Sakina. No medium is dedicated to communicate her experience, and whatever is known of Sakina's journey of

rehabilitation is seen through the eyes of her father, her rapists, and her male doctor. As author Sarvar V. Sherry Chand argues, "the structure of the story, in some sort, re-enacts the rape of the passive female body, the female body as what the title of another story calls 'cold meat' [or, "Colder than Ice"]" (Chand 310). Manto's attempt to trace Sakina's journey of rehabilitation is overwhelmed by the dominance of a patriarchal structure, creating an ironic narrative given that the climax of the short story is Sakina's arrival at the refugee camp.

In her analysis of "The Return," Das writes that her early presumptions of the story similarly argued that Sakina has been "condemned to a living death" (Das, "Language and Body" 76). In her essay "Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain," however, she contends that there is one more movement in the story that has not yet been comprehended: the father's shout, "My daughter is alive!" Sirajuddin's voice challenges the "societal context of this period, when ideas of purity and honor densely populated the literary narratives, as well as family and political narratives" (77). In his speech, Sirajuddin wills Sakina to live despite her brutal violation, and through "speech of the father, at least, the daughter is alive, and though she may find an existence only in his utterance, he create through his utterance a home for her mutilated and violated self" (77). Das asserts that Sirajuddin's exclamation at the end of the story, "although it has the formal appearance of an indicative statement… is to beseech the daughter to find a way to live in the speech of the father," allowing her to reclaim the honor of her body and beginning a new relationship with his daughter (78). By describing agency in metrics of language, Das provides a new perspective on the agency of Sakina. Is Sakina's immobile body truly socially lifeless and devoid of future

agency, or will she continue living through her father's words? By providing a medium of life, Sirajuddin's language offers a home for Sakina's violated body; however, the medium is through male dialogue, lacking any female voice. The predominance of male characters and male voice in the narrative points directly to the silenced narrative of women's lived experiences; experiences that are forced to remain on her own body and cannot be heard or recovered, not even by a father who spends days seeking his missing daughter.

3.2 "The Dutiful Daughter"

"The year 1948 had begun" (Manto, "The Dutiful Daughter" 96). Saadat Hasan Manto's "The Dutiful Daughter" captures the reality of the legislation passed in the months immediately following August 15, 1947, after the "country had been divided" (96). In this short story, Manto utilizes a frame narrative, or a story within a story, to depict both the scene of refugee camps and a mother's unwavering hope for the return of her abducted daughter. Similar to Vazira Zamindar's observations through her interviews with refugee families, Manto recounts that the camps were "so overcrowded that it seemed quite impossible to push another human being into them" (96). While food and basic living utilities were scarce, "epidemics and infections were common"; however, "such were the times," and with this narrative sigh, Manto moves on to narrate the issue of the rehabilitation of women (96).

Manto's acceptance of the times as "strange, illogical" is indicative of his own lived experience of Partition (98). As a refugee himself, he experienced the forced conversion of a citizen to refugee as well as witnessed firsthand the conditions of these temporary refugee camps. The opening of "The Dutiful Daughter" frames Manto's experience as a refugee in the newly found Pakistan, but more importantly, it depicts the fragility of belonging that the rest of the narrative attempts to capture. His brief six pages of narrative illuminate a multitude of complex issues surrounding the possession of women's bodies. Restoring women and children to their families "amused" Manto, who comments that efforts to rehabilitate women who had been raped and taken away were undertaken by the very people who "had let them be raped and taken away in the first place" (96). Through the irony presented in this statement, Manto forces readers to

confront that the true Other in the subcontinent was the gendered body, the woman. Each side of the border either committed acts of violence on the perceived Other, the religion of the opposite side of their border, as well as on the women of their own religion. As Manto's short stories in the previous chapter capture, the line between neighbor and enemy was blurred, and violence was perpetrated on bodies, not religion.

Before beginning the narrative within his frame, the portion of the short story that concerns a mother's search for her abducted daughter, Manto problematizes the seemingly simple legislation of the Abducted Persons Recovery Bill of 1949 in three vital ways. The reality of the bureaucratic decision to recover persons as though they were government property was "not a simple task" – the difficulties that the task posed were "enormous" (97). Manto cites reasons behind the failure of the legislation in "The Dutiful Daughter" through the reactions of rehabilitated women, the children of rape, and most importantly, the failure of the term "abducted women" itself. In describing the reactions of women upon being found by volunteers in the task force, Manto states that some abducted women either refused to return to their parents, committed suicide on the journey back to their families, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, or had become victims of substance abuse or become friendly with their abductors. After a certain point, there was no difference in these consequences, as the woman being recovered had no means of communicating her own wishes. The abductors themselves were not easily traceable, so justice did not accompany or follow rehabilitation.

Additionally, Manto poses the issue of pregnancy, an inevitable consequence of rape. The "protruding bellies" of the abducted and rehabilitated women offered an "end result" that, in the eyes of the governments, were neither Pakistani nor Indian, unlike the

women whom they mandated be returned to their appropriate nation (97). The "import-export trade" of women across the border of India and Pakistan can be conceptualized through Marxist ideology (98). In the patriarchal nation-based politics of the subcontinent, the human body, and in particular the female body, is allegorized in social situations with Marxian terminology, as explained by feminist and subaltern studies scholar Gayatri Spivak. In her essay "Feminism and Cultural Theory," Spivak explicates how Marxian terms are construed to bolster feminist ideology. The role of the traditional woman in the household, whose only product is housework and children, should be taken into account as the "fundamental human relationship to a product and labor," she argues (79). The decision to exchange women's bodies across the border stemmed from patriarchal society's wish to regain control over sites of reproduction.

The third and most signficant problem of rehabilitation that Manto poses is the concept of terminology: "Why were they being described as abducted women?" ("The Dutiful Daughter" 97). Manto argues that the term "abduction" was used by police forces to describe the elopement of a woman and man – the agency of the woman in such instances was unseen and unacknowledged, as the man was seen as abducting property that did not belong to him. In the case of Partition, however, Manto argues that "women had been taken against their will and violated" (98). Women were unable to exercise agency over their fate, and the term abduction therefore became an equivocation for two very different acts, elopement and violation.

The "import-export" manner in which the trade of abducted persons operated, a phrase coined by Manto in "The Dutiful Daughter," depicts the status of women's bodies as "minoritized bodies," as described by feminist scholar Kavita Daiya, amongst the

populations of the two new nation-states, India and Pakistan. The minoritized body, according to Daiya in her work *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India*, emerges due to non-normative, de-centralized, non-state belongings, is transnational, and challenges the nationalist and colonialist history. The bodies of women who were displaced by violence and again displaced by repatriation transcended borders, both literally and in terms of their identity. Who was an Indian, and who was a Pakistani? If a Pakistani was a Muslim, did the religious identities of Hindu women who were abducted by Muslim men change if they were kept as hostages in their new families, and did those identities reverse when rehabilitated back into their Hindu homes? These were the questions that did not plague concerns of the bureaucracy; the minoritized bodies were not seen as having agency because they were gendered bodies, and as such, the exchange of women's bodies as lootable, recoverable goods continued over the remainder of the 1940's.

In the framed narrative of "The Dutiful Daughter," Manto relays the story of a liaison officer, an officer who was part of the team in charge of recovery of abducted persons. Upon finding Manto, or the narrator, wandering the streets near a refugee camp, the liaison officer remembers the "desolate look" on an elderly woman he encountered while "looking for abducted women from town to town, village to village, street to street" (98). After seeing her in neighboring towns, the officer learned that the woman's daughter had been abducted during riots in Patiala, a town in the state of Punjab located less than 200 miles from the border of India and Pakistan. The officer concludes that "in all probability, she had been killed, but that was something the old woman was not prepared to believe" (98). Upon approaching the woman with his assumption, the

woman retorts, with a "steely conviction in her voice" and "motherhood which would not admit defeat, "'No one can murder my daughter'" (99). The mother is convinced that her daughter is too beautiful to be killed, and if one presumes, her daughter could have been saved by her beauty, or by being taken as a wife. As seen in Manto's short story "The Return," the value placed on feminine beauty assumed that women were incapable of agency; it was their genetic phenotype, existing because of their patriarchal line, which would offer redemption. The officer notes, however, that "in this holocaust, nothing has survived" (100). As he continued his duties as an officer across the border, he repeatedly encountered the woman, who never wavered in her belief that her daughter was alive. When another volunteer suggested that the woman be escorted to an asylum in Pakistan, the officer refuses, noting that already, "she was in a vast asylum where nothing made any sense" (100). Like the narrator earlier in the story, the officer acknowledges the sheer volume of Partition's madness, a theme familiar in Manto's short stories. The officer continues his story, confirming that he did look for the girl in question, whom a shopkeeper believed was being kept in a Hindu home. After his exchange with the shopkeeper, the officer notices a couple – a Sikh man and a woman "beautiful beyond words" wearing a white veil (101). The Sikh points out to the beautiful woman that her mother is nearby, but the woman, glancing at her mother, the old woman, grabs his arm and says, "Let's go," after which the two hurry away (101). The old woman noticed the couple, too, and began shouting, presumably, the name of her daughter, "Bhagbari" (101). Feigning ignorance, the officer approached the old woman, who trembled, "'I have seen my daughter… I have seen Bhagbari'" (101). The officer, however, assures the woman that her daughter is dead. When the old woman screams that he is lying, the

officer exclaims, “I swear on God your daughter is dead,” upon which the old woman falls “in a heap on the road” (101).

In Manto’s style of climactic endings, the short story ends at the collapse, and death, of the old woman on the side of the road. The truth is left unclear, and the reader remains unsure concerning Bhagbari’s story. The reader does not know if Bhagbari had been kidnapped, had eloped with the Sikh, or had accepted her fate and did not wish to reunite with her mother. The purposeful blending of facts with imagination is a feat common in all of Manto’s nonfiction, and the simple, accessible language with which the story is conveyed attempts to make sense of the distorted nature of reality and madness that was Partition. More importantly, it questions whether a woman who has been stripped of her honor, either by rape or abduction, can be contained in a society that wishes to rid itself of any evidence of madness. The silenced narrative of Bhagbari’s decisions alludes to the silence that the community wished to impose on both its abducted and repatriated women. If abducted and not repatriated, the woman would convert to the religion of her abductor, silencing her past and eliminating her own experiences. If abducted and repatriated, either the community to which the woman returned did not provide space for her to convey her past lived experience or she had been so accustomed to submitting to male demands that she remained silent even upon her return, as in the case of Sakina in “The Return.”

The task of properly rehabilitating women fell primarily on women’s shoulders, since, as seen through Manto’s “The Return,” male efforts to recuperate women often displaced and failed to recognize women’s experiences altogether. The resettlement of displaced people that followed 1947 was linked with “national reconstruction,” and the

"task of restoration had to be imbued with a sense of compensating for the loss, as well as… starting afresh," write Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin (177). One of the women whom Menon and Bhasin interviewed through their project, Krishna Thapar, recognized that some "women tried to escape themselves," without the help of governmental recovery (177). Having experienced displacement across the Punjab border, Thapar worked with women who escaped or who were returned; she assisted them in obtaining abortions, which were illegal, so that their families would claim them upon their return (Menon and Bhasin 177). Impregnation by the Other condemned the woman to otherness, and the resulting child, along with the mother, would be shunned from the community to which the mother originally belonged. As such, Krishna Thapar assisted the returning women in obtaining abortions sooner in their pregnancies so that individuals in the community would not "probe their pasts" or "dwell on their tragedies too much" (Menon and Bhasin 178). It is unknown whether in "The Dutiful Daughter" Bhagbari's mother would greet Bhagbari as the woman she was prior to Partition. Despite endlessly seeking her daughter, the old woman may have not accepted Bhagbari had Bhagbari willingly escaped with her abductor. Bhagbari's ambiguous past is not revealed to the reader, conveying the silence in which women suffered displacement and violence in Partition.

3.3 "A Girl from Delhi"

In another narrative situated after the date of Partition, Manto explores life in the new promised land of Pakistan. In his short story "A Girl from Delhi," Manto follows the displacement of Nasim Akhtar, a "young and much-sought-after singing and dancing girl from old Delhi's red light quarter" under the care of her mother, an old woman, and her music teacher, Ustad Achhan Khan (123). The story begins with Nasim's concerns about the continuing "religious killings" which showed "no sign of abating" (123). Nasim Akhtar voices her concerns, alongside her music teacher, about their safety as Muslims should they continue living in Delhi, the capital of the newly independent India. Ustad Achhan Khan also pleads, arguing that the reign of the new Indian state will be the "Hindu Raj," who "don't want any Muslims around" (123). Like other short story writers of the period, such as Intizar Hussain, Manto expresses the sentiments of mass migration of the 1940s; while many Hindus and Muslims fled in search of refuge across the border, many refused to leave the place where their family had lived for years preceding the Partition. In interviews with survivors, Zamindar verifies this sense of belonging that many felt to their homeland. While reports of "horrific bloodletting in… particularly Punjab [or along the border]" filled news outlets, the cosmopolitan cities of Bombay and Delhi, although farther away from the border, experienced their share of fear and violence as well (Zamindar 19). The "real and imagined hostilities along purportedly religious lines" in the cities caused the sudden departure of many families who would otherwise have chosen to remain amongst both their Muslim and Hindu neighbors (Zamindar 19). As Nasim Akhtar's mother states in the narrative, "We are in business because of our Hindu patrons and clients… There's nothing the Muslims can do for us or

that we want from them, I am telling you…. In fact, I have no doubt that in Pakistan we will be reduced to sweeping the streets" (Manto, "A Girl from Delhi" 124).

As a means of easing her daughter's tensions, the old woman, who remains unnamed in the story, asks Seth Gobind Prakash, a Hindu client and admirer of Nasim Akhtar, to "kindly come and set her mind at rest" (124). The old woman also asks whether "two or three armed guards" could be dispatched to guard their home for a few days so that her daughter could feel safe (124). Seth Gobind Prakash assures the woman that the guards will be posted by that same evening. After his departure, however, the house servant bursts into the home, claiming that he had just seen "five Sikhs pounce on a Muslim street vendor just around the corner and stab him to death in the most gruesome manner" (125). Upon hearing this news, Nasim Akhtar nearly faints, but her mother remains unfazed, saying, "This is not the first time a man has been killed in the street; these things are always going on" (125-126). The mother's detached, dulled reactions to the blood "flowing in the streets of Delhi" is a conscious reaction of Saadat Hasan Manto; his narration through his stories reflect the emotionless response that the sheer volume of violence elicited from many witnesses to the horrific events.

When she notices three men posing as armed policemen outside her *kotha*, or residence, Nasim Akhtar asks whether the men are the same guards that Seth Gobind Prakash had promised to send. Ustad Achhan Khan, however, calls them "goondas," or hoodlums, and rushes Nasim upstairs as they approach the house. Nasim's mother, who is unaware of their conversation, happily greets the armed men, who announce, "We don't want you, you old hag. We have come for the young one," which Ustad Achhan Khan overhears and rushes to tell Nasim (127). Nasim, now desperate to leave, agrees to

leave behind her mother and escape Delhi with Ustad Achhan Khan. Through their travel to Lahore, Pakistan, Manto offers a glimpse into the struggles of those migrating. After Nasim and Ustad Achhan Khan jump from the rooftop of Nasim's residence, they encounter a Muslim *tonga,* or horse carriage, driver who offers them a ride to the railway station, which is unusually busy with "special refugee trains" (128). Along their way to the station, they see an "army truck with Muslim soldiers who were evacuating [Muslim] people from Hindu areas and taking them to the station" (128). Nasim Akhtar and Ustad Achhan Khan hitch a ride from this truck, enabling them to board one of the "special refugee trains" to Lahore, where they luckily arrive the next morning – luckily, since as seen through Manto's depictions of train travels, the mass killings on trains both delayed the time in reaching the trains' destinations and annihilated numbers of families who boarded the train in hopes of refuge.

After a few weeks of living in a refugee camp, a period of time which the narrator minimizes to a single sentence, Ustad Achhan Khan sells Nasim Akhtar's jewelry so that the two can move to a "small, inexpensive hotel" before renting a *kotha,* smaller than the one in Delhi, in Lahore's courtesan district (128). When Ustad Achhan Khan suggests that they resume their courtesan entertainment again, Nasim Akhtar tearfully realizes that her "heart is not in that sort of thing any more" and that "that life for [her] is finished" (128). She relays her hopes of marrying and asks her music mentor to help her find a suitable match. While Ustad Achhan Khan attempts to decipher this change in Nasim's behavior, he wonders whether it was the "Partition of the country that had unhinged her" because normally, "women in this profession were not like this" (129). In tracing Ustad Achhan Khan's consciousness, Manto illustrates a prominent social, gendered stereotype:

women, whose profession depended on the patronage of men, were not to express desires of their own and were recognized as even more subordinate than other, more respectable women. After unsuccessfully attempting to change Nasim's wishes, Ustad Achhan Khan "gave up on her," but not before finding a small house for her far from the red light district in which their *kotha* was situated (129). Once completing his duties, Achhan Khan returns to the red light district and continues his life as a courtesan musician.

Following her newly found independence, Nasim Akhtar learns to live alone, with a young servant boy to help her around the house and the profits from the sale of the remainder of her jewelry. She becomes "very religious, praying five time a day, abstaining from food and drink during Ramadhan" (129). As she slowly life of the "spinster," or single, self-producing woman, that she was so afraid of becoming at first, an elderly procuress named Jannatey begins to visit her, although Nasim is unaware of the woman's true identity. Upon hearing Nasim sing one day, Jannatey attempts to convince Nasim to return to the red light district and become "one of Lahore's leading singing girls" (130). Nasim, however, remains firm in her resistance and Jannatey, in deceit, promises to find Nasim a "perfect husband" (130). As Nasim's faith in Jannatey grows, Jannatey brings her a number of fake proposals before finding one that Nasim would deem agreeable: "He was not too old, had a lot of property, was of a fine, upright moral character" (130). Nasim Akhtar meets the man on the day of their marriage, and the narrator informs the reader that she is "happy that she had found a good husband who would look after her;" however, her "happiness was not to last beyond twenty-four hours" (131). In the span of a single paragraph, Nasim's life unbalances once again as she, and the reader, learn that her husband and Jannatey have been plotting to sell her into

prostitution. Nasim Akhtar, in an effort to control her own displacement, dons the jeweled clothes she wore on her escape from Delhi and rushes to the *kotha* where her former mentor, Ustad Achhad Khan, is employed, and the reader is left to speculate about what becomes of Nasim Akhtar, the woman who tried to become the agent of her own life but is left with no choice but to return to the life she had hoped to escape.

In this rendering of post-Partition drama, Manto depicts a woman wishing to wield agency but ultimately failing. Unlike the many stories of unconscious, silent women, "A Girl from Delhi" centers on a young woman who is cognizant of the violence and subjugation of women that stemmed from Partition violence; however, she is naïve and falls prey to predators within her own religious community where she thought she could be saved. Similar to Kalwant Kaur in "Colder than Ice," Nasim Akhtar chooses to become an agent of her own life, despite eventually experiencing the social death she wishes to avoid. Kalwant Kaur, in committing a crime of passion by killing her husband, lives a life that the narrative of the story does not explore or explain. Similarly, Nasim Akhtar, by giving into the very social pressures of courtesan life that she wished to escape, settles for a life that the narrative does not explore. The end of Kalwant's and Nasim's short-lived agency is signified by the end of each of their narratives, alluding to the ultimate system of patriarchy in which they lived.

The exchange of women's bodies as bureaucratic property continues in "A Girl from Delhi" as well, but in a different light. Here, Manto highlights the prostitution industry, arguing that there were no safe spaces for women, not even in the promised land of Pakistan. Whether she remained with her family in the Other's community or whether she moved to the newly designated homeland for her religious community, a woman is

continuously silenced and subjected to male agency. Manto's "A Girl from Delhi" highlights how acts of violence and barbarism prevail any perceived borders. The pervading theme of women as vessels of male honor is paramount in this final short story, as Manto details the complicated nature of women's agency – women who possess agency in their own rehabilitation into society remain prey to structures of patriarchal power.

Conclusion

Each story in this thesis has attempted to explore how women's experiences at the time of India's independence and partition are structured by discourses of gender. Rather than insinuate that narratives of gendered violence fill gaps in the existing nationalist historiography of Partition, I have argued, through the literary analyses of Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories, that the fictional narrative accentuates the absence of women's narratives of the history of Partition and functions as an alternative form of the archive altogether. Through an examination of existing scholarship and theory, the thesis also suggests reasons for the dearth of women's experiences in nationalist historiography – namely, the process of othering women.

The force and conviction with which Manto delivers his narratives of violence conveys the ambiguous violence of communal conflict; more importantly, his narratives of violence undercut just how peculiar each act of violence was to the individual victim. The characters in Manto's stories, particularly the male characters, are both human and inhumane, all Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim. Manto does not spare or favor any religious or communal lines. Each side directly or indirectly experienced the ruthless trauma and uprooting of refugees during Partition, regardless of religious or political affiliation. His narratives do not offer moral critique; rather, the dialogues stand alone, windows to the horrific violence occurring outside the reader's experience. The male-dominated dialogues of "Bitter Harvest," "The Return," and "A Dutiful Daughter," point to the patriarchal, nationalist rhetoric that dominated Partition, while the agency of Kalwant Kaur and Nasim Akhtar in "Colder than Ice" and "A Girl from Delhi" capture how women remain trapped in a cyclical, patriarchal system of oppression.

As a witness and victim of communal tensions and displacement of Partition, Manto created characters, dialogues, and scenes of sexual violence and rioting in his works to mirror his everyday experiences. In the summer of 1947, his wife and her family moved to what would be Pakistan, and, reluctant to leave behind his beloved city of Bombay, Manto followed shortly after (Alter 92). The controversial topics of prostitution, violence against women, and revenge that his fiction grappled with strained his relations with the Progressive Writers Movement, his group of literary thinkers who shunned Manto for obscenity in his works (Jalal 207). Manto became "depressed and disillusioned with the literary and political life," resorting to alcohol to cure his sensitivities to the harsh realities around him (Alter 92). With an uncertain and unstable future facing him in Pakistan, Manto was unable to rehabilitate himself to his new life in Lahore (Alter 92). His addiction to alcohol worsened, leading to the cirrhosis of his liver and his eventual death in 1955 at the mere age of forty-two (Jalal 207). Ironically, Manto had already written his own epitaph while obliging a stenographer with his autograph in 1954 (Jalal 210). The epitaph read:

> Here lies Saadat Hasan Manto. With him lie buried all the arts and mysteries of short story writing… Under tons of earth he lies, wondering who of the two is the greater short story writer: God or he. (Qureshi 705)

Although the epitaph does not appear on his grave in the Miani Sahib cemetery in Lahore, the following couplet written by Manto does appear as his epitaph:

> This is the grave of Saadat Hasan Manto,
> who still thinks his name was not the repeated word on the tablet of time. (Jalal 210)

The fact that his intended epitaph is not used on his gravestone is what Ayesha Jalal, his great-niece, calls the "pity of Pakistan" (Jalal 210). Thousands of refugees who migrated to Pakistan during Partition, including Manto and his fictional character Nasim Akhtar in "A Girl from Delhi," experienced the disillusionment of Pakistan, a promised land for the Muslim community. The separation of families; deaths of men, women, and children; and the assaults and disappearances of mothers, wives, and daughters lingered unwaveringly in the minds of refugees and did not halt for years to come. His original epitaph is also fitting, as he challenges the religious beliefs that drove bureaucratic decisions of Partition. Manto "saw through the falsity of religious and political rhetoric, particularly in the context of Partition," allowing him to describe the communal, graphic, and disturbing acts of violence in his stories without taking sides (Alter 93). To Manto, "an act of rape or murder is committed by an individual man, who cannot cloak or disguise his actions behind an ethnic or religious identity" (Alter 93). Similarly, author Khushwant Singh chides religion as a façade for committing violence in *Train to Pakistan*:

> India is constipated with a lot of humbug. Take religion. For the Hindu, it means little besides caste and cow-protection. For the Muslim, circumcision and kosher meat. For the Sikh, long hair and hatred of the Muslim. For the Christian, Hinduism with a sola topee. For the Parsi, fire-worship and feeding vultures. Ethics, which should be the kernel of religious code, has been carefully removed. (Singh 171)

Singh's disillusionment with religion mirrors Manto's disillusionment with religion as well as his disillusionment of Pakistan. These examples are not to argue that the literary

is juxtaposed with religion; rather, the literary is distanced enough from reality that it is able to recognize the blind spots along religious and communal lines. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's argument that women were targeted because they were vessels of honor, therefore, is challenged by Manto's short stories; instead, the ideologies of "man versus man" and "man versus woman" characterize Partition violence.

Through collections of interviews with female survivors and witnesses of Partition, however, the works of Menon, Bhasin, Butalia, and Zamindar situate the fictional narratives of Manto. Like the women of Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories, female survivors and witnesses of Partition cannot "speak" of their experiences – in Manto's stories, the male-dominated dialogues and social politics silenced women's voices, and in experiences of women such as Kamla Patel, whom Menon and Bhasin interview, the question of how to voice their experiences of Partition became problematic. As seen through the unconscious, silent female body in Manto's short stories, women are segments on the peripherals of patriarchy, and the agency of women is not acknowledgeable. The very idea of the agency of the subaltern woman creates discomfort in not only historiography but patriarchal society as well. The violence that women experienced as Partition cannot be represented in the archive; it can only be called to attention by "fragments" of the archive, such as through Manto's works of fiction. The female survivors of Partition are forced to live in their female body, in a body that represents the incommunicability of the violence only they have experienced.

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