FORGIVENESS
BETWEEN MEMORY AND HISTORY

Forgiveness

Between Memory And History

by

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to the future generations
with the hope that they'll be wiser than us.

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Preface

This work has risen out of a felt, genuine need of our times. In the last half century, violence and forgiveness have travelled together, each questioning and interrogating the role of the other in the future history of humanity. Violence is part of all change, the act of birth as well as the act of survival. It characterises creation myths but it acquires a problematic dimension when it loses its creative potential and acquires a wholly destructive role altering our social sphere and our inner beings, our thought processes and our relationships with others, especially in these times of rising ethnonationalisms.

The idea of forgiveness is embedded primarily in the religious and spiritual sphere in man's relationship to god. When it enters a political discourse it necessarily has to address questions of inequality, power, guilt, justice and memory. The discourse in the West, in the aftermath of the Second World War and the liberation of the erstwhile colonies, has focused on it as a political gesture of reconciliation. Several philosophers such as Jacques Derrida and Paul Ricoeur have located it in historical and legal issues placing it, almost exclusively in Abrahamic religions, ignoring the rest of the world outside the religions of the book. Here an attempt is being made to relate both violence and forgiveness to other cultural pasts and religious discourses and explore the possibility of a dialogue between them.

Forgiveness, in itself, can play an important role in allowing us to come to terms with our past, intervene in the course of history and its cycle of revenge, hatred and animosities which are carried from one generation to another, embitter our memories and result in continued violence. A shift in attitudes is quite capable of bringing about positive changes at both personal

and political levels. Closely allied to all activities of peace, the search for forgiveness is in reality a search for a change in our way of thinking and behaving. How long can the ordinary man submit to a passive role in the game of power and live in a continued sense of insecurity and fear? Ideological wars have pushed the world towards divisions such as the partitions of India, Vietnam, Korea and post-war Germany testify. The long period of the Cold War, the subsequent single power centre and once again the resurfacing of ideological skirmishes in other countries - they all call for a deeper attention to human attitudes and the human being we are creating.

Perhaps, the basic struggle has to be one of individual will against the political ideology of violence. In a recent issue of *Frontline*, A.G. Noorani has emphasised the necessity of strengthening cultural bonds between India and Pakistan because of the two different strands that run side by side: 'the terrible estrangement between them at the government level, and the enormous yearning among their peoples for exchanges between them' ('India and Pakistan: Bonds of Culture', *Frontline,* April 4, 2014 62-64; 62). Alongside shared histories and cultures, are also memories of a violent past. And in India's multi-religious and multi-lingual society, divided by caste and economic hierarchies, inter-community conflicts, atrocities and incidents of violence abound. These oppositional and conflicting discourses increasingly point towards the necessity of developing the ability to forgive and the humility of being forgiven.

Aimé Césaire opened his work *Discourse on Colonialism* with comments on the state of civilization, 'A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization' (1950, New Delhi: Aakar Books, 2010). He goes on further to define its blindness in terms of being stricken and its deceit as death (31). Today, terror is located right in the midst of what Huntington has labelled the 'clash of civilizations', a clash between two ways of believing and thinking, where postures harden and difference seems to acquire a priority over accommodation. Huntington perceives a national unity in western thought processes but perceives the non-western world

as divided. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* lends itself to several different interpretations at the political and psychological levels. Does it express a subterranean wish for western supremacy ranging as it does against difference? Does it claim a universal, homogenous model of existence? Huntington traces the decline of western civilization to the resurgence of indigenous civilizations which, with their rising religious fundamentalism, revolt against the domination of the west. The timing and the strategy of Huntington's thesis is in itself suspect.

Placed against the background of divisive power structures and their use of the human being, forgiveness becomes an indispensable part of personal and cultural behaviour, pushing one to realise the importance of relationships and the recognition of the 'other' as an equal. Is it a realisable goal or an idealistic one? Is it or is it not possible to forgive? How does it work in personal and political spheres and across nation states in the international scenario? Is it a weakness or strength? These and a host of other questions crowd in on the issue. Ordinarily, the idea of forgiveness meets with scepticism and disbelief, reflecting our fixed notions of our own positions. And exactly because of this it is all the more necessary to question our own set ideas and beliefs and to think about forgiveness, to break the exclusivity of the western discourse on the subject and to intervene and provide a perspective from our locations, to acquire a voice and make our position felt. Closer home, the continuity of communal riots, the migration of affected populations to new ghettos, outside their erstwhile habitation, and the compulsion to live perpetually in emotional and economic instabilities, compel us to think seriously about bringing about some constructive change in our relationships.

Besides the civil wars and resistance movements in the subcontinent, the wider world tells a similar story. The US-USSR fighting a proxy war in Afghanistan and the wars in Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, the 9/11 and the US-Iraq war and worldwide struggles for self-expression, freedom and equality have marked the history of the last few decades markedly

affecting the quality of life. The effort to understand the complexity of forgiving and of transferring it from a solely religious to a socio-political discourse, translating it into cultural perspectives, is worth it.

I have been working on this subject for several years and have come to look upon forgiveness as an essential part of our moral being. Over the years, I have found support for my work through a senior fellowship from the Centre for Contemporary Theory in 2009 and a second from the Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics in 2013. Sister organisations, both are located in Baroda. But what has brought it to this stage was a Visiting Professorship at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla in 2012 when I lectured on this subject. It was during these periods that I had access to their libraries and the opportunity of interacting with fellow scholars. I express my gratitude to Professor Prafulla Kar of the Centre for Contemporary Theory and to Professor Peter Ronald deSouza, who invited me in 2012 to the Institute. Had he not given me this opportunity, this work may not have arrived at this point. The central three chapters were delivered as a series of three talks at the Institute where a two-week course had also been organised during this period on the *Mahabharata*, to which I was invited as a resource person. Some of the thoughts expressed there have also come to form part of this work enabling me to view the epic in a wider perspective. The stay at the Institute also made it possible for me to consult the multi-volume translation of the *Mahabharata* and understand the finer nuances, which one is likely to miss in abridged versions.

My debt is even greater to all those who were sceptical or on the periphery because their attitude pushed me further into research, rethinking and to closer philosophical analysis. The question still remains: is the act of forgiving an emotional or a rational one? Perhaps both - the rational is in the need itself, the emotional in its self-reflection.

A word of acknowledgement for the cooperation and support extended to me by Debashree Sen, the then Academic Research Officer, and Ashok Sharma, the then Public Relations Officer,

and their successors who are now holding these positions and in correspondence with me. I thank Mr Prem Chand and Mr Kamal Sharma. My sincere thanks are also due to the staff of the various libraries I have consulted. Finally, I need to place on record my sincere gratitude to the Institute, specifically to the Director whose own academic interests were wide enough to embrace other No matter to what extent a work is an individual effort, there are always unseen forces guiding it which influence its course: events, literatures of loss, family and friends, the whole world around

d us - all have a little share in the thought processes reflected in any intellectual pursuit.

JASBIR JAIN

1

Prologue: Contesting Discourses

The future will demand a reckoning
M.G. Vassanji, *The Gunny Sack*[1]

Forgiveness, in itself, is an abstract concept, but it anchors itself in a multiplicity of disciplines and processes. One needs to forgive or be forgiven when some act of wrong has been committed or some injury caused either knowingly or unknowingly. It could have happened in the past, which may have been a cultural past such as caste discrimination in India, slavery in America, apartheid in South Africa and the histories of imperial conquests. Forgiveness is an act of reconciliation and has normally based itself on reciprocity. One-sided action is likely to make the relationship unequal. But in several of the examples cited above, an identifiable agency is missing and no one-to-one communication is possible.

Violence seems to have interlaced itself with life from times immemorial. The very act of birth is a violent one, Hindu creation myths reflect a similar condition and the creation as described in the Old Testament is also a reordering, a readjustment of space with new entrants into it. The history of civilizations is replete with examples of this reordering as geographical boundaries have been re-formed, religious wars have been fought and large-scale migrations have taken place. Has there ever been a world without violence? Several years ago, when I was working on violence, I realised it is also the essence of the creative process ('The Necessary Burden of Violence and the Compulsive Search for Peace'). But when we critique it, it is not the creative aspects that one needs to focus on but the acts of the violence and aggression born out of greed or hatred, or a

feeling of vengeance, acts that tend to dehumanise both the aggressor and the victim. It can, like the Hiroshima and Nagasaki, be bomb explosions, leading to long- lasting radiation affect on the lives of the innocent and the unborn. The subtle distinction between creative violence and destructive violence is the difference between a musical melody (which speaks of relationships) and a bomb explosion which does not recognise the human factor. The twentieth century, aided by science and technology, is a history of unprecedented violence against human beings as well as the environment. Every fresh act of violence calls forth earlier memories and further feeds hatred. Violence and forgiveness both go beyond the immediate; they have long-term psychological effects, which govern our intellectual and moral well-being. A discussion on forgiveness cannot ignore the ethical because the act is built on a relationship between the self and the other.

It becomes necessary to look closely at the two discourses that have gained prominence in the resistance struggles of the last century, one of non-violence and the other of violence. Each developed as means of protest against the forces of imperial powers and the injustices perpetuated by them in the continued erasure of native epistemologies, cultures and traditions as well as the exploitation of economic resources. While Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*[2], written in the aftermath of the London bomb explosions, sought to provide a counter strategy to violence, Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*[3] argued for the legitimacy and indispensability of violence to freedom struggles and the process of decolonisation but the main emphasis in each is on the need for social transformation. While Gandhi's strategy was aimed at bringing about a more fundamental transformation in the individual through self-awareness and strengthening of will power as a prerequisite for social change, it also had a long-term goal of inducting a sense of morality and ethics in politics, Fanon perceived the change in the individual as an aftermath of action not as a prerequisite in the initial stages. Violence, for him, was method.

Gandhi has had a following across race, religion and nation. To mention only a few: Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Václev Havel. They were men who recognised the strength of non-violence in its long term role, in preserving the fabric of human emotions. Václev Havel pointed out that it was no longer possible, in the post-war and post-totalitarian world, to base any system on the 'unadulterated, brutal and arbitrary application of power, eliminating all expression of non-conformity' *(The Power of the Powerless 6)*[4]. Havel was fighting a battle against two totalitarian systems, Fascism and Communism, both indifferent to the individual and his need for choice and systems which believed in using power as a mode of thought-control. Havel considered ideology to be a specious way of relation to the world whereas 'living within the truth, as humanity revolts against an enforced position, is, on the contrary, an attempt to regain control over one's own sense of responsibility' and this 'living within the truth was a basic existential... starting point' for all opposition and dissident movement (25). Havel's *The Power of the Powerless* is an in-depth study of the gains of any non-violent movement. The development of a moral consciousness is existential in its basis and it should 'provide hope of a moral reconstitution of society, which implies a radical renewal of relationship to human order, a renewed rootedness in the universe, a newly grasped higher responsibility, a new found inner relation to other people', all of which clearly indicate the choices mankind must make (76).

But violence attracts immediate attention and has greater visibility on account of its sheer destructiveness. We are aware of the centrality of Fanon's thought in postcolonial discourse and its infiltration into insurgent movements, inspired by its rhetoric. Why? Does it promise quick results or does it claim sacrifice and obedience as a retaliatory gesture? Violent movements have been separatists, racists and aggressive; violence has a long history in both acts of domination and resistance. In the first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, 'Concerning Violence', Fanon points towards the violence inherent in any process of decolonisation in which the basic demand is a replacement of a certain 'species' of

men by another 'species' of men. Conscious of the need to remould the individual (27-28), Fanon differs from Gandhi with regard to the agencies of change. Decolonisation evokes for him 'searing bullets and bloodstained knives....'(28) as a transforming agency.[5] The constant degradation of the colonised pushes them towards hatred both of the self and the other. For Fanon, negotiations are a timid compromise. And violence, he believes, is a means of unifying the community: when each member is compelled to strike a blow, it leads to individual responsibility (73-74). We have seen this happening in times of war, but riots and violent resistance movements are often divisive and, at times, may lead to genocide. Instead of two, three parties enter the arena with the state becoming a powerful player. Fanon's view that violence 'of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity' (69) does not necessarily hold and it, perhaps, leaves no space for bridging the difference. Can an act of violence be a process of rehabilitation of the self and assist the recovery of lost dignity? Gandhi doubted this, as he brought in the notion of both conscience and guilt into the discourse.[6] Fanon's reasoning behind violence becoming a means of recovering dignity does not offer a solution. Nayomi Munaveera's novel about the civil war in Sri Lanka, *An Island of a Thousand Mirrors,* offers a similar explanation in the portrayal of the suicide bomber's search for self-respect.[7]

Pushing a young girl towards a violent death on the grounds of her abduction and the consequent social stigma and disguising this act as a restoration of self-respect and identity through a violent sacrifice is an act of cowardice and failure on part of the community. The question whether retaliation can undo the past or does it, to the contrary, gain further access to one's psyche has no easy solution and continues to haunt one. Soldiers, innocent agents of violence, have often experienced guilt and neurotic illnesses that have changed the course of their lives.

Throughout the last century, means of production have played a major role in ideological warfare. (Earlier on, the imperial

forays into other lands were also a search for both space and natural resources). The war between capitalism and communism has affected all aspects of life. In her 2003 novel, *Lesser Breeds,* Nayantara Sahgal works with two different cartographic representations of the non-western world identifying it, in the first map, in accordance with the availability of natural resources, the resources which attracted the imperial powers and in the second, labelling the non-western areas as inhabited by monsters, attacking both their dignity and their survival.[8] The concluding section of the novel, a brief one, is entitled 'Trade Winds' which reflects upon the violence inherent in capitalistic greed. The Gandhian vision is perceived as a fragile dream, a fairy tale but strangely enough, the dissidents from the world of power, have faith in it and recognise its value for all that is worth in our life. Fairy tales have an uncanny knack of coming true.

Fanon has been more visible than Gandhi just as a violent act carries more drama and initially it attracts, as we have seen in militant movements, for the requirements for sacrifice come later. Despite spread of religious belief, pacifist movements and rising capitalism, violence persists on account of various reasons such as extremism, war and inequality. Does there always have to be a counterforce? A Cain to an Abel? Is there an element of violence even in non-violence? The word 'violence' does not always evoke negative images, especially when we want to shake someone or something up. Kant's theory of dynamic force is constituted upon the principle of coming together of two opposite forces, like attraction and repulsion. On the other hand, non-violence does not imply passivity. It too calls for a change, an inner realisation and awareness. It carries within it self-reflection and the possibility of healing. It calls for a respect for difference and recognition of the 'other' as human. The discourse of forgiveness points towards the past and dismisses any justification for revenge of the wrongs of history, or on the basis of racial or community memories: a Sikh cannot kill a Muslim because once a Guru was martyred by the Muslims, or a mosque be demolished because at some point of time, a temple had been demolished. Human beings have to negotiate between

remembering and forgetting, and to awaken in themselves sensitiveness to the relation between tradition and its meaning. Our epics and scriptures offer multiple approaches to the past. The stories that crowd their pages are parabolic in content and are open to different interpretations as they debate between good and evil, right and wrong, *karma* and agency.

In the following pages, it is proposed to explore the debates on forgiveness in the western discourse before moving on to intervening in its exclusivity by tracing eastern traditions and working with the relationship between history, memory and the present, a relationship which has meaning for the future of humanity. For any dialogue, theory or position, the past has necessarily to be included as an active participant. The meaning of the word 'forgiveness' embraces both private and public spheres in its extensions to understanding the other and learning to live together, at least in some measured scale, so as to reduce the violence and the mounting aggression in our lives.

NOTES

1. *The Gunny Sack*, 154.
2. Gandhi. *Hind Swaraj* (1909). *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* with an Introduction by Anthony Parel. (Cambridge: CUP, 1997) 2002. During his ship journey from England to South Africa and the work makes a very significant statement on tradition and history and projects a political ideology. Originally written in Gujarati, it was later translated into English.
3. *The Wretched of the Earth* (1951).Translated by Constance Farrington. (London: Penguin Books), 2001, 27-74.
4. Václev Havel's *The Power of the Powerless,* has been hailed as the most logically argued statement of dissent. (Havel pdf www.cwu.edu/easleyr/ history...power) Accessed on 22 June 2013. I would also like to draw attention to Foucault's 'Two Lectures' on power in *Power/Knowledge*: *Selected Interviews and Other Writing* 1972-1977. Ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon), 1980, 78-108, wherein he discusses the possibility of the circulation of power (98), the system of right and its likely relationship with truth, 'The intention of the decision'. The question he asks is 'What is the aim of someone who possesses power' (97).

5. Fanon writes, 'It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history's floodlights upon them.... Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural agency' (28).
6. Gandhi's focus is not on the post-action transformation but on a pre-action transformation which brings a long-lasting social and behavioural change, a consciousness which works outside the limited ego of the self.
7. Munaveera's novel, *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* (New Delhi: Hatchette, 2013), deals with the difference in political and personal relationships between the Tamil and the Sinhala. Willing to shed prejudices and capable of crossing over to the other in friendship and love at the personal level where only the human response matters, politically they confront each other reducing the Tamil to an insignificant margin. The negative self-image inspires the Tamil rebels to discard their non- essentiality through violence and aspire to martyrdom.
8. Refer Nayantara Sahgal's *Lesser Breeds* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2003). There is a map in Bhai's study which marks the areas of European occupation in different coloured patches: 'scarlet, purple, indigo, black, harsh patches whose authority compelled the eye to tin and timber, copper, rubber, lead and oil. To gold and diamonds too, and other buried treasure....'(79). And later, in America, in Mr. Jenner's office, there is another map of the world, which clearly marked the colonisers and the colonised as two different worlds. Wealth mattered, 'The Map of the World facing his satin-wood desk admirably preserved the distinction. Early medieval Europe floated in unnamed seas surrounded by black lands lettered. Peopled by Monsters' (220). Out of this very world, rose Gandhi's philosophy, based on tradition and hospitality to other cultures, to challenge power and violence.

2

Why Forgiveness? Meaning, Relevance and the Problematics of the Discourse

If we look only to retributive justice, then we could just as well close up shop. Forgiveness…is practical politics, without forgiveness there is no future.

Desmond Tutu[1]

What I really want now is to forget everything. . . that my mind be wiped clean..... so that there is no desire for revenge… none of that.

Krishna Baldev Vaid, *The Broken Mirror* [2]

Against the background we have charted in the Prologue, it should not be difficult to answer the question 'Why forgiveness?' As a concept, it is as old as the hills and as young as a newborn child; it has been with us in religious and spiritual discourses and in the relationship between God and man. Words like confession, penance, mercy, grace and redemption have been markers of this discourse. The human relationship with the divine is marked by a pronounced degree of inequality and it calls forth humility and self-reflection. In the last fifty odd years, the word has shifted ground to political histories, negotiations and relationships and has come to occupy a place in continental philosophy. Now that forgiveness is placed within human possibilities, the natural question that arises is: do other things remain the same or is there a shift in the meaning and the process of 'forgiving'. It continues to be placed between power relationships but the gift of forgiving is now shifted to the victim of aggression.

The act of forgiveness in a political discourse is also not entirely new. One can trace its earlier histories moving as far back as Ashoka (3rd BCE) and locate it in Gandhi's political thought in our own times. But in the post Holocaust phase, the dimensions have changed. The war trials were held on the grounds of 'crimes against history'. Is it that the acts of asking for and of granting forgiveness are being treated as substitutes for treaties and agreements? Does the act of forgiveness grant an unconditional pardon without going into the details of repentance, change of heart, punishment or healing?

The Nuremberg Trials (1945-1949) were held with the idea of prosecution and punishment,[3] the defendants were men who had never realised the scale of the brutality they had been instrumental in unleashing. George Steiner once pointed to the contradictions in human character where it is possible for the extremes of brutality and a sensitivity to art to co-exist.[4] Commenting on Céline's anti-Semitic attitude, he pointed out, '...there is now a good deal of evidence that artistic sensibility and the production of art is no bar to active barbarism ...a human being can play Bach in the evening, and play him well, or read Pushkin, and read him with insight and proceed in the morning to do his job at Auschwitz and in the police cellar' (Steiner 45). Steiner emphasised the gravity of this phenomenon which 'recent history has thrust on us': the presence of poetic humanism and political sadism in a single psyche (*ibid.*, 55). No wonder that many of the defendants (the accused) were ordinary people, good fathers and good husbands. How did they act as they did? What is it that erases the humanity of the victim for the aggressor, is a question difficult to answer: madness, frenzy or sheer hatred, or something even more dangerous such as nationalism gone awry?

The Tokyo Trials (1946-1948) followed a similar course. Held in the War Ministry Office, they lasted two and half years. Public and political gestures of asking for forgiveness began much later. It was when the Truth and Reconciliation Committee was set up in 1993 in South Africa to consider the wrongs of

Apartheid and the genocides that were conducted under the policy of racial discrimination that the discourse shifted from an international arena to a national one. It also shifted the ground from revenge and punishment to reconciliation and restorative justice. Guided by the need to work for national unity, it was an attempt to prevent any recurrence of the past. Whatever the limits of its success or its limited achievements, it spelt out the need to weed out reprisals and to channelise national energy towards reconstruction and the bridging of differences.

Right from 1945 onwards, there has been an ongoing discourse on forgiveness, its process, possibility or impossibility. Most of it inspired by the aftermath of the Holocaust has been engaged in by Jew intellectuals: Hannah Arendt, Jacques Derrida and Vladimir Jankélévitch. They do not, however, all come from the similar backgrounds and do not necessarily agree with each other. Paul Ricouer is another philosopher, from a Protestant background, who raises questions of guilt, history, memory and law. Evidently, the whole discourse of forgiveness has to be further problematised. No longer a one-to-one settlement or reconciliation, it spreads into history, psychology, politics and religion, to mention only a few of its many dimensions.

An urgent need today is to interrupt the history of revenge, retaliation and continued hatred both inside and outside the nation-state. Hatred knows no bounds and no community is firmly enclosed within the territorial boundaries of a country. When violence takes place, more than the issues of rehabilitation and redressal, it is the fear of repercussions in other countries which comes to the fore. Internal relationships easily slip over into international situations, especially in these times of migrations and mobility. Hate is like a forest fire which spreads like the wind, while love is a tender sapling in need of constant nurturing and sustenance. The Babri Masjid demolition resulted in riots not only all over the country but also in our neighbouring countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Moreover, violence not only leaves behind scars and damaged psyches, it also feeds a tradition of revenge. When the inter play of memory takes place

with the present, the past is summoned as a witness. Looking at it from another angle, it is obvious that peace eludes us because fires at home are stoked by forces from abroad. Militancy and terrorism are the outcome not only of injustice and discrimination but also continued histories of resentment and hatred, often fed on misinformation and continually funded through interested political conduits as well as the diasporic communities who are beset by a sense of insecurity in both locations of their affiliation.

In our own country, we have a long disgraceful history of communal violence not only during the Partition riots but also on every other occasion of importance. There are areas that can be identified as prone to riots. In the year of Gandhi's birth centenary, Ahmedabad was ablaze. One wonders where the coincidence lay. The early 1980s were a period of violence and insecurity in North India, followed by a chain of events leading to Operation Blue Star and the 1984 riots. The journey of the 1990 Rath Yatra was strewn with a chain of riots and the aftermath of 1992 spread violence in the subcontinent. How do we rationalise or explain these incidents of violence – as spontaneous, genuine struggles, a response to provocation or deliberately and consciously engineered? Is it a question of good and evil or right and wrong? Or is the human being compulsively violent and capable of dismissing all else in yielding to its fascination? These are questions that have no ready answers, instead they pose more questions for the world and compel us to stop a while to consider the relationship between individual human action and world environment.

The debates on the issues involved in war trials, reconciliatory attempts and peace negotiations throw up more questions than answers and point toward the shifts taking place in the process of 'forgiveness'. They are a far cry from the Treaty of Versailles which contained in it the seeds of World War II and was humiliating to the defeated. These peace efforts have allowed us to see the need for humility and compassion (which sadly enough is still missing). There have been a series of

public apologies in the last few decades: the Vatican's apology for its silence during the Nazi atrocities, Tokyo apologising for its crimes and now Australia has also joined this company - one could go on adding to the list. The effectiveness and implications of these apologies are still far from clear. On the contrary, they raise issues of repentance and authenticity as well of representation.

The positions which thinkers like Derrida and Ricouer have adopted are all anchored in western tradition and in the Abrahamic tradition: Judaism, Christianity and Islam; the main source being the Old Testament. (Despite this common source, Islam is ostracised within the discourse as a threat!) Derrida's three inter- related essays, 'Cosmopolitanism', 'On Forgiveness' and 'Hospitality' were all written in 1997 or around that period, at a time when Islamophobia was already an active force in the western world. In order to look at Derrida's views on forgiveness, one also needs to attend to his essays on mourning, especially the one written on Emmanuel Levinas's death. The difficulty of forgiveness is that it remains a heterogeneous and an enigmatic concept, a constant reminder of Hannah Arendt's view of the 'plurality' of the human. The request for being forgiven necessitates 'self- accusation', repentance and a consciousness of guilt, sadly often absent in the aggressor. It has come to be more theatrically-framed, more a political gesture, a salve for the conscience, or an act motivated by self-interest for personal aggrandisement. Derrida observes that the language is 'anything but pure and disinterested' ('On Forgiveness' 31).[5] There is an inevitable *aporia* attached to it, for 'forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable. One cannot, or should not, forgive; there is only forgiveness, if there is any, where there is the unforgivable' *(ibid*., 32-33). This automatically implies a dismissal of the legal frame. Often, the apology is rendered when the crimes are irreparable and one has to deal both with death and the past. Does that mean that forgiveness can be or is unconditional and its 'ethics beyond ethics' or is a genuine change of heart a pre-condition? Many of the defendants in the Nuremberg war trials

were literally 'unaware' of the enormity of their crimes: the human being was totally erased from their purview. A similar phenomenon is available in the atomic blasts on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which took place at a time when the certainty of end of the war was already in sight, an act which was never brought to trial. This would necessitate going back to the New Testament and to Jesus' reply when an adulterous was produced before him: he who has not sinned, should throw the first stone at her.[6] Thus, no matter from where we begin, international power politics and the foregrounding of western tradition, become overpowering structures and reduce negotiations to an unequal relationship. Both, the notion of inequality as well as the dominance of a single tradition, need to be interrogated, primarily because they undermine the reality of human plurality.

In this context, I cannot refrain from citing one very moving confession of guilt and remorse from Sam Wiesenthal's work *The Sunflower* (1976). Wiesenthal, a survivor from the concentration camp, was witness and later an unwilling confessor to the confession of Karl, an SS man guilty of persecuting the Jews. Now as Karl lay dying, he sought a confessor and it was of no importance whether he be a priest or a lay person. Or it may have been of greater value for him to confess to a lay person, a Jew, viewing him as a representative of all Jews. Sam walked away without giving him the solace he had asked for, but couldn't get rid of the memory of it. Several years later, still tormented by the memory, he sent a description of his encounter to some thirty writers and thinkers known for consideration of moral issues – theologians, members of the clergy and philosophers – addressing his questions to them. Sam's refusal to grant forgiveness was not due to anger or revenge but a sense of inability to represent others. What moral value could be attached to proxy forgiveness? Sam felt all along that the repentance was genuine yet he did not offer any redemption. The moral debate rests on at least three different issues: can one forgive on someone's behalf, even if one does not have the authority of a priest? Should one forgive even if no

redressal or revocation is possible? Can a substitute victim by virtue of belonging to the same category act as a judge? The answer lies in the Laws of Repentance in Maimondes' *Mishneh Torah* 2:11: 'At times the refusal to grant forgiveness may itself become a moral wrong - if indeed the request has been made in good faith about an act of injustice' (Lang 133). Debating the two views regarding forgiveness, Berel Lang writes, 'a point is reached in moral reason and religious vision where our choice between the two views outlined must be based', on our hopes from the future, pointing out that, 'At stake is the question what kind of human relationships we envisage for ourselves....'(136).[7] One wonders whether the two views can be entirely separated, or do they overlap and at some point create a third solution?

The act of forgiving is not an isolated or an unilateral one; it requires a reciprocity, the involvement of a complete self - emotional, rational as well as irrational; often times also of social environment and, more than all else, the courage to accept the challenge of the unknown. It requires a felt closeness with the experience of violence and loss. A view is projected by many people, including Julia Kristeva that it is impossible to forget, assuming that consequently it is also impossible to forgive.[8] This. in itself, is questionable. Can one remember and still forgive or do forgetting and forgiving go together? Then amnesia and madness may be the ideal answers to our dilemma. Kristeva's belief also undermines the sheer power of experiential knowledge. Perhaps the defendants at the Nuremberg Trials and the political leaders working out strategies can afford to be cruel and count only in numbers and political gains, because they are distanced, and also because they do not feel the pain at first hand. Ask a soldier what he feels when he experiences violence and is instrumental in killing a fellow human being. Arjuna's perspective in the *Bhagavad Gita* is worthy of being attended to. I propose to discuss some of these issues a little later. Let it suffice to state here that the point being made in this context is that violence as a retaliatory measure is often egged on by fanaticism and fed on hatred; but violence when experienced as

personal loss can send both the perpetrator and the victim towards self-introspection. There is no way one can explain the difference in these two reactions. One can, however, attempt some explanation. Does the difference lie between violence which is collective, organised and motivated by other ulterior motives and the violence forced on one either as a part of duty (dharma), as in fighting a war or being pushed into violence unknowingly – either as act of self- preservation, defence or by force of circumstances?

Memory has a crucial role. Perhaps, Julia Kristeva is not far wrong for memories of racial wrongs have a habit of resurfacing and connecting up with fresh incidents as for instance the 1984 riots evoked memories of the Partition riots. A legitimate question would also be why do we remain anchored in a painful past? Is there a combination of masochism and sadism in it? Why is hatred carried forward to future generations? The task of remembering can serve at least one of these three purposes: analyse and set the record straight, rescuing it from contemporary impassioned impressions; pass on histories of hatred and revenge to future generations, that is, keep the past alive, keep the fires burning; and third to confront the horror, realise the equally shared guilt and seek to prevent it. It is the last which is important in order to serve as a constant reminder of shared pasts and shared histories. Even in the case of the most helpless and innocent victims, there is an evident collapse of values – courage, resistance, collective unity and loyalty. In situations of riots, adult violence narrows down to self-preservation. This is a generalisation based on acts of betrayal but nonetheless it has some measure of truth.

Forgetting, thus, is not a necessary prelude to forgiving; the aftermath of suffering can free the self and the after math of forgiving replace or distance the memory with other memories overlaying it. It is in this connection that Derrida's sense of mourning is important. In the case of communal riots, if the nation feels ashamed, they need to mourn together. Otherwise, the sense of alienation is perpetuated. Clark Blaise and Bharati

Mukherjee in their work on the Kanishka Air Tragedy, specifically connect collective mourning with the sense of citizenship and belonging. When the White Canadians reflected little concern for the bereaved families, the diaspora's sorrow was not shared as part of a nation.[9] In India neither the 1984 riots nor the Gujarat riots were followed by any sense of collective mourning – thus, literally treating the Sikhs and the Muslims as communities on the run. These have been two recent tragedies of genocidal violence. Mourning, however, is not a ritual and it cannot be treated as a substitute for forgiveness. More than anything else, it is a shared sense of loss, transcendence of the self and also of the moment, a literal walking into the psyche of the other in experiencing the pain.Derrida's *The Works of Mourning*[10] is not a book about forgiveness but it is a collection of mourning addresses, he delivered on the death of some of his friends (including Paul de Man, Foucault, Deleuze and Levinas). In the Introduction to the volume the editors' comment that 'mourning bears witness to a unique friendship' and at least in the first moment, it consists in 'interiorizing the other and recognizing that if we are to give the dead anything it can now be only in us, the living' (6-9). Mourning can be therapeutic and cathartic, if experienced emotionally. In some measure it coincides with the aims of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee[11] to bring about a dialogue, to talk about the past, to restore or bring about equality and a face to face collective remembrance without going into the whole process. Mourning is a partial transference of self into the other and a self- cleansing. It restores a feeling of community.

In contrast to Derrida who works through mourning, the Abrahamic tradition, and the sense of friendship, Paul Ricoeur works with legal frameworks and personal memory. His two works, *Memory, History and Forgetting* and *The Just*, followed the 1993 Truth and Reconciliation Committee, in the first he problematises the relationship between history and memory, and in the second, of justice and responsibility. Living memories, passed on from generation to generation are the particular

memories of a community or a people, Ricoeur cites the example of Jews, but one could as well talk about the memory of most minorities, especially those who have suffered discrimination and have struggled alone in the face of hostility and discrimination: Blacks, Dalits, Indian Muslims, Sikhs, refugees. Their community memories are personal, family, national and environmental.

Ricoeur observes that the forgetting is 'experienced as an attack on the reliability of memory. Do we remember selectively or do we forget selectively?' Memory may be selective, but amnesia is frightening. It threatens us with blankness and denies us the privilege of continuity. The buried memory continues to be traumatic. At one point Ricoeur raises the query whether it is possible to distinguish between active and passive forgetting and whether or not, each would be as escapist and as ambiguous as the other (449).[12] While a legal pardon or an amnesty may accord an institutional forgetting, the individual memory survives. The problem remains as it was, the need to remember and the need to forgive are pushed into working together for similar ends. In his Epilogue titled 'Difficult Forgiveness', Ricoeur writes, 'Forgiveness – if it has a sense, and if it exists – constitutes the horizon common to memory, history, and forgetting. Always in retreat, this horizon slips away from any grasp. It makes forgiving difficult: not easy but not impossible'. There is a disparity, a 'vertical' one, there is a 'difference in altitude' between 'the depth of the fault and the height of forgiveness' (457). The problem is who rises up and how, through confession, repentance and introspection and who descends in compassion and generosity? The aggressor has been guilty of moral evil and has to recognise personal or collective accountably while the victim has to confront the horror of suffering afresh before pushing it aside to bridge the gap. A phrase Ricoeur uses is being 'carried back to the heart of selfhood', a reduction to a horizontal relationship, a shared catharsis.

But the emotional and psychological problems still remain: are the guilty conscious of the enormity of the act? If not, who is

to bring it home to them and how? Growing up in an environment of hate, propaganda and fascist ideology has rendered many of us immune to emotion and has resulted in a gradual erasure of secular and democratic values. There is so much violence all around that it attracts rather than repels and exists not merely in the subcontinent but also in the western world. The Swedish journalist Stieg Larrson has drawn attention to Neo-Nazi organisations working both in society and the media. The growing Free Church is instrumental in disseminating hate propaganda. Larrson writes, 'The "church" educates its initiates in the politics of hatred. The enemies are Jews and the proponents of the mixed race crossbreeding' (Larrson 'Terror Killings'23).[13] Referring way back to the American organisation Ku Klux Klan, he calls it the biggest Far Right organisation, a reactionary and violent protest movement. In another article, 'The New Popular Movement', he proceeds to analyse Italian terrorism which worked through the fascist cell Ordine Nuova (The New Order) and defined its aims as 'to create chaos in the state system [and] destroy the government's power structures. [... .] We must take action via the courts, the church in order to influence public opinion and demonstrate the shortcomings and incompetence of legal power process' (31). In fact, the 1980s witnessed a production of hate handbooks, theory and practice of race war in the US and the skinhead movement in England. This was a period which marked the rise of the Far Right almost all over the world with Right-Wing extremists occupying parliamentary space and 'active anti-democratic groups' becoming alive ('Democracy in Europe' 38).[14] An additional route adopted by Far Right propaganda is also the rise of superstition and neo-spiritualism with gang rape following closely on its heels. You can draw your own conclusions by comparing the social scenarios across distances and geographical spaces with what is happening closer at home and attempt an analysis of the politics of the last thirty years. The trends, dismally, are same in different parts of the world with only marginal differences.

The institution of the refugee camp has never been fully

analysed. In itself, it forms another ghetto, this time of dislocated, often bereaved and frightened people, dependent on others for their very survival and physical sustenance. Formed of truncated families, it is a hastily put-together community which may call forth very different responses from its members, ranging between extremes of selfishness and of compassion. Temporarily, class structures are dismantled and the normal systems of civil society are held in abeyance. The distribution of rations or blankets or other necessities subjects them to humiliation and waiting in long queues, stripping them of all remnants of human dignity. They are aware of being a marked community. Young and old alike need to relate outside the family system in order to work out their relations to the society outside and prevent a permanent succumbing to the horrors they have undergone. It would be appropriate to refer to forced migrations and the formation of community ghettoes outside city space as it has happened in riot-hit cities. This constitutes a forced collectivity based on religion, reproducing the earlier peripheral residences of Dalits and even the present day slum areas. Charity is humiliating and ugly, especially to the recipient. It often expects acknowledgement and gratitude. The word 'refuge' lends itself to several different shades. Derrida uses it in 'Cosmopolitanism' with references to open cities– cities of refuge and asylum. The essay was an address to the International Parliament of Writers concerned about the new restrictions imposed on immigration by the French government which damaged the reputation of the country as tolerant and liberal. But in 'Of Hospitality', he connects it up with hospitality – receiving someone with open arms and a feeling of trust. Derrida's concept of absolute hospitality is soon deconstructed through issues of legality and sameness vis-á-vis difference, for hospitality is not offered to the anonymous other, who has neither name, nor patronymn, nor family, nor social status and who is treated not as foreigner but as a barbarian. Derrida's concept is not absolute but conditional.[15]

The refugee camp because it collects people who are still

caught up in the traumatic experience and/or in a yet unmourned bereavement, does not provide hospitality; it only provides escape from immediate annihilation. All acts of violence, whether riots, war with its scorch-earth policy or colonial power, leave behind memories of brutality. While Paul Ricoeur asks the question: Who is the just? Freud had earlier stated in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that not all men are worthy of love, raising the issue of 'worthiness'. Who are the people who are not worthy? Sinners, aggressors, barbarians — who? Civilizations have taken advantage of such positions, without stopping to make any further distinctions between personal attitudes and political ones, dubbing the 'other' as unworthy. 'Worthiness' is problematic, how do we determine 'worth'? Both Ricoeur's query and Freud's observation require further exploration. Ricoeur's question would necessarily imply the integrity of both the act and the agency; it could also be a hint at the nature of authority and its own flawlessness. This is a question which no philosophical theory has been able to answer satisfactorily. The idea of the 'just' includes within it a sense of responsibility; Pilate is still remembered for washing his hands off Jesus' trial. The terms 'just' and 'worthy' are worth examining from the perspective of both the victim and the aggressor irrespective of the difference between them.

No matter how difficult the task of forgiving, it deserves a deeper consideration than what many of us are willing to bestow on it. In most discourses related to forgiveness, ethics as distinct from morality surfaces as a major concern. At some point, ethics with its secular and humanistic expectations, and morality, with its rootedness in religion, require to be separated from each other as most conflicts of power are associated with race, religion or ethnicity and often demand resistance to these constructs, which tend to be fixed. Richard Holloway's book *On Forgiveness*, steeped in the Biblical tradition, seeks to move outside religion. His first chapter is titled 'Religion without Religion' and emphasises the need for a disassociation from religion, as it has the power to 'inhibit the pace of social change'(3). The main

thrust of his argument is that most religions have a history of discord, conflict, divisions and rivalries. Yet as certain fundamental values are shared by ethics and religion, the separation cannot be complete. Hatred is born out of a sense of injustice, of having been wronged, a feeling which alienates the individual from both self and the other. If we examine carefully the sense of righteousness, it is evident that at heart it is an ethical monotheism and perhaps requires more space for difference. In order to be able to forgive, one has to free oneself of the bonds of closed wisdom. Holloway observes that the inability to forgive can be, 'a sentence of psychic imprisonment that locks the person for ever into the remembrance of the original trespass. Just as forgiveness gives the offender the capacity to move away from the moment of trespass and regain the future; so the victim's inability to forgive makes it impossible for her to move into the future' (Holloway 54).[16]

Holloway does not address the question of the offender failing to realise his guilt and/or responsibility. Can one forgive totally unconditionally? Is it likely to bring about any change in the relationships or free the two parties from the self-made prisons of separation and alienation? A relevant reference is the South African woman's response to the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation when she questioned the right of an institution or a Commission to forgive. The right was vested only in her and she found herself unable to forgive. True, the net result is that she is likely to remain trapped in her past and her future is going to be shaped by anger and resentment affecting her family and social relationships as well as her psychic state. No wonder that the last century is overlaid with a sense of melancholia and mourning reflected in the self-analysis of the dislocated and affected populations. Another problem addressed by Ricoeur is that of representation: can the dead forgive? Can an institution or body request forgiveness and can forgiveness be granted in absentia? He focuses on the question of the self. Forgiveness, for him, is an act performed between individuals, 'by the self to the self '.[17] These are all complex questions but

need not detract from the necessity of forgiving and moving ahead unless we wish for ever to be caught in the maelstrom of hatred. Sam Weisenthal's *The Sunflower* offers another perspective which has been discussed above, where the idea of representation is accepted. If the dead cannot rise from their graves to forgive, hatred or revenge also has no power to restore them back to life. If there is no forgiveness, who is responsible for the violence, loss and hatred its absence leads to?

Most internal violence is politically motivated and most wars, that is external conflicts, are wars of power, economic gain, territory and ideology, often with smaller states or between them, on the dictates of Big Powers. The Israel-Palestine conflict is the creation of political design. Tariq Ali, in *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, points out how the creation of the state was planned in the nineteenth century and was a well considered move by Britain, France and America through guiding Jew business investments to that area.[18] Holloway commenting on this observes:

> The tragedy was that the return of one lost people to their ancient homeland created a new exiled community, the Palestinians. Every day we witness the terrible wounds these crucified communities inflict on each other, with neither side able to feel the other's pain. Neither community seems capable of forgiving the past in order to discover a new and a better future. It appears that they would rather go on dying separately than try to learn to live alongside each other. (Holloway 56)

Riots and civil wars are more localised but each in itself has a long history of conflict and of memories that are constantly dug up to ignite fresh violence. Questions of identity and justice are involved, issues which are important at both individual and social levels. Peace cannot be bought through suppression of the other. Dipankar Gupta, in his book *Learning to Forget,*[19] takes up some case studies of militancy movements with Punjab being one of them (196-204). The militancy was born out of accumulating acts of sidelining of the community on issues of linguistic representation, economic marginalisation, water and electricity distribution issues and the neglected claim to

Chandigarh. The issues were either issues of recognition and identity or of economic justice and survival vis-à-vis the mainstream. They were not related to any religious fundamentalism. It was a political process which brought about its change into a religious question or a separatist movement. Later, the Rajiv-Longowal Accord[20] was an attempt at reconciliation and a political solution. But the recent history of Punjab is littered with unkept promises and unfulfilled expectations of the 'healing touch'. In addition to this the delayed legal action on the 1984 riots which has successfully affected the quality of life, and has resulted in large scale female foeticide. All this put together has given birth to a closed society. One can substitute the question, 'Who is guilty?' by 'Who is responsible?'

Religion becomes an anchor especially when it is attacked by others; else it allows a multi-religious society to co-exist. When we look closely at the history of riot prone areas such as Bhiwandi and Ahmedabad, the incidents ordinarily happen when people at prayer are attacked or unreasonable curbs placed on them, or else when provocative public demonstrations are carried out specifically to encroach upon the rights of the other community. In most cases one can also trace a history of intervention by ideologically motivated organisations, and of delayed governmental action, as much as by two or three days. These histories speak for themselves. Describing the Sikh riots, Gupta uses the phrase, 'cooked over a slow fire from the late 1970s onwards by interested political parties....'(204), it came to maturity in the active militancy and has left behind live embers.
The histories of Kashmir and the North-East are enmeshed in similar issues of recognition of rights and of being victimised by political agencies. Obvious enough that neither the bureaucracy, nor the judiciary nor the legislature has been able to rise above personal prejudices in order to rationalise or emotionally assess a situation. Our subcontinental neighbours are going through similar situations. Neither oppression nor suppression through military power can bring about peace.[21] The result is increased insecurity, incidents of violence, mutilation, abuse, rape, road

rage, unfair police action and exile or prison terms or a permanent refugeedom. Dalit histories are similarly strewn with incidents of violence, of upper caste oppression, social ostracism and forced conversions by questioning their right to choose the religious faith they want to follow. These are public massacres. This happens in spite of constitutional provisions and a long-persisting affirmative action and places the surrounding social environment under suspicion. Violence has fractured our families, our nation and our psyches. Despite a long tradition of religiosity and spiritualism, we, as a people, are unable to draw on our strengths to build up a future. Is it 'antimodernity' as Dipankar Gupta labels it, or the result of a worldwide fundamentalism, which in its wake not only revives religion but also patriarchy and aggressive masculinity, or is it an (un)acknowledged march towards human destruction? The economic wars and the increase in the development of technology of destruction have brought about in the words of Arjun Appadurai 'death of the civilian' (Appadurai 14)[22]. But something more sinister has also happened – the erosion of values. One can safely add to this the distortion of the whole notion of democracy which most of the time now fails to work for collective rights but instead focuses on gain.

Challenged with the multiplicity of these problems, the question is where do we begin? There is need to intervene in the spiralling descent into a world which will give us no breathing space, to begin somewhere and think of the self-in-the-world, cross narrow boundaries and salvage whatever we can. It is all connected in a circular chain – forgiveness, change of heart, freedom, identity, education, values, justice, system. None of them can work in isolation. But where and how do we begin, who will become the messiah? As we have seen the whole discourse abounds with contradictions. Can one move from religion and politics to religion and ethics? Is there a way of beginning afresh in an atmosphere of hostility and crisis and call a halt to the idiom of hate? Are there greater possibilities closer home in our own cultural past, which needs to be opened out in the present context?

NOTES

1. Desmond Tutu, quoted by Rajmohan Gandhi in *Revenge and Reconciliation*, 48.
2. Krishna BaldevVaid, *The Broken Mirror*, English translation by the author himself of his novel *Guzra Hua Zamana.* (New Delhi: Penguin 1981, 1994), 334.
3. Internet ref. Nuremberg Trials www./loc/gov> Researcher. Accessed 12 August 2012.
4. George Steiner 'Cry Havoc', *Extraterritorial Papers on Literature and Language Revolution*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 45-55.
5. Jacques Derrida, 'On Forgiveness' in *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, (London: Routledge Special Indian Edition, 2012).
6. *The Holy Bible*. Authorised King James Version, The New Testament, The Gospel according to St, John Gospel 70: 8, 1-7. It was a story in wide oral circulation but some versions of the Bible do not include it, doubting its authenticity. Similar questions are raised by Paul Ricoeur in *The Just*. (Translator David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). And Hannah Arendt similarly observes, 'Where all are guilty, nobody in the last analysis can be judged'.'Organised, Guilt and Universal Responsibility', *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954*. Ed.Jerome Kohn. (NewYork: Random House, 2005), 126.
7. Berel Lang, *The Future of the Holocaust: Between History and Memory*. (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1999).The references are to chapter
9. 'Two Views: Reliving or Revoking the Past' 129-141. Refer 130-137. Simon Wiesenthal's *The Sunflower* is also accessible on the internet: commonplace. vanderbilt. edu/hosted/sunflower.pdf 13-43.
8. See Julia Kristeva, 'Forgiveness: an Interview, PMLA 117 (2002) 281-282.
9. Refer Blaise and Mukherjee, *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* (London: Penguin Books, 1987) 'The Air India disaster was a Canadian tragedy, from the beginning, growing in part from a national character flaw: the comfortable myth of instinctive goodness. The bedrock certainty of "it can't happen here", which translates into complacent airport security, yields only slightly to a partial revision, "Sad as it is, it is not really our problem"' (203).
10. Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning,* Eds. Pascale- Anne Brault and Michael Naas. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003). Editor's Introduction 1-30.
11. The Commission was set up with the aim 'to collect testimony, to

console the injured, indemnify the victims, and amnesty those who confessed to political crimes'.

12. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History and Forgetting.* Trans. Kathleen Bloomey and David Pellauer. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004). *The Just* came out in 2000.
13. 'Terror Killings Can Happen in Stockholm' in *The Expo Files and Other Articles* by Stieg Larrson. Translated from the Swedish by Laurie Thomson. Ed. Daniel Poohl. (London: Maclenoss Press Quescus, 2011), 21-29.
14. In *Expo Files*, 8-40.
15. Derrida and Dufourmantelle. O*f Hospitality.* Trans. Rachel Bowlby. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). See 23-25.
16. Richard Holloway, *On Forgiveness: How Can We Forgive the Unforgivable*? (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2002).
17. *Memory, History and Forgetting*, 497. In this connection also refer to an earlier reference in note 7 to Berel Lang's story of Sam Weisenthal.
18. Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*. (London:Verso, 2002, 2003).Ali takes up several issues though his main concern is with the rising Islamophobia and the politics which has created it.
19. Dipankar Gupta in his book *Learning to Forget: The Anti-Memoirs of Modernity*. (New Delhi: OUP 2005).
20. Rajiv-Longowal Accord 24 July 1985. Longowal was assassinated soon after on account of internal Sikh politics.
21. The ongoing civil war situation in Sri Lanka and the conflicts in Pakistan are symptoms of the same malady. For the violence generated by policies of retaliation, I refer the reader to one article, 'Tragedy in the Vanni', *Economic and Political Weekly,* April 11-17, 209, 13-15. The writer, Rohini Hensman criticises the game of ongoing accusations and retaliations, the conscription of children and the deliberate attacks by both parties on civilian areas. Hensman also suggests an alternative strategy and points towards the guilt of both the parties.
22. Arjun Appadurai,'Tactical Humanism', *The Future of Values: 21st Century Talks.* Ed. Jeromé Bindê. (Paris: Unesco Publishing, 2004), 13-18. Appadurai views the present crisis as the war of world systems, between cellular and vertebrate forms of globalisation and suggests the possibility of a tactical humanism, that is prepared to work beyond the given and the axiomatic and work through endless negotiations 16-18.

3

Negotiating Between Past and Present: Equality, Forgiveness and the World Order

The western discourse of forgiveness excludes cultures outside the religions of the book (even Sikhism which is a religion of the book), pays little heed to Islam and distancing itself from non-western religions, treats them as different, as the 'Other'. For the purpose of providing a fullness to the discourse and recognition of subjectivity and agency, one needs to address this lacuna. Eastern traditions have grown out of the experience of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism and their guidelines for social and familial behaviour. Buddhism's emphasis in *The Dhammapada*[1] defines the path of righteousness. Besides outlining the Eightfold Path, it clearly attaches importance to the role of the individual mind and action:

> With our thoughts we make the world. (21)
>
> Your worst enemy cannot harm you
> As much as your own thoughts unguarded. (32)

There are whole passages on the sense of discretion, abstinence from anger, greed and lust and on the qualities important for life on earth and its relationship to the environment. True wakefulness is consciousness of knowing the meaning of what constitutes right and the range of freedom; the latter is defined as freedom from hatred and its accompaniments.

Alas for the man
Who raises his hand against another
And even more for him
Who returns the blow. (125)

He who goes naked,
With matted hair, mud-bespattered
Who fasts and sleeps on the ground
And smears his body with ashes
And sits in endless meditation –
So long as he is not free from doubts,
He will not find freedom. (57)

Buddhism constantly stresses the need for relating to others, for seeing in them the same life and potential and if this happens, it naturally follows that the other-directed hurt also becomes self-directed (55).The fact remains that violence leads to more violence, hatred to more hatred:

In this world
Hate never yet dispelled hate.
Only love dispels hate.
This is the law,
Ancient and inexhaustible. (22)

As witness, one needs to tell the truth and as someone who has done wrong, one is accountable – one's actions cannot be disowned or denied (102). The human being is expected to hold his 'self' together. A person, who realises the responsibility and accountability of his thought and action, necessarily functions through a consciousness of his being. It is this consciousness which *is in-the-world* and which develops in-the-world amidst the immediate, lived and experienced reality. It is here that one is confronted by the enormity of problems ranging from the economic (food, poverty and nutrition levels), to the educational,

environmental and value structures. An individual consciousness is nurtured progressively by its environment in an evolutionary manner. Subjectivity comes into being through a double discourse: the creative encounter with the inner self and the one with the external world. It is sustained by a sense of self-respect and dignity and entails an on-going dialogue both with tradition on the one hand and with the image that others have of us, on the other. How does and in what direction can a child born in an atmosphere of fear and hate develop?

Buddha's thought as reflected in the Eightfold Path, gives centrality to human life. His teachings dominantly speak of religion as a matter of ethical practice. Referring to the *Mahayana*, Pabitrakumar Roy draws attention to the four boundless attitudes: unconditional love *(maître*), compassion *(karuna*), sympathy (*mudita*) and equanimity *(upeksha*).[2] When I first read Derrida's two essays in *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness,* both working on similar themes and written at about the same time, one of his observations drew my attention. Derrida's concern in 'Cosmopolitanism' is with the refugee, the immigrant, the foreigner when he talks of the open city and hospitality, while in 'Forgiveness', he expounds on the universal discourse of forgiveness. He is of the opinion that the language used in this discourse is 'Abrahamic', which is not the language of the religions of many countries participating in this discourse, (his reference in particular is to Japan and Korea, 'Forgiveness' 28).[3] Language evidently is a reference to cultural traditions. Identifying it now as a universal idiom, he considers it a symbol of internationalism. Derrida, however, enters into no discussion of Islamic values, which support humanism in their own right, encouraging social virtues of friendship, friendliness and cooperation with the strong shoring up the weak, or any of the other religions no matter how rich they may be in these areas, and avoids the whole exercise of dialogue with them. Learning is one of the routes towards cultivating a culture of relationships. Instead, a large portion of Derrida's discourse is built on western philosophy, logic and public acts of apology, with Huntington's

book in the background, a book which had come out just a year earlier in 1996.

Building an argument through a complete sidelining of the cultural traditions and the contemporary conditions prevailing in the East occupies an invisible space in the western mind-set. European intellectuals often pass sweeping judgments on the basis of an incomplete familiarity. For instance, even Hannah Arendt, a sensitive and compassionate human being, does not hesitate to link mindless violence and destruction with 'a kind of Asiatic indifference to human life' (298).[5] As the collection of Arendt's essays, *Essays in Understanding*, covers the years 1930-1954, and was apparently written soon after the Holocaust and the period preceding it, an event engineered by the German Aryan and encouraged through passive acceptance by the Church, and tolerated by European countries, is her main subject therefore in this context it is ironical that racism based on colour seems to have gradually crept into intellectual blindness. Derrida's opinion and Hannah Arendt's comment, both refer to partial truths and proceed to generalise; the first basis itself on the difference in religious cultures and the second on the high figures of mortality. These statements and interpretations need to be countered, if for not else, at least for the purpose of correcting the interpretative stand. Religious cultures in India are plural and all of them recognise the human being as an important category. Indians have been criticised for being a non-rational people living more by the emotional antennae; they cannot be dismissed as being non-forgiving and indifferent to the other (though admittedly gender, caste and rituals have been the grounds of discrimination and a great deal of injustice is rationalised on the basis of karma or past deeds). In this context, it may be appropriate to recall that most wars have been unleashed by the West, at least in the last four hundred years, and that both the Holocaust and the Atomic bomb blasts have their origins there just as the causes of economic and power inequalities have their origins in imperialism. History, at one point, may be shaped and even recorded by those in power but when we begin to

universalise it the lens needs to be adjusted to take in the missing side of the picture. Samantha Power in her book, '*A Problem From Hell': America and the Age of Genocide*,[6] discusses several wars and situations of internal strife: Cambodia, Iran, Bosnia, Srebrenica and Kosovo, amongst others. The thrust of these explorations is that America has refrained from intervening and has thus failed to prevent genocide, waiting for these conflicts to burn themselves out (xii). The United States, she writes, had never in its history intervened to stop genocide and had in fact rarely even made a point of condemning it as it occurred'(xv). Power's work is, in the main, an attempt to examine the causes of this non-intervention: was it lack of knowledge, or of not being sufficiently concerned or the realisation that 'there was nothing useful to be done' (xvi). Her researches lead her to conclude that these were all half-truths. Being a war journalist, most of her analysis is based on interviews and eyewitness accounts. We need not find fault with her conclusions, the work goes carefully into political policies, but she does not take into account the distantly controlled provocations,[7] policy formations, control and oil wars.[8] Even in the Iraq-Kurd-Iran conflicts, this factor was present. Samantha Power recognises this: 'Because both Iran and Iraq were stockpiling weapons and ideological resentments that could hurt the United States, the leaders did not protest much as the two sides destroyed one another' (Power 177). It was its aversion towards 'revolutionary Iran and the fear of Iraqi oil reserves falling into Ayatollah Khomeini's hands', which finally motivated an active response (176). War is devastating and implies the use of force to put down force; it is an exchange of one form of violence for another. And in no way action can be separated from responsibility or repentance, or at least a consciousness of its own aggression; as this is the hardest fact to face, thus it goes unacknowledged. The more serious question is: what is it that leads human beings to perform acts of violence against others, not only in times of collective violence, rioting or war, but also in the streets and their homes. To focus only on forgiveness would be to concentrate only on a partial

solution to restore a tentative normalcy; it would not bring about any worthwhile shift in human relationships. Most of the problems of international conflicts focus on power, territory and resources. Can these be transfer red to ordinary life? If so, what was it that led the tribals to participate in the violence in the streets of Ahmedabad during the 2002 Gujarat riots, a violence in which they had no active interest or direct motive?

Over the years, the United Nations has initiated several peace moves but has not met with the kind of success, it should have. One acknowledged reason is the reluctance of the contributory countries of the peace-keeping forces to fully support the move (Kofi Annan 60)[9], and another, not so openly acknowledged, are the unkept promises by the more powerful side and its supporters. Annan, General Secretary of the United Nations from 1997 to 2006, dwells at length on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the reluctance on part of the United States to accept the UN proposal because it did not want to deal with Arafat (285). But even as some point of agreement was reached, 'the Americans took over the process and tilted the framework towards the Israelis' (290). The reference is to the unequal power balance and the cultural indifference as two primary causes which hinder peace processes.

But there is no way one can endlessly continue to pass on the responsibility to others. At some time we need to address our problems afresh whether material or relational. As conscious agencies we need to intervene in the discourse, question prejudices and participate in the making of our present. Gianni Vattimo (Professor of Philosophy at the University of Turin and member of the European Parliament), in an article, 'Towards a Twilight of Values?' visualises the problem as a conflict between secularism and vitalism, crediting the Al Qaeda with the spirit of vitalism which enables the individual to submit to a collective will, whereas the west has developed its sense of individualism and secularism to such an extent that a decentring has taken place. Treading carefully between history and philosophy, Vattimo, like many other western thinkers, believes

that the peoples of the Third World, 'can no longer be accommodated within the western mythology of a linear history' (Vattimo 10).[10] These cultures, it is implied, continue to be primitive. But Vattimo, being a philosopher, approaches the issues through a rational approach, sensitive alike to the political and the economic histories of colonialism and advocates a 'culture of restraint' (12), thereby diagnosing it fairly accurately but the hierarchy he produces is untenable. Highly compressed, Vattimo's implication opens up a whole set of questions related to the nature of faith as well as the nature of subjectivity. Is it 'jihad' versus 'subjectivity' or religious frenzy versus discrimination? The contrary view, explaining the rise of terrorism, offered by Jean Baudrillard in his essay, 'The Universal and the Singular: The Violence of the Global', in the same volume, is closer to the truth.[11] There is a clear connection between the increased gap in economic wealth and the rise of the crime graph. Transfer these facts to cultural differences and international politics, and one ends up with violence which has two different origins – power and poverty.

Today, the crisis is related to cultures and cultural values. The persistence in binary divisions is not going to lead us anywhere. Neither can the concept of the 'universal', which leaves out the Third World cultures, nor a world indifferent to the human being can bring about any solution. Mere revival of values has a tendency towards fundamentalism and rejects all patterns of cultural change and evolution. Appadurai's concept of tactical humanism is a sound working strategy, where 'an endless negotiation' through engaged debates, demanding full participation (as opposed to withdrawal or indifference) by the civilian is constantly in process.[12] It assumes education and awareness which are still in states of unequal development but more than all else it asks for a total re-visioning of ourselves and our world, a coming out of our beliefs and disbeliefs. What we see around us is ritualised (and marketable) culture, mass media and its rhetoric, louder than all else and drowning out all voices of conscience. If for not else, it is for this – this voice of

conscience- - that we need to revive our cultural memory located in our past: the message of the Buddha with its emphasis on conduct and the ethics of behaviour and of Mahavira on non-violence and non-aggressive social existence. The human being is central to their philosophy.[13] They need to be understood not as religions but as philosophies and occupy some space in our practical life.

Alf Hiltebeitel, in his work *Dharma*[14] has related the concept to politics, culture and society. Tracing its 'early history in law, religion and narrative' he contextualises the term, first in Asoka's edicts which written in the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts, were spread in several parts of the Mauryan empire. Asoka closely linked it with administrative reforms as well as with a social code of behaviour (41). Hiltebeitel uses the term 'social engineering', but Asoka's efforts both through the edicts and his travels, when he gave audiences and discussed issues, are motivated more by a desire to reach his people, and to build some kind of continuity, so that values are circulated and survive than merely to guide them into a uniform collectivity. According to Hiltebeitel, 'this is the first time we find *dharma intended officially* as an ethic that would impact social groups high, low and across the board' (45, emphasis in the original). Asoka's edicts also express a dislike for festivals and useless rituals, advocating as they do a culture of restraint. He was equally critical of ceremonies performed on the occasions of concern (for the welfare of family, kin and others) or celebration, pointing out that these were of little use in this world and 'none in the next' (47). In this disapproval one can see the rejection of superstitious belief. For him, dharma or dhamma was not a given, it had to be worked for, not by religious ceremonies but by social behaviour and self-improvement. Instructive in the code of social behaviour, the edicts stress mercy, truth, respect and piety, qualities necessary for good life and for diffusing unrest.[15] The major Rock Edict carries the statement of remorse at the suffering caused by his campaign in Kalinga, but as Romila Thapar has pointed out this remorse is not mentioned in

the edict located in Kalinga, perhaps due to political considerations (Thapar, 'Asokan Edicts' 433).

Every discourse generates its own counter-discourse and these dissenting movements were again sidelined by the resurfacing of the Brahminic ideology which rose in self-preservation. No engagement with the cultural past of India can ignore the two epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata.* Together they define the ideal and the real. Both narrate conflict, exile and war. Both happen to have tragic endings but they get different responses. Of these, the *Ramayana* occupies a religious importance (though it is Tulsidas' *Ramayana* which is revered and read in homes, not Valmiki's), while the *Bhagavad Gita* is extracted from the *Mahabharata* to fulfil a similar role. The *Ramayana* is a projection of a moral code of behaviour, of hierarchies, obedience and familial relations. In the narrative the stepmother Keikeyi is the initiator of action when she asks for the kingship for her son Bharata. Dashratha, bound by his promise to her, is compelled to banish Rama for fourteen years, a decision which Rama does not question. Rama is portrayed as 'eminently worthy of being a king, well-versed in the science of polity and a slayer of his enemies'. The weapons of war, strength and courage are all described, presenting the possibility of rebellion. But Rama obeys his father, displays no resentment, is kind and considerate and does not accede to Bharata's request to come home, prematurely terminating his exile in order to succeed to the throne. He is *maryada purshottam Rama* who values and upholds tradition. Bharata's adherence to the rightful succession is also in conformity with the moral and legal positions on succession.

Is the *Ramayana* an allegorical representation of the war between good and evil, in such stark terms as we have chosen to respond to it? Ravana's tribal ancestry is of the *rakshas* (*danav*). He too has a brother, who when his advice is rejected by Ravana, shifts his loyalty to Rama, apparently in the cause of righteousness. Does a shift in affiliation bring about a shift in Vibhasana's *danav* origins? This raises a basic question

regarding the nature of action rather than of tribal origins. It is also of significance that both Vibhasana and Ravana's own wife, advise Ravana to restore Sita to her husband and thus avoid the impending war. The recurring phrase is that Ravana is trapped by his fate. Yet, looking at the different agencies involved both from the human and the elemental world, it is difficult to locate fate in any external force. Apparently, it is in the making of the self itself. The battlefield in the *Ramayana* is covered with dead bodies and limbs scattered all over. The city is set ablaze bringing further annihilation. There is no point of satiation. Vibhasana is also engaged in planning to have Ravana's son Indrajit killed (Valmiki 597).[16] The victors ruthlessly pursue the defeated enemy, bringing into question all values of integrity and righteousness. Later, the second exile of Sita reduces the virtue of Rama's victory which is reduced to being merely a step towards regaining personal honour and demonstration of manly valour. The war in *Ramayana* is not merely a fight between good and evil but raises several complex issues regarding the ideal and the real, the justified and right and the pursuit of power and revenge, all placed against each other.

Similarly, the war in the *Mahabharata*[17] is also full of questions, debates, deceptions and injustices. A war between two branches of the same family, it is a war fought for power and revenge and results in heavy losses. Kinship is placed at a moral crossroad. Who is wrong and who is right? Is Santanu any better than Yayati? The former in order to gain the hand of the woman he was attracted to, willingly strikes a bargain at the cost of his son's youth, marriage and progeny, while Yayati asks his son for his youth. The family's whole future is held to ransom by Santanu's desire for the fisherman's daughter. Later, the liberal sexual norms which through the custom of *niyoga* (levirate), permit a sexual relationship with a brother's widow, add to further complications. Bhishma's refusal to father any progeny due to his vow of celibacy acts as a deterrent and places the burden of fatherhood on Rishi Ved Vyasa with the result that the widows give birth to children with disabilities – one blind, the other endangered by his sexuality. The story of the *Mahabharata*

is too well-known for me to go into more details. Suffice it to point out that the *Mahabharata* war was a follow-up of continued rivalries, disputes and deceptions, finally vesting itself in Bhima's vow of avenging the insult to Draupadi.

The Kaurava-Pandava war lasted eighteen days and brought with it total annihilation, unending regret and guilt. Sons and grandsons all perished leaving behind young widows. But all along a parallel discourse advising negotiations, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation exists. Different agencies advise the same course: Yudhishtra advises Draupadi not to be vengeful and to overcome bitterness, to follow the path of forgiveness which was the only virtue, it 'was Brahma, truth, penance, holiness and it held the world together'.[18] Krishna points towards the futility of violence and its inability to restore either the dead to life or the past to a position of sameness. At one point even Vyasa enters the narrative to advise Gandhari to forgive. Rajmohan Gandhi commenting on this episode writes: 'The forgiveness he seeks seems to be pure, whereas the forgiveness that others on occasion ask for, including Krishna, resembles a give-and-take within divided Pandava ranks....'[19] Several of the acts of violence are motivated by self-preservation and both Dhritarashtra and Bhimsen express regret and apologise for some of these acts. Draupadi forgives Ashvathama in the interest of survival and Bhishma, on his deathbed, praises the act of forgiveness, but this is in the aftermath of war, when destruction and death have already had a field day. The *Mahabharata* asks the question: what price victory and revenge? Where does it lead us? Dhritarashtra's blindness is a metaphor for the times. He is born blind, Gandhari bandages her eyes in a self-enforced blindness, while humiliation, anger and the idea of revenge render others blind. The surviving elders – Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti – going into self-exile, retreat to the forest, a literal *Vanaprastha*, in their need for self-introspection and penance and cope with their bereavement. Finally, it is the forest fire which provides them release. The war resulted not only in death and disaster but it also damaged the human environment, thus bringing out its folly.

Krishna's advice to Arjuna, as has been singled out by many a commentator on the *Bhagavad Gita,* is an advice which laid emphasis on the need to do one's duty. Gandhi also wondered at its placement, as how could a soldier/charioteer pontificate with armies waiting on both sides?[20] This placement, however, can also be viewed as a visualisation of the conflict, as it brings the two kinds of duties face to face. Arjuna's argument has been sidelined by the excessive attention bestowed on Krishna's advice recommending the course of duty without relating it to any reward. But life acquires its joy and value from attachments and the values likely to rise out of non-attachment will be different in nature and direction. Would they not lead to insensitivity and self- concern? Does obedience to duty take precedence over both reason and emotion? Amartya Sen in *The Idea of Justice* asks, 'But was Arjuna really mistaken? Can a belief in a consequent independent duty to fight for a just cause convincingly override one's reasons for not wanting to kill people, including those for whom one has affection?'[21]There is an important questioning in Arjuna's inquiry and in his hesitation to kill those who have loved and nurtured him and those he loves. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, this dialogue takes place in the battlefield. As the chariot is placed between the two armies, Arjuna saw in both lines of battle 'fathers, grandfathers, sons, grandsons; fathers of wives, uncles, masters; brothers, companions and friends' and was overcome by grief and despair (1: 45, 26-28). The section describes Arjuna's inner conflict and questions the superiority of reason over emotion, and of obedience as a sufficient cause for destruction. The dialogue raises several questions about the meaning of moral principles. It is difficult to distinguish between just and unjust war. The whole passage is framed within Sanjaya's reporting who, acting as Dhritarashtra's eyes, relays to him the happenings on the battlefield. Arjuna tells Krishna that all he can see are forebodings of evil and has 'no wish for victory... nor for a kingdom, or for its pleasures ... shall we not, who see the evil of destruction, shall we not refrain from this terrible deed?' (1: 46,

32, 39).[22] This foreboding bears itself out. Their kin, Bhishma, the Kauravas and their Guru Dronacharya - all perish. Why does Krishna advocate a strength that would destroy? Is it symbolical of the need for the destruction of evil and also of desire? But this wouldn't work in real life contexts. The conflict here is between duty and conscience. There is an inner contradiction in Krishna's advice and, at one point, Arjuna draws attention to it (3: 56,2). Krishna, meanwhile, quickly shifts from one term to another, not dwelling at length on any one of them - emotion, senses, passion, reason - and not choosing to explain them. The thrust of the advice is that all is illusion, death doesn't end life, the spirit survives. The virtues that are stressed are courage, heroism, honour and sacrifice. Commending action, renunciation and non-attachment, he still persuades Arjuna that it would lead to harmony; nothing can stain, he who is pure. By stressing action, *karma* is centre-staged but both individual conscience and guilt are pushed aside. Even responsibility does not come into play. The *Bhagavad Gita* repeatedly builds its metaphors on temporality, and the merger of beings in the Supreme Being. Book 9 of the *Bhagavad Gita* ends with:

> Give me thy mind and give me thy heart, give me thy offerings and thy adoration; and thus with the soul in harmony, and making me thy goal Supreme, thou shall in truth come to me. (9: 83,34)

Can we term it a spiritual text? It teaches the meaning of *karma* but advises the person to leave everything in God's hands, living thus in the present without any investment in the future. Arjuna's stance is important, not because he facilitates the explanations, but because he adopts a human perspective and demonstrates an uncertainty on the basis of a reasoned argument and of life-in-the-world.

The *Mahabharata* is a text full of deviations from the norm, but the final getting together of the family implies a marginal restoration. The epic acquires importance for its continued efforts at bringing about a reconciliation and for its innumerable debates on *karma* and *dharma.* Like most religious texts, the

Mahabharata also attaches importance to the laws of hospitality ' to food and its sharing' (Badrinath 30).[23] The gift of food, especially to a traveller, water to the thirsty and welcome even to the most desolate are the virtues of a householder (Badrinath 32-35). '*Dana*' or giving is not interpreted as charity, but signifies a sharing, a bond establishing a common humanity: 'Hospitality is an expression of that awareness, and not just "a rule of etiquette"' (*ibid*., 35). The guest is 'verily a way to heaven'. It goes further than this when it states: 'should one's enemy arrive at one's doorstep, one should, and with respect too, attend upon him. A tree does not withdraw its cooling shade, even from the one who comes to cut it' *(Shantiparv*. 146.5, qtd. by Badrinath 36). Yudhishtra's deep wish to fulfil the requirements of hospitality, leads the Sun God to gift him a cooking-pot, one which will always remain full, in readiness for the unexpected guest (Badrinath 38). Two terms which strike one are '*dana'* and '*dakshina*', gifts of exchange reflecting on honour, homage and *shraddha.* Historians have observed that these are attached to value and both the giver and the recipient are honoured.[24]

Every religion has some place for forgiveness for the truly repentant, for the feeling of having done wrong is a feeling of remorse and guilt; it acknowledges both the possibility of having acted, that is one's active participation, as well as the responsibility for the act. But when an enemy, knowing full well that he is an enemy, has done us wrong and is still taken into our homes, it is an act of hospitality, it is an extension of trust to the unknown other, who, it is hoped, will respond to this hospitality in the same spirit. The act of offering protection (and hospitality) to one's enemy (in times of crisis), involves an element of risk. When the host undertakes that risk, he initiates the process of change in the heart of the enemy. True, this is the kind of example with a limited fallout but it makes the point that hospitality can be impulsive, it can override fear and hatred, that trust is an imperative of any relationship and the feeling of guilt need not be generated only by self-reflection, but it can be initiated by someone else's action. The action of the other

creates the moment for self-reflection. In both cases, it is the human impulse which conquers.

Sufism and the Bhakti movements have likewise created an open philosophy of space, of mind, of receptivity to nature and of abandonment of the self. These movements were active for several centuries and were spread across the whole of India, crossing linguistic barriers or transforming themselves into a similar devotional movement. Sufi poets, mystics and philosophers have always advocated a life of love and friendship, outside the material world. It rejects the concept of one's religion as the only right religion and expresses faith in goodness, no matter where it dwells. In fact, all conventional categories are pushed aside – houses of worship, rituals and priests. God is human. Turkish and Irani poets, Indian poets such as Amir Khusrau and the Bhakti poets such as Kabir and Nanak – who later went on to develop Sikhism – all have a great deal in common. Devotional philosophy has crossed barriers, rejected divisions, and embraced love and friendship. Its wandering nature is different from that of the ascetic and there is an essential plurality in it. Kabir identified himself with both Hinduism and Islam; and advocated the crossing of all religious barriers. The message of these poets goes beyond mere rationality; they all advocate love and recognise the oneness of god and man. Rationality becomes a hindrance for the act of self-introspection. Kabir rejects enclosures of self and society as he indicates in his poem 'I've burned my house down'.[25]

Nanak Fakir or Baba Nanak, who later came to be known as Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of the Sikh religion, travelled extensively in India and its neighbouring countries, interacting with religious men of different religions. His travels, lasting over sixteen years, took him up to the North-East and down to Sri Lanka and later to Baghdad, Turkey, Mecca and Medina, not with the purpose of preaching religion but to learn, to debate with scholars and holy men of various faiths. His travels are referred to as *udasis*, implying a certain sadness and restlessness at what one sees around. Somewhat in the manner of Buddha but

with the difference that he did not recommend asceticism, but instead stressed the need to be of this world in order to be of use to it. He discouraged his disciples from asking for alms but accepted hospitality that was offered of its own accord. His philosophy, as it evolved, recommended the life of a householder but rejected material concerns. Giving and sharing, accepting all that coincided with an openness of mind, he accepted the plurality of religions and advocated oneness of faith. The *Guru Granth Sahib*, compiled by the fifth Guru, shows a similar hospitality in putting together poetry of men of different faiths and languages. This was an openness which did not fit into any ritual-bound religion. Hospitality of an open house and an open city needs to be accompanied by an accompanying hospitality of the mind to new ideas, new faiths, new philosophies – only then can one cross the boundaries of religion, culture and the self.

Gandhi, during his political struggle against imperialism, discrimination and injustice, evolved the strategy of satyagraha and the institution of an ashram for purposes of political action thereby offering a non-violent model of personal, collective and political behaviour. Whenever faced by new challenges, he gave the problem his considered view and, at times, modified an earlier stance. His effort was to induct an ethical strand into political life. Satyagraha begins with the individual and is a consciousness of truth and the desire to adhere to it with determination. Several countries of the world have followed the course of Gandhi's non-violent struggle in order to stem the aggressor's brutality and raise the level of consciousness. But this non-violent resistance needs to come across as strength, not cowardice or passivity, not a silence born out of fear. If the choice be between non-violence and cowardice, then violence has to be resorted to. This does not detract from his firm belief that 'non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment' (Gandhi 3). But he also says, forgiveness is meaningless, if there is no power to punish, a mouse cannot forgive. This last comment of Gandhi needs serious consideration and is as problematic as the difficulty of

the guilty actually realising their guilt. Does that imply gaining power to such an extent that the see-saw relationship in power is reversed,that is the power of the powerless? This he had developed through the practice of satyagraha, (holding on to the truth and an action of non-violence), compelling the other to recognise his strength, as opposed to withdrawal or plain surrender.

It cannot be denied that the element of suffering is present even in a non-violent strategy. Martin Luther King Jr.'s struggle and in our own times Aung San Suu Kyi, are examples of this kind. Gandhi was often drawn into debates of all kinds involving violence and aggression, especially as the period was full of conflict and internal turmoil caused by British atrocities in India and the two World Wars abroad. He was called upon to justify his stand by critics from the West. At one time, he reviewed his own participation in the Red Cross work in South Africa during the Boer War, the First European War and the Zulu rebellion in Natal. Apparently, he felt that given the circumstances of imperial suzerainty and his own stand of non-cooperation, this participation in the role of caring for others, was the only course available to him (Gandhi 36).[26] Often he was asked to comment on contemporary world events, especially on Hitler's persecution of the Jews, and whether his advice of non-violent resistance could have worked, his response was that it was a matter of speculation (*ibid*., 'The Jews' 70-74). But suppose the Jews had done so, would the war criminals who were tried in the Nuremberg Trials, realised their mistake in submitting unthinkingly to Hitler's idea? Could a non-violent collective counter revolution have brought about a rebellion amongst Hitler's dedicated followers? Perhaps it could have. The Jews may still have died but unabated aggression may have ended. The interventions from abroad, especially from America, may have taken place earlier in response to a larger cause than their own interest. The course of the Second World War may have been different. But nothing of the kind happened. Instead, the Holocaust continued and then the atom bombs leading to a full-

fledged nuclear programme, the Cold War and the long drawn war of ideologies in other lands. In response to the several questions posed to him in this context, Gandhi wrote an answer in the *Harijan* in December 1938[27], making a distinction between passive resistance and active non-violent resistance of the strong, he stated that the latter could work in the face of the fiercest opposition (Gandhi 75). His ultimate faith was placed in the human heart that governed violent action. There must be some way of touching it. Non-violence was embedded in the teachings of many a religion ('Gandhi, Non-violence and World Crisis,' 77-82); it was an altogether different matter as to how widely it is or was practiced.

Gandhi viewed non-violence not as a matter of fragmentary action but an integrated one on part of the individual claiming a unity of behaviour, thought processes and ambitions. At one point it implied the constant need to be introspective and self-judgmental, at another it implied a wider vision of human relationships, other religions and the quality of 'difference', which is very often the cause of strife. It also meant restraint, tolerance and openness - the Derridean concept of hospitality. Anchored as deeply as Derrida was in Abrahamic thought, he extended the Jewish concept of the 'chosen' people to the religions of the book. Gandhi, on the contrary, despite his personal faith in Hinduism, rose above any exclusive anchoring and opened his mind and heart to the *Quran*, the *Bible* and the plurality of religions. He moved away both from the domination of spiritual thought geared mainly to personal salvation and the other world as well as the material world of possession. Sandip Das in his essay 'Tension, Tolerance, Non-violence and Peace – A Gandhian Paradigm',[28] writes:

> Gandhi did not pass through any supra-mundane meditations of different religions as Shri Ramakrishna, nor did he choose to spread the universalism in the messages of Hinduism as Swamiji did. ....To him the mark of fraternity is to help a Hindu to be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, a Christian a better Christian. He was convinced that a religion which forces others to follow its creed is only a religion in name, in fact no religion at all. ....He also felt that we should strive for

accommodating each others' practices. In South Africa, he induced some non-Muslim ashramites to observe fasting during the Ramjan to fraternize with their Muslim brethren. (Das 67-68)

One of the important strengths of non-violence lies in its ability to dismiss material gain as it prioritises the human above industrial and technological development. Meanwhile, despite these strategies and known wisdom, the problems of war and terrorism persist. Peace and forgiveness are like glimmers of hope. Today, we are still caught up between our ambitions as individuals and nations and the ambitions of others. Development has come to imbibe a concept of an 'unthinking progress'. Incidentally, Ajay Skaria in a very fine analysis of Gandhian thought, in his essay, 'The Strange Violence of *Satyagraha*: Gandhi, *Itihaas* and History,' has provided another dimension of which we all are aware but silent about. He comments upon the violence which underlies non-violence not only for the self but also as implied in its imposition on the other, 'the violence of sudhaar'. The reference is to Indulal Yagnik's autobiography and his realisation of his harsh treatment of his wife (149-150)[29] but it is equally applicable to Gandhi and his relationship with Kasturba. The point this makes is that thought processes are not a matter of blind following; they are internalised responses, born of self-awareness and willed changes and, despite the very best of intentions, cannot be uniformly equal or equally applied.

In 1947, a few months before the country was divided, Gandhi addressed a Conference on Inter-Asian relations and drew attention to the men of the East – Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed – all, men who spread the message of God, faith and belief (Gandhi 305).[30] In accordance with his belief, he advised an equal distribution of wealth between India and Pakistan, a suggestion which was unacceptable and became one of the reasons for his assassination. Episodically Indian statesmen have tried to follow Gandhi's message of accommodation – Nehru's Panchsheel was one, the Gandhi-Bhutto Treaty was another, the River Water Agreement and later Tashkent were

other efforts in this direction. One did not take advantage of one's own conquest and the other person's defeat. These measures, directed at avoiding conflict, were efforts at reaching out. Why did they fail to build up a continuity of goodwill and policy? Were the internal forces in the countries involved too powerful? Or is it mankind's refusal to learn from history?

Time and again, it has come home to us that violence repels, brutalises, leaves scars on the mind, affects the social fabric and even leads to self repulsion, affecting the lives of future generations. Dharamvir Bharati's play *Andha Yug,* coming in the after math of the violence of the Partition, was a metaphorical representation of our times, linking it to our past. Bharati writes:

> Blindness rides this age
> No reason
> and blindness shall prevail
> in the end[31]

It is only much later, when all is over, that Dhritarashtra realises the existence of a world outside the boundaries of his self (Bharati 37). He has much to blame himself for, as has Gandhari. It is inexplicable that death is pushed into becoming an agency of change, regret and interruption in the cycle of violence and revenge. Was there no other course open to interrupt this history of violence? Neither forgiveness, nor accommodation nor dialogue – none of the three? Why is peace so elusive?

The tragic ending of the epic is desolate and without hope. It takes away all desire to live. Mahasweta Devi in her story 'Kunti and the Nishadin',[32] and Shashi Despande in 'Hear Me, Sanjaya'[33] have drawn attention to the need for confession, else the burden of guilt is too heavy to live with. In both cases, Kunti is the one to confess, Kunti, who had pushed her daughter-in-law into a polyandrous marriage, and had neither owned her first born, Karna, during his life, nor mourned his death. Confession dwells on the ugliest past of one's self and is a humbling process. Anxious to unload her burden, Kunti, in Mahasweta's story,

unburdens herself to the forest trees, not realising that the tribals moving in the area can understand her language. The confession has to be voiced, spoken aloud, else the look within is still partial. Self-exposure alone can complete the process. As she narrates her early desires, suppressed longings and jealousies she had experienced when her husband's attention was attracted toward Madri, her life lies open to the gaze of the other. But even in this hour of confession, she is not completely honest. It needs a Nishadin to draw her memory to a past event when Kunti had offered hospitality to a tribal woman and her five sons and then set the hut ablaze so that their dead bodies could send out the false signal that the Pandavas had perished. This is Kunti's moment of reckoning. Too late, she asks for forgiveness.

In Deshpande's, 'Hear Me, Sanjaya', Kunti's listener is Sanjaya. It is during this confession that she realises that she had off-shouldered her own responsibility to the concept of *karma* and had allowed the springs of compassion to run dry. Did she ever have a choice or was she the prisoner of her compulsions? But, 'there is always a choice' (Deshpande 48). Where does the blame lie for the violence, the one she has suffered and the one she has inflicted? She reflects on the wrong turns they all have taken at some time or the other ruled by anger and hatred, as at their own unyielding attitude in their refusal to listen to either reason or emotion. The final horror comes home to her in the heavy burden that the elders have placed on their progeny: 'These tired old men, my sons, I thought. It frightened me' (51). In another story, 'And what has been decided?' Deshpande foregrounds the decision-making process, where the brothers decide on peace and send Krishna as a messenger. Draupadi is the sole dissident voice, even though a look into Krishna's eyes foretells a 'vision of horror', of loss, bloodshed, death and mourning.[34] It is the human complexity which is addressed when Krishna points out the risk in calling it off midway. Margaret Chatterjee, through her placement of dharma within circumstance and multiple allegiances, comments indirectly on the Gita's argument and uses the term commitment.[35]

Time and again, mankind has realised the folly of violence as well as the difficult path of forgiveness but has met with little success or has not been serious enough about working out a solution. Exclusive cultures, power struggles and failure to relate or respect the other, conspire with each other to undermine the values we cherish but do not put into practice. Our epics, literatures, the ethical content of our religions advocating an open relationship to God, if naught else clearly indicate the need for reviewing our pasts more honestly. Both the stories discussed above emphasise the role of confession, which is an exposure of the self and compels the individual self to scrutinise, not merely to reflect on what has been done but also what one has been abstained from and interrogate the past from a moral perspective. The legal system is made by men, but the ethical vision locates the judge in one's conscience. The *Bhagavad Gita* is a discourse on *karma,* where both perspectives of obedience and of compassion are represented. Contextualised in the epic, the debate is sharpened as it rescues *karma* from passivity to bring it into an active realisation. But compulsion rather than wisdom prevails. It is horrifying to imagine a world without values and without hope, a dark, stark, dystopic world of insecurity and terror, of the death of the will to live. What, indeed, is the significance of the forest fire? If naught else, this vision in itself should lead us to think of forgiveness.

NOTES

1. *The Dhammapada: The Sayings of the Buddha*. Translated by Thomas Byrom (London: Rider, 1976, 2008).The references within parenthesis in the text are to page numbers.
2. Pabitrakumar Roy, *Three Lectures on Loving Kindness,* (Shimla:IIAS, 2011), 25.
3. Refer *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (London: Routledge Special Indian Edition 2012). This is a point he makes over and over again. See also Derrida's essay 'Globalization, Peace and Cosmopolitics' in *21st Century Talks*. Ed. Jeromé Bindê. (Unesco Publishing House, 2004), 110-122.
4. In this connection also refer to Lenn E. Goodman's work, *Islamic Humanism.* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 109.

5. Hannah Arendt,'Mankind and Terror' in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Formation, Exile and Totalitarianism*. Ed. Jerome Kohn. (NewYork. Schocken Books, 1994), 297-306.
6. Samantha Power, '*A Problem From Hell*': *America and the Age of Genocide*. (London: Flamingo, 2003).
7. Refer Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*: *An Autobiography*. (London: Simon and Schuster, 2007, 2008).
8. I refer the reader to Tariq Ali's *The Clash of Fundamentalism*: *Crusades, Jihads and Modernity.* (London:Verso, 2002, 2003).
9. Kofi Annan, *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace.* (London: Verso, 2002), 2003.
10. Gianni Vattimo, 'Toward a Twilight of Values?' *21st Century Talks*. Ed. Jeromé Bindê. (Unesco Publishing House, 2004), 7-12.
11. Jean Baudrillard,'From the Universal to the Singular:The Violence of the Global', *21st Century Talks*. Ed. Jeromé Bindê. 19-24.
12. Arjun Appadurai. 'Tactical Humanism', *21st Century Talks*. Ed. Jeromé Bindê. 13-19,17.
13. The emphasis of Buddhism is on the righteousness of the moral code - right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration, leading to knowledge and liberation. Jainism (599-527 BCE), similarly advocates the value of right living, truthfulness, chastity, non stealing, non-possession, non-attachment and non-violence. None of these two belief systems creates a Supreme God. Both recognise human effort.
14. Alf Hiltebeitel. *Dharma: Its Early History in Laws, Religion and Narrative*. (Oxford: OUP, 2011).Also see Romila Thapar,'Asoka and Buddhism as Reflected in the Asokan Edicts', *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History.* (New Delhi: OUP, 2000), 422-438.
15. Romila Thapar,'Dana and Dakshina as Forms of Exchange,' (521-535) and 'Asokan Edicts' in *Cultural Pasts*, 2000, 422-438.
16. Valmiki, *Ramayana,* Translated and Abridged by Arshia Sattar. New Delhi: Penguin Books (1996), 2000.
17. For my main references to the text of *Mahabharata*, I have used the Abridged Hindi translation Jaidayal Goindka in 2 volumes. (Gorakhpur; Gita Press 2060 Samvat, 2003 CE). For certain comments and references I have also used Chaturvedi Badrinath's *The Mahabharata:An Inquiry into the Human Condition* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2006, 2007). Gurcharan Das's *The Difficulty of Being Good* (New Delhi, Penguin, 2009, 2012), also offers some significant insights, especially the fourth chapter, 'Arjuna's Despair' 88-116. In addition to the above, I have consulted some other versions as

well.

18. Rajmohan Gandhi, 'The Mahabharata Legacy and the Gita's Intent', *Revenge and Reconciliation: Understanding South Indian History*. (New Delhi: Penguin, 1999), 1-36, 12.
19. *ibid*., 13.
20. For details refer Rajmohan Gandhi, *Revenge and Reconciliation*. 17-20.
21. Amartya Sen, 'Realizations, Consequences and Agency', *The Idea of Justice,* (London: Penguin, 2009), 208-221, 210.
22. *The Bhagavad Gita*. Trans. Juan Mascaro. (London: Penguin Books, 1962, 1978).The references within parenthesis are to chapter, page and verse.
23. See Badrinath 32-35 for passages quoted from *Anushshan* 63. 6; 63-29; and *Ashvmeghik* 6327, 6328; 6329; Badrinath *34, Anushashan* 62.49-62.50 and 6331.
24. Also see Romila Thapar,'Dana, and Dakshina' as Forms of Exchange' in *Cultural Pasts* (2000) 521-535.
25. See 'Poetry Chaikhana'. This particular poem is translated by Linda Hess and Shukdeo Singh Internet reference. www.poetry-chaikhana. com/k/ kabir. accessed on 3 August 2012. loaded on 23 Feb., 2012.
26. 'My Attitude Towards War' in M.K. Gandhi *My Non-Violence*. Ed. Sailesh Kumar Bandhopadhya. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1960), 36-38.
27. 'Some Questions Answered,' *ibid*.,75-76.
28. Sandip Das in *World Peace: Problems of Global Understanding and Prospect of Harmony*. Ed. Santi Nath Chattopadhyay. (Kolkata: Kunthi Pustak, 2005), 61-82, 20.
29. In *Heterotopias: Nationalism and the Possibility of History in South Asia*. Ed. Manu Bhagavan. (New Delhi: OUP), 142-185.
30. 'The Message of Asia' in *My Non-violence*, 305-306.
31. Dharamvir Bharati, *Andha Yug*. Translated into English as *The Blind Age* by Alok Bhalla. (New Delhi: OUP, 2005).
32. 'Kunti and the Nishadin', *The Politics of Literary Theory & Representation*. Ed. Pankaj K. Singh. (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003), 85-95.
33. Shashi Deshpande, 'Hear Me, Sanjaya', *The Stone Women*. (Kolkata: Writers Workshop, 2000), 42-51.
34. Shashi Deshpande, 'And what has been decided?', *The Stone Women*. (Kolkata:Writers Workshop, 2000), 24-34, 34.
35. Margaret Chatterjee, *Circumstance and Dharma*. (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2010).

4

Is there a Future in the Past?

This is not merely a rhetorical question but goes further than that to inquire into the nature of the 'real' and the human concern with past happenings. This is a concern with both time and memory*: why* do we remember the past, especially one which has left behind a trail of pain and suffering and still continues to haunt us? And *how* do we remember it? No two persons remember the past exactly in the same manner. People who are on opposite sides will naturally view it differently but even those who have experienced the same happening will recall it differently. Memory is circumstantial and dependent upon who is the agent, who the person remembering and the context of history; it is also personal and a part of our whole being and there can be no simple transference of it from one to another from person to person or generation to generation. There is perhaps a sifting in what we remember or wish to remember. And distancing frames it in a different manner, allowing a reviewing of the incidents in their totality with all their subterranean layers, which may not have been realised in the immediacy of their occurrence. The act of forgiveness looks for a way to interrupt this linear continuity of memory and the play of hatred, revenge and violence, and bring about a change. Can the past give us something more valuable than a heritage of hatred and revenge which fractures our lives? Can the shifts in memory give us hope and the courage to forgive?

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on oral histories and testimonies, which involve recall (or partial recall) and present a different picture of reality. Their reliability maybe questionable but the truth of the recollection for the person

cannot be doubted. Official histories record facts, statistics and political perspectives and may lack neutrality. It is a healthy sign that past histories are now being looked at from different cultures and backgrounds in order to fill up the missing aspects. But more than histories, records and oral histories, it is literature, no matter whether from a single or a multiple perspective, which succeeds in capturing the emotional nuances and, at times, presents a counter discourse opening out closed structures. Art travels in directions that reportage, documentation and political analysis cannot or does not move towards. It imparts an underlying grid to the fragmented responses and pulls the reader/witness in as a participant. Art and memory, together probe into the unconscious and, travelling in time, they evoke a response in the minds and hearts of readers across time and distance. In art/literature the strange combination of subjectivity and objectivity comes together to keep the past alive, yet each reflection is different and catches a different light. Do these reconstructions of the past offer us any perceptions that can help us work towards solutions? Can they make human life meaningful and valuable, that is give us a voice and help bond us together? The nature of memory is crucial for both the writer and the reader as it probes the conscious as well as the unconscious.

Fear, hatred, and panic are often the causes of violence. Fear makes cowards of us all, if not for our personal selves, for those who are dear to us. It hardens divisions, excites hatred and provokes self-defensive action, factors which subtract from our idea of the human. Harsh Mander's carefully researched accounts of political violence, of deaths and rapes, of tribals being inducted to perform acts of physical violence capture the fear and the thoughtless, indiscriminate frenzy of the moment, when human faces are blurred, bodies become objects, and what one experiences is horror and disgust pushing one to distance oneself.[1]

As T.S. Eliot pointed out, 'human kind/Cannot bear very much reality' (*Burnt Norton*, II 44-45). But the artistic representation makes it human and bearable and reaches out to

the invisible crevices of our mind. Deleuze in his work on Bergson (*Bergsonism*),[2] refers to the act of remembering as a co-existence (with the present), once again sending us back to Eliot's *Burnt Norton*, 'Time present and time past/Are both perhaps present in time future/And time future contained in time past.' One needs to turn this around and look for the future in the past. The appeal to recollection, Deleuze observes, 'is the jump by which I place myself in the virtual, in the past, at a particular level of contraction'. It begins to constitute 'a psychological consciousness'. Commenting on Bergson's notion of *duree*, he observes that according to Bergson, 'We do not move from the present to the past, from perception to recollection, but from the past to the present, from recollection to perception' (*Bergsonism* 63). Memory functions in multifarious ways - it can be a burden or a release, a burden we drag along, indulge in and thus forget to live in the present. It can be a disabling one both for the individual and the collective; but it can also, by acquiring a long-term view which takes in more than what was immediately visible, help us to transcend the immediate horror and trauma and work towards redemption. Deleuze apparently is of the view that the past occupies an inner space, 'Duration is essentially memory, consciousness and freedom'. Furthermore, it has a 'continually changing quality', as our own lives proceed beyond the point and other generations step in where historical memories are concerned. Violence at its peak produces good journalism, eyewitness accounts and political analysis; representation in art forms follows a little later, when emotions acquire the quality of perception. The past is indestructible; it continues to be but in a passive state. One, perhaps, is not fully able to accept it because, at the surface, hate propaganda uses the past, specifically to incite more violence. But then hate propaganda is not art. It is a policy, one which perhaps needs to be counteracted by art.

For a moment longer, I would like to dwell on Deleuze's comments on Bergson, especially where the psychological leap is concerned, primarily because they are meaningful and compel us to think differently. Bergson makes a distinction between pure

perception and pure recollection. The present is 'pure becoming, always outside itself. It *is* not, but it acts'. The past, though it 'has ceased to act or to be useful, has not ceased to be.' Emphasising this difference, Deleuze goes on to point out that, 'Only the present is "psychological", but the past is pure ontology; pure recollection has only ontological significance' (56). But finally, when the two pasts – as it was then and as it is now – interact with our present, a composite image emerges. And apparently, through this, it acquires a psychological reality. The reader of a narrative, or the spectator of a performance, is then, one may safely conclude, making constant journeys between his present and the present of the past. What is involved is a leap towards the past which enables a gradual connectivity. Memory, and with it the Bergsonian 'duree', present a whole series of paradoxes, but the problem is 'How can pure recollection take on a psychological existence?' (refer Deleuze 60-62). The Bergsonian leap is not necessarily at one level; it may be a little narrow or alternatively, wide and expansive. Art facilitates our focus on the artist's images as they probe aspects which enable connectivity at a psychological level. It is here that recalling a remembered past in our present enables perception.

Focusing primarily on working out strategies for peace one needs to look at the past through the subjective-objective lens of art and for this purpose, I have chosen to work with some Partition narratives which record a history with which even the present generation is familiar.[3] The literature emerging from the Partition has worked on almost every aspect of significance ranging from loss and exile to mass killings and acts of rape. They also abound in narratives of love across the border and narratives of compassion foregrounding the human side by side with those of betrayal, power and greed. Fresh violence opens old wounds and relates to the past while acts of compassion arouse nostalgia, a memory of happier times when people were surrounded by stability and security. Narratives of the dislocation which take place on account of disturbances, raise issues of an ontological dimension, of identity directed, and spelt out in

multiple ways, towards gender, self, nation and others. Women's narratives of dislocation through violence are about the uprooting from culture, family and religion. A larger question which arises out of this is where do these women, dislocated and now divided in their loyalties and emotions belong in the nation as their individual identities get overlaid by political considerations, especially where the abduction of women and subsequent rehabilitation is concerned. This aspect is analysed in detail by Veena Das in her work *Critical Events*. Das points out that, 'It is not enough that new nations have a name or a territory. This name is to be inscribed on another territory, the body, so that the political history of the creation of independent India and Pakistan corresponds with another history – that of the secretly carried memory of terror upon the secret organs of women' (184-185).[4] Further elaborating on this subject she points out that this led to a total upsetting of gender power equations when women were subordinated first to being the object of communication between men and later subjected to the paternal authority of the state. Both conditions ignored the woman as a living being with a mind of her own or any personal feelings and choices. The whole question of the legality of the children born out of the abductions and rapes was linked with nationalities. Where did these women belong? To whom did they belong, which nation, which family and what place had their children in families and nations? The recovery of abducted women was not linked with their preferences or the larger problems of their restoration and rehabilitation in their families. It came to be dominantly associated with the honour of the nation and of the male. I draw attention to this because in our framing of the past as a monolithic structure, we very often neglect to take note of the different pathways it has traveled, and which now construct our reality.

Violence, irrespective of the gender of the victim, has other repercussions. Does the aggressor or the abductor experience any regret? Two different narratives bring out two opposing reactions. Intizar Husain's 'The City of Sorrow' is about the loss of the

essential base in moral values. Three men who have indulged excessively in inhuman acts, now disowned and dispossessed, go about carrying their corpses with them. Pushed into an anonymity and reduced to faceless beings, they are the living dead, who cannot even be buried, as they are no longer worthy of being treated as human.[5] They have reached the state of guilt, but a guilt located mainly in their own sense of loss. Almost in a state of shock, they have not yet recognised their own agency, In order to be forgiven they need to move out of this sense of self-located guilt to an 'other-related' sense of guilt; to emotionally transfer themselves into their victims. Husain's story provides a very significant comment on the incomplete process of forgiveness. The men have committed acts of violence debasing their inner selves; they have killed, raped, forced others to violate relationships, have seen desolation and public anger, suffered retaliation as their violence has come home to them in their personal lives. Others have spat at them, their faces have been disfigured but they do not die. They live through it until their families disown them, wives and fathers reject them. Then they die. But death promises no release, they carry their corpses with them. Earlier migrations haunt them; homeless, abandoned and dead, there is no grave to hold them and no past to recover. A consciousness of guilt finally enters their very being but it is too late. They are beyond redemption. Husain's narrative is a representation of the trauma that affects the perpetrators of violence as they come to inhabit a land totally bereft of all moral considerations. This is the life in the city of eternal sorrow where men are doomed forever. One may well pause to ask, what price their confession? Is it introspective? Is the listener capable of reaching or redeeming them? They sit in judgment on their own deeds but with no reprieve in sight. The story brings home to us the truth that asking for forgiveness is no longer a mere political necessity or a political gesture. It is not even easy. Thus, neither trials nor *sadbhavana* fasts can either subtract from the enormity of the act or lead to an acknowledgement of failed responsibility. The feeling of guilt plus repentance works at several levels:

recognition of the active self, of the failed responsibility, of moving out of self-interest and attending to the more imperative need for a humanly liveable world. Realisation of guilt is not simply a sense of regret or mourning for a lost balance or loss of life and relationships but it needs to become a transformative act and bring about an attitudinal shift. It is significant that nowhere, in this whole dialogue, is religion named and there is hardly any play on emotion. Religion works only in the background through references to *hijrat*, earlier migrations and graves. The focus throughout is on a moral evaluation which is thrust on the First Man through an external force and not through an initial self-realisation. If there is a collapse, it is one between the exterior world and his inner being. The hell of his own creation has come to envelop him in its entirety, merging the past with the present. 'The City of Sorrow' leaves us with an unanswered question: how can man work for release from a non-self? The second narrative I wish to draw attention to very briefly is Amrita Pritam's 1950 novel *Pinjar*.[6] This was made into a film after more than half-a-century in 2003 and portrayed a change of heart in Rashid, the man who develops a relationship of affection and understanding with the woman he had abducted and consequently helps her in freeing other victims of abduction. Similar memories also surface from real life situations which bear testimony to the human ability to grow and learn from one's own acts.

What happens when an in-between generation takes over and the past becomes a relayed memory, or childhood memories now stand distanced and when even for the older generation, eyewitness to the bloodshed, memories have become selective? This can happen in a period of three to four decades: family heads die or take a back seat, sons and daughters who were children then and have memories of the holocaust grow up and now have families of their own, a third generation – what happens then? Tahira Iqbal, a Pakistani writer's Urdu story '*Deshon Mein*,'[7] is a narrative centring on a grandmother's memories of her past home of pre- partition days. A beautiful story which examines layers of memory as the woman recollects

not horror or brutality but the fragrance of the soil, the quality and taste of the vegetable produce and the feeling of kinship which bonded the community across religion and caste. Her mind rejects all accusations against her co-villagers. The violence of the riots has, for her, the face of anonymity.

The story opens in a village in Pakistan with the evening flooded in darkness, a symbolic reference to the darkness under which we hide the past and continue to live in its bitterness. The narration recovers a lost past with the food being cooked over an old-style clay cooking oven, a *chulha,* and the wood fire lit with the help of a reed-like blower, with lanterns lighting the place. There is a consciousness of a spirit visiting them daily at this hour of dusk, the spirit of a daughter of the house who had jumped into the well to save herself from rape and abduction. This spirit haunts the mother's memories of her daughter, Nek Begum. When the sons come home and corn cobs are being roasted on the open fire, the conversation turns to the past. The corn was sweeter, the radishes tastier, the well-water like a sugary syrup, oranges more juicy in the land they have left behind. Their present home holds no such riches. Her sons question her nostalgia and remind her of the brutality of the men who had destroyed their kind, compelling them to flee, to fear for their lives and travel to a new unknown land. They were the 'others', different, now part of the mother nation, the same which had forsaken them. The old woman pleads with her son Nazir Ahmed, not to call the land a foreign land, a land where their kin had been killed or left behind, where they lay buried. Perhaps they survived and she tentatively posits the question: Is there a way to get in touch with Karnail Singh? The family disapproves of her stand and her desire to connect with the past. But she insists that they must put on record that none of the killers were men from their village, whosoever was responsible for the killings was someone else, an anonymous crowd, a nameless being, – *'Uska koi naam na tha'*, perhaps transferring the namelessness of Husain's three characters in 'The City of Sorrow' to the killers here. Anonymity being the direct opposite

of identity, comments on the relationship between the individual *being* and the actions of an individual. It also brings into focus the role of memory: what it chooses to remember or to forget. Evil is a madness, which works itself into a frenzy, especially when mob hysteria takes over closing all possibilities of a rational or an emotional awareness. At that very moment, they learn that the village will be connected to electricity – a symbol of light, of two beginnings of a new future, one of development, and the second of putting hatred and bitterness behind them. *'Deshon Mein'* means both - in the land of birth and the land of migration as well as the relationship between countries. But more simply, it means 'home', the place of origin, where childhood was spent, where one belongs.

Another narrative which deals with similar feelings on Indian soil, when a retrospective analyses of the violence takes place, is Sanwal Dhami's Punjabi story *'Malham,'*[8] a significant healing narrative. The title, which literally means 'ointment', is an indicator in itself, but the main narrative brings to it a symbolical richness. This story of a village with a dominant Muslim aristocracy and landowners (positions of power) and Hindus and Sikhs as tenants (positions of dependence), it works through memories, economic structures and old style moral values of loyalty to the community, consisting of people of different religions. Yet, when the riots take place, people are killed, attacked, and forced to flee. Many a truncated family is forced to leave the village. The story, however, centres not so much on the violence of the Partition, though it is present in the background, as on the emotional aftermath, on the healing powers of reflection and on the symbol of Hakim Karamdin's ointment. The hakim had been lured to a neighbouring village on the pretext of a sick patient, a call which he responded to despite the Muslim community's decision not to move out of the village. But when he refused to betray his villagers and assist the marauders, he himself was brutally beaten up and left to die. It is his son, Fazla, who visits the village of his birth after an interval of forty years. It is in this village where he stays with one of his

school friends that he meets several of the people who had been part of the violence as well as the family that had moved into their house. There is also the Choudhary's daughter, Nafisa, who had been abducted and left behind. Later they had learnt of her conversion and then marriage to her abductor, Mahinder Singh Jat. Desirous of meeting her, Fazla sends her a message and when she comes in response to this, Fazla learns that her husband is bedridden. Deeply conscious of his sins and the meaningless violence he had inflicted on others, Mahinder Singh is convinced that he is paying for his evil deeds. Having grown up in a culture where wrong has to be punished, if not by man then by God, he traces all that has happened – his young son's death, his own sore-ridden body, his total helplessness and dependence on others – to his own past actions. Conscious of this, Mahender tells the messenger, that happiness always eludes those who harm others and that his worm-infested body will be his death (55-56). This realisation of his guilt is followed by an inner change, an attitudinal one and a painful acceptance of the fact that there is no way of reversing the past. A partial reversal, however, is brought through the agency of Fazla, who by giving him the healing ointment, also offers forgiveness (57).

Other meetings which speak of remorse – a collectively felt one rather than individual based – are with Hansa, Santa Singh and Buta Singh. The last is a migrant from West Punjab, now in Pakistan, and speaks nostalgically of the fertile land he had to leave behind while Fazla values the almost barren soil of his native village (60). Each mourns his own dislocation. But when Fazla wished the migrant well and a possible return, Hansa looked at him quietly commenting that Fazla was a messenger of God and asks of which clay was he made? By such feelings of hospitality and friendliness, he had risen above all religious prejudices and reduced them all to new-born babes (61).

Throughout the story, there are numerous discussions, lasting well into the night as also during their social visits, where the temporariness of the Partition violence is contrasted with the permanence of the geographical distance, where the misplaced

rivalries and greed for power are seen as illusions, and the issue that is obvious, the need for change of mindsets, is voiced. There is also the realisation of the need to redefine and locate religion in human contexts, rather than divisionary ones. Fazla, as he prepares for his return home, leaves the prescription of the ointment with his host Satta. The ointment, a healing salve for the body, is a symbol which extends to the soul. Memories, now distilled of their disillusions and madness, and gestures which recapture the underlying commonalties and shared pasts, together achieve an inner cleaning and restore trust and faith.

Is Dhami's narrative an ideal utopia, or is it a social analysis, or going beyond both, an articulation of felt emotions, regrets and hopes, a longing for the values that sustain, where nostalgia for the past, refurbishes positive memories? The future is in our hands, as we choose to forget or remember and relate to a meaningful future. *'Malham'* goes further than the realisation of 'The City of Sorrow' in its disassociation of their neighbours from the violent past. Like Iqbal's story '*Deshon Mein'*, *'Malham'* too looks closely at guilt, confession, repentance, reciprocity and healing in contrast to the 'The City of Sorrow' which lies in the violators' own present and in the horror of recognising their brutal selves haunts them. No messenger of God has yet awakened their souls.

The process of going across, of bridging differences is long, arduous and strewn with political difficulties. Art, despite censorship and hostile state policies, can still manage to travel across and smuggle its way into the alien psyche, and explore shared histories and cultures. People-to-people contact is spontaneous and rich as the cultural festivals organised by the society for culture and literature of the SAARC countries, testify. The cultural exchange and peace project, initiated by the Indian newspaper house *The Times of India* and the Pakistani, counterpart *Jung* 'Aman Ki Asha' moves towards a similar direction. In the volume *Bridging Partition: People's Initiatives for Peace between India and Pakistan* (edited by Smitu Kothari and Zia Mian) brings together the history of peace initiatives by

intellectuals including writers, painters, activists, documentary workers and the very ordinary of ordinary men. At times, these efforts working towards friendship and easier communication between countries, people and divided families, jog the governments into action where visa permits, travel routes and trade are sought to be normalised, but suddenly there is an eruption – an incursion into each others' territory, a bomb blast or an ideological difference strongly expressed – interrupt the process, rolling it back. (A strong reminder of the myth of Sisyphus). Infiltration of militants, military leadership, especially in Pakistan, the non-neutrality of bureaucrats and some wings of the judiciary on both sides, the spurge of neo-nationalism and centre staging of religion further obstruct these restorative measures. There is a constant fluctuation in the relationships between these subcontinental siblings with right-wing ideologies stoking the politics of hatred. The political leadership, even when well-meaning, has to gauge the degree of resistance or backlash likely to take place. Mubashir Hasan in *The Pakistan-India Peace Process*, indicates how diplomats, bureaucracy and media often play a negative role disrupting the initiatives of the politicians (32-33).[9] The peace process was in urgent need of being moved to a more rational plane than the interference by vote politics. Hasan writes that, 'After fourteen years of promoting peace and friendship between the two countries, I have come to the conclusion that the ruling elite of the two countries are genuinely scared of peace breaking out between them' (34). Knowingly, we as nations, follow a suicidal route, interested more in the illusions of capitalism and development than in the lives of men.

Theatre, music, peace marches, journeys to the other country, cross-border cultural activities, visits of journalists and media people are all a necessary prelude to any bridging of the different memories of the Partition, memories that constantly bring alive past violence. Cultural interventions are also the agencies of dissent. Often these movements have to find their way through restrictions and censorships, but once they do that, they arouse

positive memories, memories that are equally true as those of violence, but with the difference that a balance is restored, a link is forged, and understanding develops. Thus, cultural sharing becomes the agency of mind-shifts and opens out the possibilities of a rethinking and a serious reflection on the past, motivated as it is for a concern for the future. Cultural memories attempt to put together what Sumanta Banerjee identifies as a counter hegemonic discourse, a resistance to the hegemony of the state. But the fear remains as to which ideological wagon this movement rides – a fundamentalist anchoring or values of secularism and democratisation? (58-59).[10] The hurdles are many and multi-faceted – economic, state systems, international policies and religions frenzy. Yet there is hope in these efforts and initiatives. They reflect the wisdom of humanity.

In both the narratives, '*Deshon Mein'* and '*Malham'*, sharing of their memories and their guilt, leads to understanding and healing. Memories shift over a period of time. The miscreants are not the people they have known. As such by conferring anonymity on them they are also given a reprieve to come to terms with their naked selves. It is difficult to kill those you know, those you have shared your childhood with; this also explains Arjuna's reluctance in the Kurukshetra war. The victim and the killer have to be strangers to each other. This holds true in most cases; and if not strangers at least not on terms of established neighbourly relationships. Both the narratives are located in rural and semi-rural areas. Does that indicate that urban environments are not conducive to the building of such bonds, upsetting Derrida's concept of the cosmopolitan city? But in riot-torn Bombay in Anand Patwardhan's documentary *Father, Son and Holy War,* there is scene when the dwellings of the riot-affected are being rebuilt. It is the workers of one religious community who are repairing the homes of the other. This image stands out against the background of hatred, violence, verbal abuse, and gender discrimination against one's own women. *Father, Son and Holy War*[11], in fact, is an analysis of a larger social scenario where the rise in fundamentalism and neo-

nationalisms is linked with the building up of an aggressive masculinity and an atmosphere of hostility, with rights of citizenship and socio-ethical structures pushed aside. The documentary tracing the rise of the Shiv Sena and its sectarian politics and aggressive rhetoric underlines the need for awareness and secular social action. Patwardhan's documentaries, one after the other, turn to sensitive social issues, especially *Ram Ke Naam* for which he had to go to court in order to have it exhibited and *Jung aur Aman*[12], a documentary for which he jour neyed to Pakistan and Japan, connecting this search for peace to an existential need for it. Violence, like radiation, crosses borders both of time and space.

A serious question to ask is: why is the subcontinent a dominant centre of religious strife. True, religious fundament-alism in the West has also led to the resurgence of neo-Nazism and racism, but South Asia is worst affected, perhaps because it is additionally caught up in poverty and feudalism. In this reference, a brief look at *The Kite Runner,*[13] a novel which is widely known, and look closely at the process of repentance and forgiveness as depicted in the relationship of Amir and Sohrab. Amir, called home by his mentor and friend Rahim Khan, learns of the lie of his whole existence. Hassan, whom he had constantly bullied and abandoned to sodomy, and later contrived his exit from his father's house on the false charge of a theft, is his half-brother. With Hassan now dead, the only amends he can ever make are to his nephew Sohrab. As Amir goes through the difficult process of managing Sohrab's journey to the States through legal, diplomatic and bureaucratic barriers, he often has to break his promises to him. The young child is full of distrust for thus adult world, in which he has already experienced torture and trauma, has been sold, and forced to be a plaything for Assef, the man who had sodomised his father. His physical courage even surpasses that of Amir, but his soul withdraws and he shuts himself up in a private world. Gradually, through persistence and patience, Amir and his wife Soraya try to wean him out of this deathlike silence. They have to resist the pressure

of Soraya's father who is opposed to the adoption of this child, who half-Hazara, looks different. The novel's story, covering more than four decades, travels through feudal Afghanistan, the Russian invasion, the Taliban with its adherence to the lessons drawn from *Mein Kampf*, the American imperialism and a time filled with dead people, orphan children, refugees and fugitives. Here too Amir comes across people who are willing to smuggle others across the border and though short of food themselves, extend hospitality to others (205-209). Against this background and Amir's personal journey of self-realisation with the penance performed, forgiveness comes. One day, Amir takes Sohrab for kite-flying and as he sets the process rolling, Sohrab comes closer to him and slowly takes the spool in his hand. As the kite goes swirling towards the sky, and Amir cuts down another kite, Sohrab smiles, takes over and Amir repeats the words Hassan had once said to him, 'For you, a thousand times' (323). Like kite-flying, forgiveness needs two people – one to fly, the other to spool out, taking turns, sharing, running together – for you a thousand times over.

Incidents of violence remind individuals and communities of all earlier similar happenings whether personally experienced or historically remembered. Past history has an uncanny tendency to crop up at the worst of periods. Dhami in *'Malham'* mentions the Sikh psyche turning back to Aurangzeb's times during the Partition riots and the 1984 riots brought back memories of the Partition. The resurfacing of past incidents of violence can also serve a purpose, as it facilitates a self-confrontation, a reminder of one's own role. Both the films *Amu* (2005)[14] about the 1984 riots and their aftermath and *Parzania* (2005)[15] about the Gujarat riots are narratives of internal violence, amongst citizens of the same country, people who have an equal stake in social and economic development, but are divided by religious propaganda and misconceptions. I will only refer to the two confessional scenes in these two films. In *Amu*, it is the dhaba-owner Govind, who confesses to his role as an informer. Under no obligation to confess as there is an eyewitness who has seen KK plunge his

knife into Balbir (Kaju's father), but Govind, on account of his own sense of guilt as the informer, who when threatened with death had betrayed the location of Balbir's hiding place,, becomes party to this guilt and carries the burden within him. It was an inhuman and an unneighbourly act and had destroyed his personal sense of integrity. Govind confesses and repeatedly asserts that it was not KK but he who by disclosing Balbir's whereabouts had rendered him open to attack. Is the enemy he who has killed or he who has led the murderer to him? Govind carries the physical scar of the enemy's weapon right to this day just as he carries the moral one on his soul. The confession shifts the guilt to a connection with the outside world, and paves the way both for communication and reconciliation. Through confession, part of Govind's lost humanity is regained. Similarly in *Parzania*, the bootlegger confesses to his role as an informer when the Human Rights Commission holds an inquiry. The narrative focus of the film is different from the one in *Amu*. *Amu* works through Kaju's personal journey to the knowledge of her parentage and her given childhood name as Amrit. She begins with an outsider's view of India as a land of urban-rural mix with cows on the roads and hand water-pumps still around. As Kaju pursues her curiosity she incidentally unfolds tales of violence. Subsequently pursuing the matter further she visits the slums and listens to personal memories, indirectly compelling Kabir to interrogate his bureaucrat father. In this, the film comments on the passivity of the bureaucracy and its complicity in the violence. One gradually begins to see the role of innumerable agencies. In fact, the politicians, the police, the bureaucrats and those who provided the electoral rolls, were all involved in this act of genocide; the guilt was spread all over. It was the failure of the civil society. *Parzania,* however, works differently. Focusing more directly on the atmosphere of violence as it builds up, it opens with the shop shutters being pulled down and people hurriedly rushing to safety. Throughout the film, three strands are intertwined; one is of the violence as it is being stoked by slogans of hatred and religious frenzy mixed with a narrow sense

of nationhood; the second is the community feeling, shared domestic spaces and dreams of the people, which momentarily collapse during the crisis, to surface once again when public confessions take place, each looks within, remembers the help given to many of them by people of other religions and a sense of solidarity is restored and sanity begins to take over. A third strand is the presence of Allan, an American researching on Gandhi in these times of violence. His transformation from an academic to an active member of Parzan's family changes both - his life as well as his understanding of Gandhi. Guilt and responsibility go together despite their oppositional pulls: one moving from the spread of religious ideology, to the top of the pyramid and the other flowing downwards to the base. The inquiry reveals how medical aid was prevented from reaching the riot affected, when police personnel turned killers, and neighbours closed their doors. But the young boy who reprimands the bootlegger and diverts the marauders, the Hindu who lets a Muslim go - are indications of the human remnants that still survive.

The consciousness of being human is perhaps the main hope for any restoration of normalcy. Taking up the 1993 riots in Kolkata, Mahasweta Devi, zeroes in on the household of a widowed woman Ketaki who lives alone and the gradual understanding which dawns on her in her relationship with the 'other'. In her preface to the novella, *Ek aur Vibhajan*, the writer puts her faith in ordinary people and their behaviour during a crisis. It is only people of this kind who defeat fundamentalism through their ordinary actions of helpfulness. But the intellectuals also have more than an equal responsibility to actively contribute to the sustenance of values.[16]

Scared of mob violence in the post Babri Masjid riots, Asghar pleads for a night's shelter. Ketaki has seen him around for more than three decades and unhesitatingly opens the door to him. They begin on an unequal relationship, she the protector and he the refugee, in need of help. The trust between them is delicately balanced. He is afraid that she may hand him over to the

marauders and has to be repeatedly assured that this will not happen. The one night goes on stretching into days. His presence has to be kept a secret thus open spaces are forbidden to him, and he cannot go the water tap or the washroom located in the open courtyard. He needs food which has to be cooked and served by Ketaki in the utensils she uses for herself. He has also to answer the call of nature, in that one room, the room which has now become a confining prison. All waste goes on piling, wrapped up in newspapers. Ketaki has to carry buckets of water up the stairs. One by one, Ketaki casts off all the inhibitions and prejudices she had grown up with. There is a parallel case in the house across the street, where Ruchira has also offered protection to Shabeena, without the knowledge of her orthodox mother. Questions arise in Ketaki's mind: will the Hindu god she worships, protect a Muslim? (33).

Other incidents follow: Shami, an activist, is attacked by the anti-social elements. Ketaki and Asghar bandage his wounds and try to stop his bleeding. Ruchi helps in getting him to the hospital. His condition is critical. Meanwhile, Shabeena cannot go home across the city. Locked up in their religious identities, each is separated from the other. Even civil initiatives wait for the signal from the political leaders (46). Ketaki wonders whether things will ever be like they were? (51) *Ek aur Vibhajan* criticises the lack of individual will as much as it does the various arms of governance, divided as they are in terms of ideology and religion. It also addresses various questions of inherited prejudices, of pollution and purity, of relationships based not on understanding and communication but on power and greed. Its strength, however, lies not in this analysis, but in the psychological struggle of a lone woman as she crosses every single prohibition she has inherited and musters up all her courage to sustain normalcy in and around her. We can understand the 'other', if we do but try to know them. The two narrative strands come together to emphasise the participation and need for a social community, which can rise above religious barriers. They offer new insights into religious discourse. Ketaki,

as she rises above the social prejudices, grows in her own moral stature. Always an independent woman, who had consistently refused dependence on her son and daughter-in-law, she now frees herself from the shackles of religious rituals, which in any case are not an integral part of *dharma* or any moral code. She sheds them initially due to the force of circumstances but later, more authentically, as a second riot victim from the majority community, lies bleeding at her doorstep.

Inter-religious strife, as Gyanendra Pandey has observed, is no longer referred to as 'communal'. In an essay, 'The Post-history of Communalism'[17], he points out that the political discourse has shifted to majorities and minorities and is now a discourse in which genocide, ethnic cleansings and terrorism find a comfortable niche. No longer is it only religion but also politics that divides people, and in India, it has begun to be directly associated with the nation state. Locating hate politics in sites of violence the world over, Pandey critiques the continued division into 'us' and 'them' into the 'civilized' and the 'uncivilized' and the whole attempt to destroy the minorities and those who are different as 'moral/ethical communities', as people with a right to voice their politics, affecting their networks of sustenance. Riots in recent history have been 'organised political massacres' (200), creating a divide between citizens and populations (195-196). Violence has no limits. Humankind in order to sustain itself and its value structures needs to think beyond the present. Several of the problems discussed by Ricoeur and Derrida can be easily surmounted and are likely to vary with reference to circumstances, cultural environments and the interpretation of an ethical/moral discourse. It is also likely to differ, if we ask the question as to what are we discussing or centralising: violence, history, revenge/ punishment, justice or human relations? Who is the subject: the human being or the power one can exercise? Moral guilt takes a priority over any legal issue. As Gayatri Spivak has observed, politico-legal solutions in themselves fall short of the requirement, they fail to imagine the 'Other' (83).[18] The dead

may not be able to forgive but the living can. Moreover, forgetting is not always an essential prelude to peace or forgiveness; the past is difficult to face, but it still needs to be remembered, because it reflects and shapes our future. The question, 'Is there a future in the past?' is directed toward both the human capacity to learn from the past and the relationship between time and memory. One does not need to forget but to ask: what is it that we would finally remember or like to remember? The interplay between time, history and memory is constantly in movement. The future depends on our response to an understanding of this interplay and on a dynamic interpretation of karma. There may, at times, be a need to forgive the unforgivable - not as legal judgment but as a moral one.[19] And this demands a transcendence of one's ego. Mahasweta Devi's view on the significance of the intervention by the intellectuals in political and social discourse is of importance in this context. The road is uphill, strewn with difficulties, long and arduous through family histories, upbringing, education, politics and religion, through memories and remembrance and through communication and dissent, but the journey is still worth it and the 'Other' is as real as we are.

NOTES

1. Harsh Mander, *Fear and Forgiveness: The Aftermath of Massacre.* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2009).
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, Translators Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberiam. (NewYork: Zone Books, 1991 2006). He discusses Bergson with reference mainly to two of his works *The Creative Mind* and *Matter and Memory* (1896), though his work related to intuition and elan vital are also considered.
3. I have in mind films such as *Garam Hawa,* the television serial *Tamas* based on Bhisham Sahni's novel and the stories in Alok Bhalla edited anthology, *Stories about the Partition.* There are several other representative collections and the partition of the two wings has also had a great deal of articulation in Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali.
4. This aspect is analysed in detail by Veena Das in her work *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*.

(New Delhi: OUP, 1995) 184-185.

5. Intizar Husain, 'The City of Sorrow', *(Shehre Afsos*) in *Stories About the Partition of India*. Translated by Vishwamitra Adil and Alok Bhalla. (New Delhi: Harper Collins 1994, 1999).377-394.
6. The film version of the novel *Pinjar* casting Urmila Matondkar, Manoj Bajpai and directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi was made in 2003 and was well received. It focused on a growing understanding of the men of the issues involved and consequently bringing about a change in their attitude to abducted women. In this connection, it is worth mentioning the Punjabi film *Shaheede-Mohabbat Buta Singh* (Dir. Manoj Puri, Pro. Manjeet Maan, Perf. Gurdas Maan, Divya Dutta, Arun Bakshi, Raghuvir Yadav, 1997) and the Hindi film *Gadar - Ek Prem Katha*. (Dir. Anil Sharma. Perf. Sunny Doel, Ameesha Patel, Amrish Puri, Lillete Dubey, 2001). Both derive their narrative from a true-life story.where a woman abducted and abandoned finds protection and love but the return home pushes her towards a compulsory exile from her husband's land and abandonment of her son. This was a story that ended in tragedy where the youth followed her, was rejected and finally laid down his life in sheer desperation. The film *Buta Singh*, shows in the final scene, the Muslim community divided over his rejection by the woman's family.
7. Tahira Iqbal, *'Deshon Mein'* (Urdu) in *Rekhat*. (Islamabad: Dost Publications, 2003), 42-51.
8. Sanwal Dhami, '*Malham*' in *Malham and Other Stories* (Punjabi).Ed. Rajnish Bahudar Singh. (Ludhiana: Chetna Prakashan, 2008), 39-66.
9. Mubasir Hasan, 'The Pakistan India Peace Process' in *Bridging Partition: People's Initiatives for Peace between India and Pakistan*. Eds. Smitu Kothari, Zia Mian and Others, (Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan, 2010), 19-51.
10. Sumanta Banerjee, '(Ad)ventures of Friendship', in *Bridging Partitions*, 52-83,58.
11. Anand Patwardhan, *Father, Son and Holy War*. 2 parts . Part I *Trial by Fire*, Part II *Hero Pharmacy*. Direction and Screenplay: Anand Patwardhan. Music D.Wood, Vinay Mahajan and Nav Narwan 1994.
12. *Jung aur Aman* / *War and Peace*, Producer: Monica Wahi and Sanjeev Shah, Camera and Editing: Anand Patwardhan, 2002 and *Ram ke Naam*/ *In the Name of God*, Production and Editing Assistance: Paromita Vohra, Pervez Merwanji and Others, Camera and Editing. Anand Patwardhan, 1991. Patwardhan faced a lot of difficulty in his attempts to screen *Jung aur Aman*. The Central

Board of Film Certificates refused to give it a certificate and insisted a multiple cuts. It was only after a court case that he was able to screen the film without cuts. It was commercially released in 2005.

13. Khaled Hosseini. *The Kite Runner* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2003, 2004).
14. *Amu* Producer: Director: Shonali Bose. Performers: Konkan Sensharma, Yashpal Sharma, Brinda Karat, 2005.
15. *Parzania*: Producer Rahul Dholakia, K.B. Sareen and Kamal Patel. Dir., Rahul Dholakia Perf. Naseeruddin Shah, Sarika, Farzan Dastoor, Sheeba Chaddha, Raj Zutshi Pearl Barsiwala, Corin Nemec, 2005.
16. Mahasweta Devi.'Bhumika', *Ek AurVibhajan* (2004) Translated by Sushil Gupta into Hindi from the original Bengali *Chayi December*. (New Delhi:Vani Publishers, 2006).
17. Gyanendra Pandey, 'Conclusion: the Post-History of Communalism; in *Heterotopias: Nationalism and the Possibility of History in South Asia*. Ed. Manu Bhagavan (New Delhi: OUP, 2010), 186-203.
18. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Terror: A Speech After 9-11' *Boundary2 3*1:2, 2004, 81-111.
19. Refer Master Charles Cannon's *Forgiving the Unforgivable. (*Mumbai:Yogi Impressions), 2011, a work which came out after the MumbaiTerrorist attacks and looks at the ways in which one can live with memories of loss and yet find compassion in one's heart for the guilty. Dominantly religious, it still has a message for us if lives of those dear to us are not to be permanently embittered and damaged.

5

Epilogue: Understanding the Other

Only a culture without hope cannot forgive – a culture that does not believe in progress or redemption.

Blake Morrison

I believe that we must be able to imagine our opponent as a human being, and to understand the significance of his or her action […..] that if in the imagination we do not make the attempt to figure the other as imaginative actant, political (and military) solutions will not remove the binary which led to the problem in the first place. Hence cultural instruction in the exercise of imagination.

Gayatri Spivak, 'Terror: A Speech after 9/11', 93-94)[1]

Forgiveness and revenge, love and hatred all work within relationships and are directed towards the other. These emotions enable or compel a stepping out of the limits of the self and relating to some other being. We have either not understood the value of relationships or the importance of the other or perhaps not even understood ourselves. As Rajmohan Gandhi has observed our conflicts and prejudices are often rooted in ignorance.[2] How much of rational element is there in a relationship? The moment it becomes totally rational, it becomes a worldly or a utilitarian approach and friendship, sharing, caring and understanding do not grow out of it. A relationship is also hardly ever equal. Most of all it is not selfless. Over and above the need of relating there can also be an emotional bond between people. Memories, shared histories and even differences, can all become points of a common life. Even when transplanted to large-scale dimensions they may carry the same combination.

Why do we hate someone? Why is there a feeling of aversion to some colours, voices or ideas? These responses are not reasoned attitudes. They are unconscious, intuitive or environmental. For centuries the outsider or the person different from us has been labelled an intruder, an outcaste, pushed to the periphery and literally excluded. In India the terms *mllecha* and *kafir* have been used for a long time, specifying difference and inferiority in the first and a non-believer in the second, hence unacceptable. There is a trace of the impure lurking in both. Our relations with the British were also marked by difference, and the sharing of food was kept to the minimum. They too were *mllechas* but being in a position of power were also in a position to get obedience, allegiance and sycophancy from the native.

Most wars have risen out of the desire for power, and in case of retaliation, further violence occurs. Even the *Mahabharata* war though undertaken for a rightful inheritance had other dimensions to it, and was full of deceptions and untruths. Civil wars and insurgencies also result in lingering disturbances resulting in ongoing violence and dislocations, creating distances and bitter memories. Mankind has found it difficult to forgive past injuries and wrongs, despite the fact that wars follow wars and violence annihilates, while the real causes of difference remain unattended to, causes often rooted in economic and political inequalities. No war is final and no war ever brings victory. Very often violence is also an act of self-preservation but where and when and how do we distinguish between the two kinds of violence is a difficult task. Except that our loss whether of identity and belonging, with the collapse of a social circle, or of location (fugitive, underground, refugee or exile), still leaves behind something of the human in us, the human that can be revived and capable of enabling us to go on with life. Throughout the twentieth century there has been a major preoccupation with the human relation to technology and its impact on our familiar world. One of the things that is of value, the emotional ability to relate to others, is increasingly in short supply. Dystopian visions have time and again emphasised the need for emotion as the one

saving point of human existence. Huxley's character Savage in *Brave New World (*1932*)* and Orwell's Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) would rather have emotion even if it brings suffering, than an emotionless life. The two novels work with two different aspects of science and technology, one with genetic engineering and the other with surveillance and destruction, but they arrive at the same conclusion.

Eric Fromm in *The Sane Society* had similarly wondered whether we are a sane society or an insane one. Writing more than half a century ago in 1955, Fromm was of the view that the new human is incapable of either loving or reasoning, in fact incapable of appreciating life and thus ready and even willing to destroy it.[3] He is a 'being' alienated from himself. Today this sense of alienation has increased multi-fold with our existence fractured by psychological conflicts. Aldo Leopold's biotic community reflected a concern with the study of relationships between different organisms of our natural world and their environments, all vital to our survival.[4] We are aware that scorch-earth strategies not only affect the soil but also the livelihood of the people and delay the restoration to normalcy and riots leave behind a trail of death, mutilation and psychological illnesses, all difficult to heal. Yet violence continues unabated, abetted by non-living organisms. Our civilizational battles are coming to be centred on the human and the inhuman. Are we living in a time when 'what it means to be human is on the verge of collapse…'[5] It is not only a matter of the role of bio-technology in full body human cloning, creating 'a new genetic structure but also a whole lot of simulation of the human itself…'(*ibid.)*, the destruction of and indifference to what we have learnt to recognise as human. McGowan writes: 'Torture as inhuman, indifference to suffering as inhuman, the will of the powerful over the weak as inhuman, all rely on a notion as stable and incontrovertible as thing-in-itself. But they also confirm that thing by expunging from its terms bad behaviour'.[6] Being 'human' is more than an existential issue, it is also an ontological one. When we refer to the potential or 'the realisation of a full

life' or the opportunity to grow, we have all these things in mind — emotions, feelings, values, beliefs, environment, relationships and economic wellness. Development and progress cannot be viewed as one-dimensional. Heidegger's concept of Being includes all this as does the *bhakta's* communication with God. The first is a realisation through meaning in the act of living, discovering the self, the second of a relationship of the self to the other.

Forgiveness thus is also a relationship of the Self to the Other. How do we know, understand or relate to the other? Mahasweta Devi, with reference to her work with the tribals, suggests living with the other[7], Rajmohan Gandhi views that knowing about the other, his culture, ideas, experiences,[8] is a way of understanding him.. Paul Ricoeur works with a total going across and placing oneself in the place of another in *Oneself as Another*. This rests on an ethical position including both the rightness of the action and the purpose it serves, a position not necessarily dependent on the normative pattern of morality, ordinarily defined as obligations and duties.[9] Moral norms, whenever they lead to inaction, may require a shift from the normative to the ethical. Ricoeur's concern in this work is with the primacy of ethics over morality, and the necessity of the ethical aim to pass through 'the sieve of the norm'; and the 'legitimacy of recourse by the norm to the aim whenever the norm leads to impasses in practice...'. Ricoeur continues, 'in other words... morality is held to constitute only a limited, although legitimate and even indispensable, actualization of the ethical aim, and ethics in this sense would then encompass morality' (170). In this context, Ricoeur's distinction between self-respect and self-esteem is clear. Self-respect is attacked when others humiliate or ignore us; at times, the feeling of hurt may not be justified, while self-esteem relates entirely to one's inner being recognising the role of conscience. If the indulgence is in an act which is not in accordance with my idea of myself, it brings in the role of conscience and one can no longer afford to be indifferent to the lapse. There is deep connection between

means and ends and the question as to which of the two is more important, goes further than the individual to include its affects on others. Is it possible to live with oneself in a state of guilt or in the memory of a wrong act?

In this connection, Emmanuel Levinas's work, *Otherwise than Being*: *Beyond Essence*, is another philosophical approach which supports this. Levinas's argument travels between egotism and transcendence; the latter implying what is other than being. Happenings like war arise out of one's own interest, a desire for power, a sense of egotism, while the ability to transcend conflict and move beyond it requires the courage to look beyond self-interest. The transcendence 'suspends the immediate clash of beings….'(4).[10] He proceeds to dwell on rational peace: patience, calculation, mediation politics, capable of leading to the renunciation of 'allergic intolerance', an act which assumes responsibility for the other.

It would be equally relevant to ask: can one live or live better by placing the aggressor in a similar condition. In an article 'Love in times of slaughter'[11] Harsh Mander draws our attention to a Muslim youth, Yusuf Mansuri, whom he met in the Shah Alam relief camp in Ahmedabad in 2002. Mander refers to the crowded durgah where 10,000 people sought refuge, 'Yusuf recalls the humiliation of living on charity, wearing used clothes, eating food directly from the floor, using one toilet for 500 people'. Later, when Yusuf described the slaughter that had taken place, Mander writes, 'I remember wondering that if I had suffered what he had, could I have found the same spaces in my heart for forgiveness?' Yusuf and his father were arrested on charges of murdering a Hindu, but subsequently, when the charge did not hold, released on bail on the condition of reporting every month to the court for four years. There was enough cause for bitterness and revenge. But the young man did not yield to these negative emotions. He began to study law and in the Assam riots, volunteered to work for the Aman Biradari in a Bodo camp, where he initially encountered anger and criticism but finally 'both sides admitted their longing for peace'. This is a

concrete example of human action, the acceptance and the need to work with the difference of the other and realise that the horror of the past need not be re-enacted either by thrusting a similar condition on others or through holding on to bitter memories. Yusuf and his family's choices and actions enabled them to renounce the feelings of victimisation, bitterness and hatred and attempt building a future. The question of 'just' or legal did not deter them from responding to their ethical selves; it is only by going across that the realisation comes that even ordinary structures which one takes for granted mark the difference and create hierarchies of inequality. Can difference be, in some degree, accommodated within the concept of equality? I do not by any means imply 'separate but equal' in any segregating terms but my point is: is it possible to accept difference as an attribute of identity and realise that because it is differently anchored, it is not inferior. Or is another possible solution to look at plurality and multiplicities which will automatically disrupt the binarism and along with it the hierarchies, without the rejection of inequality because of difference. Each one of us is different from an earlier self just as a childhood photograph reminds us how much we have changed and yet we relate to a past 'self '. When strangeness or unfamiliarity is encountered we are either attracted or repelled, we scoff and insulate ourselves and fail to allow any concessions for the difference whether in culture, history, religion, or even food.

The concept of the universal, with its fallout into unequal binaries, is an estranging one. It does not create any space for dialogue or recognition of the important fact that just as our culture and its affiliates constitute our identity, they do of the other. But if the gap has to be bridged in terms of relationships, a better term than universal is the idea of alterity, a word which is increasingly coming into use to fill the existing gap. Kate McGowan has observed, 'We need the other to define ourselves, but we need a particular other who will grant us recognition on the terms we demand'.[12] If we try to relate to the other, an

understanding is likely to come about, rather through any attempt to change, detest or fear. Levinas values the 'absolute alterity of the other' which requires a shift in the egoist self in order to enable a transcendence of its limits (*Otherwise than Being* 96). The phenomological and philosophical patterns of thought processes primarily rise from human experience and the response to an external reality. In view of the divisionary trends, it is increasingly clear that a total rethinking on our personal and political relationships has to begin. Levinas's philosophy is dominantly valued for its ethical stance, of transferring man's relationship to a universal ethical discourse which has a potential for leading to peace and 'renunciation of allergic intolerance'. The responsibility for the other is also vested in us. Apparently, whatever the past, its existence is never in a vacuum, it finds its presence in the present. In *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority,*[13] Levinas is concerned with the absence of morality in a condition of war. Here too he works with the idea of transcendence and makes us question the closed structures which ego and subjectivity can become. The primary question is how do we accommodate and understand the other? All these references to morality in war and in politics as well of forgiveness, connect with our cultural and religious traditions, and refer to existing structures of thought, structures still available to us, and perhaps with all the advantages of hindsight. It is only the human position that needs an awakening. It seems as we have another chance at shaping the blueprint of life.

Asghar Wajahat's play, *Jis Lahore Nahin Dekhiya au Jamiya hi Nahin,*[14] considers the problem of accommodating difference in a post-crisis situation, one which demands getting over prejudices and intolerance. Wajahat teaches in Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, and has written extensively on riots, their after math and their impact on human relationships. The reviewer of the *Hindustan Times* commented that despite the fact that Wajahat has not personally experienced Partition in West Punjab and that his roots are not there, his portrayal has captured the fine nuances of intercommunity relations. Located in Lahore

the story explores the experiences of a Muslim migrant family from Lucknow who have been allotted a spacious *haveli* but discover to their horror that someone occupies the first floor. Is it a ghost or a living person? The old woman is the mother of the owner who has either been killed or has migrated during the violence. For the Muslims, she is a *kafir,* a non-believer. They both threaten and request her to leave for Hindustan; Lahore is no longer located in her country. Mirza Sahib also approaches the authorities but all to no avail. The woman just refuses to go. Right from the beginning she is willing to offer help and is delighted to hear the voice of other human beings. But there are disturbances. In order to eliminate her, the son of the family engages hooligans but the Begum, his mother, puts an end to it. She simply cannot live with the guilt on her conscience. Gradually the two families build up a war m relationship of caring for each other. The woman is now 'dadimaa' to the children and 'bua' to the elders.

In order to accommodate their initial desires, at one point she offers to leave for India but now, the family aware that she has no one there, do not allow her. Finally, the inevitable happens. She dies leaving behind the problem of her cremation. Are Hindu rites or Muslim rites to be followed? The Maulana advises them to cremate her in accordance with her faith. The men then pool together their knowledge of Hindu customs and set about improvising and making all the arrangements. Her body is taken to the river bank in the face of the opposition of some the anti-social elements who finally express their anger by murdering the Maulana. The play, in fact, has two endings – the going across in the performance of the last rites and the murder of the Maulana, motivated less by religious faith and more by a native sense of aggression of the men who are impatient for a kill. The first elates the reader and takes us to the heights one can rise up to, with the 'sons' taking their rightful place by their mother. The second reveals the debasement of human nature which has no respect even for the dead. They juxtaposing of the two events and the two sides of human nature, indicate the choices we need to make.

The lesson comes home that religion need not be a barrier to understanding the other and difference need not prevent relationships from developing. Our relationships are often based on some shared ground, history or culture. The fact that we are human or believe ourselves to be human also comments on the sameness of emotional responses. This last can help us reach out to others. Pabitrakumar Roy commenting on the g rowing fundamentalism, points out that 'Fundamentalism ignores or denies the rich history of its own tradition as well as modern historical consciousness' (34).[15] The hermeneutics fundamentalism generates is one of intolerance, perhaps because it interprets religion literally and selectively, rejecting critical reflection. While a hermeneutics of tolerance, 'could be inter-religious and intercultural….. It is always possible to seek *sincerely* to transform unreasonable disagreements into relatively reasonable ones which allow for some kind of dialogue. There are resources for pardon, hospitality to the stranger, suffering and humility, the peace of prayer and meditation in every religious tradition' (35, emphasis in original). Roy's argument carries within it a response to Derrida's concept of hospitality and its exclusive placement in Abrahamic religions. I would like to extend Roy's position on tolerance a little further to the nature and meaning of tolerance. In itself it is a passive act, and as such not really adequate enough to address long-term relationships, which need to be built not merely on tolerance but on understanding and trust and the concept of *maitri* is far more important.

Forgiveness is, above all, a personal act rooted in one's own self. In some measure it may be an act of self-preservation but it is also carries within it the capacity to reach out to others and expanding our horizons in order to create meaningful relationships. It is a possible and a viable course of action which can work between people, races and cultures and create a better psychological and social environment. Nations and states, however, are reluctant to take any step in this direction as there is a deficit of trust and to act in the face of it becomes a great responsibility. But it is action alone which can lead to any

positive outcome. It is in this that the intention begins to carry a more significant meaning than mere words. Is there a possibility that if a reservoir of goodwill can be collectively built, that better relations can emerge? As Roy has said, 'reciprocal rapport' can be 'expected to be built' on the essence of the religious traditions (Roy 35) not on ritualistic practices. There is no reason to believe that our failures in the past are incapable of leading to any success in the future. In fact, it is the past which holds a mirror to us and beckons is to make better choices. Our past whether violent or peaceful has enough to initiate dialogues so that histories begin not with war but with peace, not singularly with reason or emotion but with both of them and enable the altering and enriching of the people and nations involved. Forgiveness, maybe our main resource of enabling the human and, perhaps also the means of saving us from a conscious progress towards destruction.

During this journey through different cultures, religions and histories, one realises that there can be no formula for human behaviour or for the total elimination of violence. Categories such as power, globalisation and nation-state intervene and religion is hijacked for various other concerns, rather than the relationship between man and God. Trust in political relations is in deficit. Self-reflection and awareness of responsibility are equally problematic, yet memories work together and remind us of the human in others as well as in us. Knowledge in terms of education and technology and reason in the sense of rationalism are not enough in themselves. Human beings need a healthy combination of both reason and emotion, of policy and intuition. The search for peace has to be multi-directional and work itself into new contextual definitions of nation, religion and community. If violence is within us, *peace is also within us*. And, at times, neither forgetting nor forgiveness is a necessary prerequisite; mere self-interest can work. Forgiveness does not only come into play as a public act of avowal and redemption, or between two nation- states, but is part of our everyday life. More than a formal acknowledgement and expression, what it really

calls for is an attitudinal shift in our very thinking, something we all know but find difficult to evolve in our real-life actions.

NOTES

1. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,'Terror a Speech After 9-11', *Boundary 2*31: 2, 2004, 81-111.
2. Rajmohan Gandhi, *Eight Lives: A Study of the Hindu-Muslim Encounter*, (New Delhi; Roli Books, 1986). He expounds on this in the first chapter 'Hindus and Muslims'.
3. Eric Fromm, *The Sane Society* (Albany: Fawcett Publications, 1955-1967) 309.
4. A.L. Herman, *Community, Violence, Peace: Aldo Leopald, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Gautama Buddha in the Twenty-First Century*. (Albany: State University Press, 1999), 47.
5. Kate McGowan, *Key Issues in Critical and Cultural Theory,* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2009), 119.
6. *ibid*., 120.
7. Mahasweta Devi, 'The Author in Conversation' in *Imaginary Maps*, (Calcutta: Thema, 1993), i-xvi, vii.
8. Refer Rajmohan Gandhi, *Eight Lives,* 1-16.
9. Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another:* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 170.
10. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being: Beyond Essence* (1974).Trans. Alphonso Lingis. (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2011). online.chingsoolie.com/files/ 08/-wholebook-word.pdf.
11. Harsh Mander, 'Love in times of slaughter' *The Hindu*, Magazine Section. Sunday. Feb. 24,2013.3.
12. Kate McGowan, 'Alterity', *Key Issues in Critical and Cultural Theory*. (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2009), 79-101, 86.
13. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay in Exteriority*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: (Duquesne University Press, 1969, 2011). Internet pdf complete book.
14. Asghar Wajahat, *Jis Lahore Nahin Dekhiya au Jamiya hi Nahin* (Hindi). (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2001).The title literally translated means: 'he who has not seen Lahore is not yet born'. It is a well-known Punjabi saying commenting on the goodwill and hospitality of the people of Lahore.
15. Pabitrakumar Roy, *Three Lectures on Loving Kindness,* Shimla: IIAS, 2011.

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