



**FEMALE BODY AS HIEROGLYPHICS OF PARTITION VIOLENCE:
READING LALITHAMBIKA ANTHARJANAM'S
"A LEAF IN THE STORM"**

SIDDHARTHA SINGH

Assistant Professor & Head Department of English
M. M. P. G. College, Kalakankar, Pratapgarh, INDIA

The two new states of India and Pakistan came into being as a result of a division on the basis of religion and were demarcated by arbitrary borders¹; a division which was accompanied by unprecedented mass migration, violent deaths, sexual assaults and a prolonged trauma and was legitimized through the idea of revenge fraught with the trauma of gender and sexuality. It was a revenge that discriminated along the lines of religion and ethnicity while the atrocities were committed especially against women and their bodies. Women were not only objects of, but also witness to violence. Their bodies became contested sites of violence upon which external identities ascribed their meanings and yet most of the written histories on Partition lack any close female perspective. The need of the hour is, as Joan Kelly advocates, to restore women to history and to restore our history to women with the aim to "make women a focus of enquiry, a subject of the story, an agent of the narrative";² in other words, to construct women as a historical subject and through this construction, as Joan Scott's puts, "disabuse us of the notion that the history of women is the same as the history of men, that significant turning points in history have the same impact for one sex as for the other".³ Such new perspective has given impetus to the feminist sociologists like Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin, Urvashi Butalia, and Veena Das to document oral histories and official records of Hindu and Sikh families' and communities' refusal to accept women subjected to sexual violence in the riots that accompanied the Partition of British India in 1947. Menon and Bhasin, in their seminal work *Borders and Boundaries* (1998), critique the situation:

... the anticipation of just such a rejection by the very family and community that were to provide them support was one reason why many women resisted being recovered. Pregnant women were obviously more vulnerable than others and the decision whether to abort or carry their pregnancies to full term was an agonizing one for all women, especially young ones who were going to be first time mothers. Those who were in an advanced state did not even have this choice; for them the question of whether or not to abandon their babies must have been even more painful. ⁴



At the same time, women survivors also made hard attempts as Sukrita Paul Kumar mentions that “those women who survived the partition riots emerged with a greater existential autonomy. Not only did they accord space to themselves for growth, they also created in themselves the enterprise for independent living.”⁵ Contextualizing this feminist historiography and narrativising history of the Partition, this paper examines the situation of the recovered women through a reading of Lalithambika Antharjanam’s short story “A Leaf in the Storm”.⁶

Narrativising history as an act of remembrance, not only enriches history by opening up minutiae of such political incident of national and international significance, but also provides reconstruction and reinterpretation of history. Such narrative histories analyze their component parts, and unwrap how they assemble our current impression of India’s Partition.

For both men and women, the trauma of Partition violence was difficult to articulate and this often made for a hesitant, disjointed or sometimes even "wordless" telling. We cannot say that men and women always spoke in different voices. Yet, as their accounts themselves indicate, the gendered nature of the experience of violence engendered its telling in specific ways. The part of this difference must lie in the fact that women were not only objects of, but also witness to violence. Unlike men, they retained the memory of loot, rape and plunder in their bodies, therefore they remember it differently. Thus the story of 1947, while being one of the successful attainments of independence, is a gendered narrative of displacement and dispossession, of large-scale and widespread communal-sexual violence. Urvashi Butalia records that “there was widespread sexual savagery: about 75,000 women are thought to have been abducted and raped by men of religions different from their own.”⁷ History of partition is surprisingly mute about this issue; therefore the need is to make stories like “A Leaf in Storm” a focus of inquiry since they are, as Jill Didur would argue, not just “confessional chronicles of emotional trauma... but interested commentaries on historical events”.⁸ Such writings provide a more authentic force to re-examine history and subsequently history is being juxtaposed with women's voices.

Lalithambika Antharjanam, (1909-1987) was often considered the “First Woman” of Malayalam Letters. Born in an orthodox Namboodiri family, she received no formal education. She learnt Malayalam and Sanskrit at home from her father, Kottavattom Damodaran Potti, a scholar and social reformer of repute.⁹ She was born in times when E.M.S. Namboodiripad, V.T. Bhattathiripad and M.R. Bhatathiripad, the younger generation of Namboodiris revolted against the double standard of Namboodiri men indulging in multi-marriages and uninhibited lifestyles, while their wives lived in seclusion with few contacts with the outside world. These reformers challenged the orthodoxy of the community, the profligate lifestyle and the sexual permissiveness of its men and fought for restoration of a sense of values to the community and respect for their women. This period of social



renaissance provided impetus for a renaissance in Kerala literature. Lalithambika was one of the prodigies of this social and literary renaissance. C. Sarat Chandran points out that

Antharjanam's writings captured the spirit of this period and the struggle of the young generation. But it was a long, hard struggle for her, as a woman. She once observed, "There is no Shakespeare, Homer or Kalidaasa among women because the best years of our life are spent in bringing up children and looking after our men." The name Antharjanam itself meant "those inside". She had no formal education and her education was limited to some lessons in Malayalam and Sanskrit. Yet she overcame these challenges by a sense of determination and produced nine volumes of short stories, six collections of poems, two books for children and a novel.¹⁰

Lalithambika began writing verse as it was the vogue in those days. But her first published piece was 'Abhinava Parthasarathi,' an article on Mahatma Gandhi. Her earlier poems, collected in 'Bhavadeepthi' and 'Saranamanjari,' revealed the making of a romantic poet motivated by lofty idealism. Then she turned to write short stories. Her early stories did create a furore and trigger off quite a few ripples all around. In the formative period, Lalithambika was greatly influenced by Rabindranath Tagore, as evidenced in the stories like 'Amma' (Mother) and 'School Pranayam' (School Romance). She focused the different faces of woman as mother, daughter, sister and wife in scores of stories. Hailed as a masterly short story, 'Kodumkattilpetta Orila' (A Leaf in Storm), revolved round a discredited woman in a relief-camp, brought orphaned by the Hindu- Muslim riots of 1947. 'Mulappalinte Manam' (The Smell of Breast milk) revealed an experience of motherhood that transcends all man-made barriers of caste and creed. 'Moodupadam' (The Veil) is the doleful tale of a fatalistic Namboodiri woman who surrenders herself to the dictates of destiny without demur. 'Prathikara Devatha' (The Goddess of Revenge) projects the fiery spirit of the oppressed women flaring up against the fanatic society. Lalithambika had also written on the myriad faces of love in all its hues and shades. Her renowned story "Manikkan' deals with the all embracing attachment between a Pulaya (untouchable) and his ox. Her craft reaches near perfection in the touching finale of this man-animal affair. 'Manushyaputri' (The Daughter of Man) depicts the sorry plight of an aged woman who approaches a minister for a favor. The fact that she was once his foster-mother renders the story a remarkable appeal that is heart-wrenching. Curiously enough, Lalithambika wrote only one novel – 'Agnisakshi' – and that turned out to be her magnum opus. It won her several accolades including the prestigious Vayalar Award in its inaugural year, besides the Central and Kerala Sahitya Academy awards.¹¹

While the majority of the Partition stories tell of loss and the vitiation of basic moral values, some stories, like Lalithambika's "A Leaf in the Storm", describe survival and recovery. "A Leaf in the Storm", is the story of Jyoti, Jyotirmoyi Devpal, "the most emaciated of the



woman”, who is “reclaimed” under the exchange program between the two newly born and partitioned nations. This exchange does not provide any immediate assurance to the shattered lives of those who are recovered after communal violence and Jyoti too is not sure. She asks herself whether she has been transferred “From one prison to another”?¹² Lalithambika avoids any critical analysis of such measures taken by both the governments of India and Pakistan.¹³ She focuses on the socio-political construction of the female body, which is considered as a repository of national honor. The violation of female body has been used to defile the honor of the nation. Strengthened by British racialized colonial practices to divide Hindu and Muslim, this discourse has its genesis in the nineteenth century idea of Hindu nationalism and tradition. Debali Mookerjea-Leonard traces the historical contours of this process of producing a discourse of honor and, especially, of women's sexual purity:

Through a peculiar sort of analogical reasoning, cultural nationalists around the turn of the century mapped the symbolic purity associated with the inner, or private, domain onto the actual bodies of women. Interpellating the chaste woman's body as the bearer of an essential Indian/ Hindu identity, the period witnessed her transformation into an icon of the honour of the nation, the religious community, and the untainted household. That is to say, the nationalists engaged in a process of myth-making whereby feminine sexual purity was endowed with the status of the transcendental signifier of national virtue. (It simultaneously shielded masculine proto-nationalism from the narration of its failures.) The formulation of an ideal femininity did not grow out of some social pathology. Instead, it was embedded in a mosaic of macro-sociological dynamics of colonialism and culture, wherein the central struggle was for control over state apparatuses, property, and the law.¹⁴

This nationalist process of myth-making consciously used and manipulated the female sexual purity to sustain Hindu Nationalism and tradition and was well supported by religious scriptures. Leonard further argues that “the aura around chastity in the colonial and nationalist era clearly had concrete consequences for women, because their bodies were not simply sites for discourse but were also sites of patriarchal constraint and violence.”¹⁵ In the reconstitution of tradition in the nineteenth century, Hindu women and scriptures were the terms of its articulation and the female body was considered as hieroglyphics of Hindu nationalism and tradition. They were trapped in what Ketu H. Katrak would call a politics of the female body. “A politics of the female body,” says Ketu H. Katrak, “includes the constructions and controls of female sexuality, its acceptable and censored expressions,”¹⁶ and it “involves socialization involving layers and levels of ideological influences, socio-cultural and religious, that impose knowledge or ignorance of female bodies and construct woman as gendered subject or object.”¹⁷ The female body as nineteenth century ideological construct is colonized again and again; firstly by the colonizers; secondly by the men of their



own community in the name of so called tradition; and again by the men of other community to seek revenge.¹⁸

Jyoti is a victim of this politics of female body. She had been raped along with fifteen women while crossing the border with the help of Qasim Sahib, who was a good friend of her father. Although Qasim Sahib and his daughter Ayesha, Jyoti's friend, take great care not to raise any suspicion even in Ayesha's brother, the plan to send these women safely across the border fails:

The travellers thought that they were out of danger. Then suddenly a big row erupted. The cart stopped. Someone pulled out the bundles of hay from the cart, ignoring Qasim Sahib's swearing and protests. Loud, thunderous laughter. Wild shouts. From among the bundles of hay fifteen women were dragged out. One by one, those flowers fell ...¹⁹

Incidents like this became common during the Partition. The female body became a contested site on which the people of different communities strived hard to script their own desires and authorities. Violation of female body makes it a hieroglyphics of partition violence. This violence inscribes a new meaning on female body. Violation demolishes idealism associated with female body and reinvests it with symbols of a fallen, undignified and impure nation. Raped female body demystifies the concept of female sexual purity, which was mystified under the nineteenth century colonial discourse of the Hindu nationalism and ancient scriptures. Jill Didur observes that reconstructions "of the ancient origins of Hindu cultural nationalism went hand in hand with an intensification of patriarchal surveillance of elite and middle-class women's sexuality and conduct as wives and mothers".²⁰ This discourse advocated a new patriarchy with all hegemonic forms of dominance and defined the relationship between women and nation in terms of woman as a signifier of the nation. Further, Hindu nationalism projected nation as motherland, an essentially feminized construct. This complex ideology invested national honour, pride, dignity and tradition in women. Partha Chatterjee hammers this point home: "The new patriarchy advocated by nationalism conferred upon women the honour of a new social responsibility and by associating the task of female emancipation with the historical goal of sovereign nationhood, bound them to a new, and yet entirely legitimate, subordination."²¹ This subordination in the name of a newly re-evaluated tradition became the trademark of the Hindu nationalism. Lata Mani in her seminal work "Contentious traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India" (1987) gives a detailed version of this process of making women as picture image of the Hindu tradition. She argues that women were not subject in this discourse but only emblem or, as I propose, hieroglyphics of the Hindu tradition with imposed sanctity and mystified sexuality. The Hindu tradition that had been interrupted by Islamic interlude had to be reinterpreted with the help of scriptures. Mani argues that in the debate on Sati the privileging



of the more ancient texts was tied to the belief that Hindu society had fallen from a Golden Age.²² She further sheds light that “this idea of a fall grew to be crucial to nineteenth-century indigenous discourses, ‘progressive’ and ‘conservative,’ and was to intersect with the idea that Britain rescued Hindu India from Islamic tyranny, to produce specifically ‘Hindu’ discourses of political and cultural regeneration.”²³ The Hindu intelligentsia of nineteenth century turned their back entirely on the secularism, rationalism, and nonconformity of pre-British Muslim ruled India. Mani rightly observes that “this colonial discourse not only privileged Brahmanic scriptures as the key to Indian society, it also distinguished sharply between the ‘Hindu’ and the ‘Islamic,’ conceiving of these as mutually exclusive and autonomous heritages.”²⁴ This British policy to divide and rule eventually divided the nation but this division was gendered and was stamped on the female body, which turned it from hieroglyphics of tradition to hieroglyphics of partition violence.

When the impure Jyoti, a victim of the gendered Partition, a hieroglyphics of partition violence and a symbol of fallen nation, arrives in the Indian camp she is carrying the “seed of damnation” in her womb. Her “belly remains big even though she hasn’t had food for four days. She clenches her fist, aims at her belly.”²⁵ Even in this pathetic condition she is observant of other women around her:

That old woman there – is the mother of nine children, who in turn have given her fifteen children of their own. She has indeed been a mother to the whole village, to both Hindus and Muslims. The family decided to stay on because of their mother’s insistent that she should breathe her last in her own village. Today, she alone remains. Her children were killed. The girls were abducted. Her house was gutted. And there she stood, in the courtyard, supporting herself on a stick, watching her house burn down to ashes. Yet, she lives on ... She eats, sleeps, and talks ... Hope, passion for life ...

There you see another woman, now at her breakfast, chewing hard at dirty bits of chapatti. Her cheeks and breasts are swollen. Her clothes are torn. She had been married to a big officer in Sindh. She set out with her three children as soon as the people had been warned of revolt. Tragedy overtook her car and waylaid her. She was violated in front of her husband’s body which laid ripped open and scattered. She could only see the blood-stained hands of her children. Someone reclaimed her body, more dead than alive, from the railway track. Alas, she hasn’t yet died.²⁶

Both these women are victims of partition, but their experiences are different. The old woman witnessed the violence, but her body was not treated as a site for the performance of identity because she was devoid of sexuality. Another woman not only witnessed the brutal killing of her husband and children, but was also raped. These two instances help us to understand that



the female body was specially targeted as sites of sexual conquest. These women choose to live, but as death in life. They are physically alive but they are dead for their relatives and they are now national burden. Instead of ending their lives in the name and concept of honor and pativraty²⁷ prescribed by the traditional Hindu nationalist discourse, they dare to live. These women have sinned and have failed in their moral responsibility of upholding the honor of their families and nation. Such women, argues Jill Didur, “destabilized their [own] convergences in the nationalistic imaginings of the recently formed postcolonial state.”²⁸ How can they be accommodated within the narrative of the nation as legitimate and pure? Since the female body is repository of men's honour and community's culture, its violation is akin to the violation of the community to which it belongs. This practice had a long historical and mythological past.²⁹

Tradition, which has elevated and mystified female sexual purity to a spiritual level, demands sacrifice from these impure and fallen women. There are abundant examples of raped women sacrificing their lives. In this context Kavita Daiya rightly concluded that “it is not the affinity of nationalistic and/or religious imagining, the complex articulation of both that engenders death through gendered violence.”³⁰ These women have not sacrificed their lives for the sake of so called nationalistic and religious tradition. Jyoti observes everything, but despises her body as well as the whole world. Like other women she has not yet reconciled with her fate. Social historians and chronologists of women's experiences during Partition have noted that it was customary for women caught up in Partition violence to blame it all on fate.³¹ The gendered violence has forced the female victims, as Veena Das argues,

...into a dumb condition that is not only sign of this period but is also a part of the terror itself. It is this fact – that violence annihilates language that terror cannot be brought into the realm of the utterable – which invites us to constitute the body as the mediating sign between the individual and society, and between the past and the present.³²

The violated female body became a burden that caused several suicides during the Partition. Though Jyoti lives on, but her suicidal instinct seems to be prevalent as she has not eaten anything for four days. This fasting has weakened her body and when the doctor coaxes and begs her to drink milk to save her life she breaks into tears and asks

You want me to live on still, and sow the seeds of damnation?

... My life ... doctor ... may I ask you something? Tell me, are you able to destroy something which must be destroyed, just as much you can preserve something you think must be preserved? Now this life bred of damnation – conceived in consequence



of inhuman rape and ignorance – tell me doctor, can you destroy this, save another life ...?³³

The doctor turns pale by this clear and loud demand. A disciple of the supreme master of ahimsa he speaks like a Vedantin.

Sister, who are we to fight the decree of destiny? Look I am doctor. I have no moral right to take away someone's life; I can only redeem it. Look at the lakhs of people in this camp; there are many more like them in other camps too. We will overcome this storm that rages over the east and west of our land. Bharat will endure you; are you not a woman of India? Cheer up; here, drink this milk ...³⁴

Like other sufferers she overcomes the challenge of adapting herself to the atmosphere of the camp. Jyoti's experience of pregnancy is traumatic. In a normal married life her pregnancy might have filled her with a sense of thrill and maternal responsibility. Her family would have celebrated the news of her pregnancy. Some tips and precautions might have been given to her by senior female members of her family. She would have taken extreme care of her condition. But here there is no celebration. The realization of her condition fills her with terror and shame. The trauma of rape has overshadowed her existence. She is not mentally well prepared to face this greater challenge to her entire being; she tries "hard to contain her swollen body within the folds of her Sari"³⁵ The pulsation which threatens a revolt symbolizes everything that womanhood and humanity find despicable in nature. However she is provided an option by an unusual incident: "There lay in the toilet the lifeless body" of newly born and deserted body of a child, on whose "neck was a thick bluish mark"³⁶ The body has been left to be dragged by scavengers. Jyoti watches and wonders how courageous and decisive these people are that they sweep past all the obstacles and go on ahead.

Several weeks pass. One day, she is left alone under the shade of the big tree, where she has gone to listen to the message of a distinguished guest. The message of the guest, that the children of those raped women must be accepted because they "are the first citizens of a free India,"³⁷ provides her an option to give birth to the child. But then she is worried about the future of these children. She contemplates:

They will grow up ... these children ... as they begin to comprehend the reality, as they come of age ... that blood ... No! The source of that blood is hate, not love ... would it run amok, driven by the intense desire for vengeance? Even break past the borders? ...³⁸

Exactly at this moment, she is invaded by the overwhelming labor pains "with the speed of thousand bolts of lightning".³⁹ This intense labor pain makes her realize that "No woman can



evade the tax levied on her life”⁴⁰ and finally she gives birth to a child. A momentary instinct, progeny of her contemplation to abort or to kill the child after its birth, fills her with a desire to “choke” the infant “to death”, or to “bury the burden of her misery and shame ... under the tree”, for she “wouldn’t let the scavenger drag it away”.⁴¹ But this momentary instinct passes and she allows her child to live. It seems to me that there would be three reasons for her allowing the child to live. The first of these is that she could not muster the courage to abandon her child. The second is that she decided to accept her fate and therefore did not abandon the child. The third reason could be that she did not abandon her child because of her motherly instinct for it. Instead of getting rid of the child, who is an attestation of rape and violation, she decides to live with him/her. The very moment she places her hand on the body of the child, she is filled with the enormous compassion for and responsibility to sustain the life she had been carrying for more than nine months. Eventually, she abandons all thoughts of running away from the camp or of leaving the child to be spotted by someone. Unknowingly she revolts against the traditional role of an ideal Hindu womanhood and returns to the camp with the child.

This story depicts a character, whose world is completely ruined, but who manages—through the compassion for her illegitimate child—to maintain her sense of civilized conduct when it is all too easy to abandon it. There is no forgiveness in Jyoti’s decision, but there is an awe-inspiring sense of sympathy for those who are more helpless and collectively share a refusal to inflict further wounds. Instead of thinking endlessly about being a victim of gendered and nationalist violence, Jyoti realizes that the longer she lives in the world, the more profoundly is the sense of its immortality aroused in her; the more "natural" it is for her to love the child. Life for the survivors after the carnage of the partition was a hard won. Many of the stories deal with their struggle for coherence and with their determination to avoid anything which could remind them of the blind forces unleashed by jingoism, hateful invective, chauvinistic nationalism and religious pride.

Lalithambika accepts without ambiguity the fact of the partition as an irreversible part of our geopolitical reality and place it at the center of our concern for the fate of the civilization of the region. Though she draws upon historical and cultural memories to organize the narrative, her story is a counter narrative to history. The fictional representation of partition supplements the history of partition as Alok Bhalla raises the point that “The best of fiction writers about the partition are not concerned with merely telling stories of violence, but with making a profoundly troubled enquiry about the survival of our moral being in the midst of horror”.⁴²

It reminds us that in times of external war or civil war, it is women who are inevitably singled out for particularly humiliating treatment. Ravikant and Saint concludes that such “counter narratives which focus on the local situation, rather than the national narrative of recovery of



honour embodied in the abducted women' can be seen as pivotal in opposing conventional ways of narrativising the Partition experience."⁴³

It is surprising that no preventive measures were taken or planned by the decision-making authorities from India and Pakistan to check incidents that preceded and accompanied Partition. The questions are many: why did the concerns of honor and purity play such a significant role while restoring the abducted women? Why there was no official space provided to them to record their experiences or to ascertain their views? Why did the history of the Partition not adequately examine such vexing situations? What about the so many narratives of several female victims? How is it that an event of such tremendous societal impact and importance has been passed over virtually in silence by the other social sciences? Why has there been such an absence of inquiry into its cultural, psychological and social ramifications? Where history writing is inadequate, writers like Lalithambika take up the responsibility to make us aware of the politics of Partition that it was a gendered phenomenon and the female body was an easy prey of religious hatred. Such narrativisation of the historical events needs to be done because such narrations provide alternative discourses as Mushirul Hasan points out:

...if the histories of partition are to be rewritten, there are several reasons why we must judiciously draw upon the intellectual resources made available to us by such creative writers who expose the inadequacy of numerous narrative on Independence and Partition, compel us to explore fresh themes and adopt new approaches that have eluded the grasp of social scientists, and provide a foundation for developing an alternative discourse to current exposition of a general theory on inter-community relation. Their strength lies in representing a grim and sordid contemporary reality without drawing religion or a particular community as the principal reference point.⁴⁴

We know Partition through national and family mythologies, through collective and individual memory. Partition, almost uniquely, is the one event in Indian history in which familial recall and its encoding are a significant factor in any general reconstruction of it. Therefore documented history has to be reexamined through personal histories and histories provided by Partition fiction. Official chronicles from India often efface alternative narratives. But short stories like this showcase that partition was gendered. As an accomplished fact Partition was something of an unfinished achievement. Consequently, it becomes imperative to understand the subaltern histories through such narratives. This story seems to fulfill the vacuum left by the inadequacies of history. What history left out of its records, the author stepped in to supply. Lalithambika' revises and reinterprets history, for it has developed out of historical and social processes.

NOTES & REFERENCES

1. W.H. Auden, perhaps, best summed up the ironic role that Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who knew very little of the land he was commissioned to divide and yet he etched borders too hastily, played in the story of Britain's final withdrawal from the subcontinent in his poem 'Partition', which runs in part:

Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission
Having never set eyes on this land he was called to partition
Between two peoples fanatically at odds,
With their different diets and incompatible gods.
'Time,' they had briefed him in London, 'is short.
It's too late for mutual reconciliation or rational debate:
The only solution now lies in separation...
He got down to work, to the task of settling the fate
The maps at his disposal were out of date
And the census returns almost certainly incorrect,
But there was no time to check them, no time to inspect
Contested areas...
But in seven weeks it was done, the frontiers decided.
A continent for better or worse divided.

-Cited by Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 165-166.

2. Joan Kelly, *Women, History and Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1.
3. Joan W. Scott, "Women's History and the Rewriting of History", *The Impact of Feminist Research in the Academy*, ed. Christie Farnham, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 3
4. Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries*, (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998), 97.
5. Sukrita Paul Kumar, "Re-membering Woman: Partition, Gender and Reorientations", *Narrating Partition: Texts, Interpretations, Ideas*, ed. Ravikant & Tarun K. Saint (New Delhi: Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2004), 99.
6. Lalithambika Antharjanam, "A Leaf in the Storm". *Literature and Nation: Britain and India 1800-1990*, eds., Richard Allen and Harish Trivedi, (London: Routledge, 2000) 329-336. **Source:** Lalithambika Antharjanam, "A Leaf in the Storm", translated from the Malayalam by Narayan Chandran, in *Stories about the Partition of India*, ed. by Alok Bhalla, (Delhi: Harper Collins, 1994, 137-45).
7. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition Of India*, (Penguin: New Delhi, 1998), 3.
8. Jill Didur, *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory*, (university of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2006), 48.
9. Sreevarahom Balakrishnan, "Centenary Tribute to Lalithambika: Reflecting the Sighs and Sobs", *Kerala Calling*, September, 2009, 32.
10. C. Sarat Chandran, "Tribute: A Lone Female Voice", *The Hindu: Literary Review*, January 03, 2010. <<http://www.hindu.com/lr/2010/01/03/index.htm>> (accessed 5 September 2012).
11. Sreevarahom Balakrishnan, "Centenary Tribute to Lalithambika: Reflecting the Sighs and Sobs", 33.
12. Lalithambika Antharjanam, "A Leaf in the Storm", 330.
13. However, going against the stridently critical stance of most historians and creative writers regarding the inadequacy/inefficiency of the new governments of both India and Pakistan to tackle the manifold human problems as a consequence of the Partition, Syed Sikander Mehdi gives an authentic account of the various measures undertaken by these governments (individually and jointly) to confront and contain the crisis of 1947. In the said article, he argues:

Another aspect [of the Partition of 1947] begging for special mention is the fact that Liaquat Ali Khan, did work very hard to control post-Partition communal violence, and extensively co-operated with each other to protect human lives, provide shelter to the threatened, arrange rail and road transports with escorts to hundreds of thousands of Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus migrating from India to Pakistan and from Pakistan to India. The officials often organized joint patrolling in the most sensitive areas.

-Syed Sikander Mehdi, "Refugee Memory in India and Pakistan", *Divided Countries, Separated Cities: The Modern Legacy of Partition*, eds. Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes and Rada Ivekovic (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 91.

14. Debali Mookerjee-Leonard, "Disenfranchised Bodies: Jyotirmoyee Devi's Writings on the Partition," *Genders*, Issue 38, 2003. <http://www.genders.org/g38/g38_leonard.html> (accessed 28 August 2014).

15. Ibid.

16. Ketu H. Katrak, *Politics of the Female Body: Postcolonial Women Writers of the Third World*. (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 8.

17. Ibid., 9.

18. This discourse was specifically colonial and the scriptural evidence was treated as superior to evidence based on custom or usage. This discourse only widened the gap and created tension and hatred between Hindu and Muslim communities. This colonial policy of divide and rule paved the way for a never-to-be-resolved issue of Hindu Muslim divide, which got its early impetus in the "demonization of Muslim that became an increasingly common theme in nationalistic texts that emerged in 1860s".

-Jill Didur, *Unsettling Partition*, 30.

19. Lalithambika Antharjanam, "A Leaf in the Storm", 334-335.

20. Jill Didur, *Unsettling Partition*, 29.

21. Partha Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women: The Contest in India" *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Nov., 1889, 622-633), 629.

22. Lata Mani, "Contentious traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India," *Cultural Critique*, No. 7, The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse II (Autumn, 1987, pp. 119-156), 145.

23. Ibid., 146.

24. Ibid., 148.

25. Lalithambika Antharjanam, "A Leaf in the Storm", 330.

26. Ibid.

27. According to Hindu belief, a *pativrata* is a woman who has an irrevocable physical and mental chastity and loyalty towards husband.

28. Jill Didur, *Unsettling Partition*, 57.

29. Several invaders invaded India with the dual purpose to loot wealth and women. History tells us that while men are often the perpetrators of violence, women are the worst sufferers. Even in Hindu mythology the violation of women's body is considered as a violation of her *Pativrata Dharma*. Lord Vishnu violated Tulsi disguised as her husband, Jarasandh, so that her *Pativrata Dharma* could be violated and her husband could be killed.

30. Kavita Daiya, *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 71.

31. Veena Das argues that the sexual violence to which women are subjected in times of war or any form of aggression cannot be understood as belonging only to the discourse of family. To plunder women's bodies, perceived as men's property, was to indicate that the enemy had occupied the most intimate possessions of the men to whom the women belonged. On women's bodies, thus, the 'political programmes' of the mutual enemies were 'inscribed'

-Veena Das, "The Survivor in the Study of Violence", *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*, ed., Veena Das (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 310.

32. Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 184.

33. Lalithambika Antharjanam, "A Leaf in the Storm", 331.

34. Ibid., 331.



35. Ibid., 332.
36. Ibid., 332.
37. Ibid., 333.
38. Ibid., 333.
39. Ibid., 333.
40. Ibid., 335.
41. Ibid., 335.
42. Alok Bhalla, "Memory, History and fictional Representation of the Partition", *Economically and Political Weekly*. (October 30, 1999): 3128.
43. Ravikant and Tarun K Saint, "Introduction," *Translating Partition: Stories, Essays, Criticism*, eds., Ravikant and Tarun K Saint, (Delhi: Katha Books, 2001), xxvi.
44. Mushirul Hasan, "Memories of a Fragmented Nation", *The Partition in Retrospect*, ed. Ambrik Singh, (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers & Distributers (P) Ltd. in association with National Institute of Punjab Studies, 2000), 359.