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Leslie A. Flemming

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*A view from west of the
Ravi*

In the quarter century since the partition of India, in their attempt to understand the meaning of that event for Punjab, American scholars have concentrated primarily on the effects of partition on East Punjab, and where short story writers and novelists have contributed to that understanding, it has been largely the voices of Indian Punjabis that have been heard. If we are to have a comprehensive understanding of the effects of partition on Punjab, however, we must also listen to voices from the western side of the Ravi, belonging to Pakistanis writing not only in Punjabi, but in Urdu as well. One such voice, well worth listening to, is that of Saadat Hasan Manto, whose post-partition stories portray very clearly the pains, dislocations and crises of identity faced by Punjabis in Pakistan after partition.

Born in Sambrala (Ludhiana District) in 1912, Manto lived in Amritsar until 1936, then moved to Bombay where he wrote for films. A Muslim, in 1947 he emigrated to Lahore where he died of alcoholism in 1955. He began writing short stories in 1936 and continued writing until his death, and his stories reflect not only the concerns of the literary movements of his day, but his own personal inclinations as well. Writing in Urdu, like most Punjabis of his generation, Manto was most influenced in the beginning by the Progressive Writers Movement, and his early stories reflect the political concerns of the late thirties. Soon tiring of political themes, he then became interested in sexual psychology, exploring in his stories the sexual motivations of such lower-class characters as workers, pimps and prostitutes. Following his emigration to Lahore, however, while continuing to deal with some of his earlier concerns in later stories, Manto turned especially to partition and its effects on little people for his themes. Reflecting the dislocation in his own life, in these later stories especially, he made the effects of communal violence, on both victims and perpetrators, and the difficulties of refugees and their families his particular concerns.

Although the dangers are many of treating one group of stories in isolation from the rest of Manto's works, nevertheless, here I shall focus exclusively on those of his stories which were written after 1948 and which deal explicitly with the effects

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of partition. Including, with the exception of the virtually neglected volume *Siyāh ḥāshīye* (Black Margins), some of Manto's most famous and most mature stories, these stories as a group portray not only the experiences of individuals, but reflect as well the shifts in Manto's own attitudes towards partition. In addition to analyzing, therefore, the kinds of experiences with which Manto's stories deal, I shall also allude to in turn Manto's first stunned reaction to the communal violence around him, his subsequent attempt to still see some humanity in the hearts of the participants in the violence, and his final portrayal, in a variety of moods, of the deep human pain of partition, of the effects of the violence and dislocation on the little people who were its victims. From studying Manto's stories, then, we shall have a better understanding not only of the events that took place in Punjab themselves, but also of the reactions to them of a sensitive intellectual in West Punjab.

The last stories that Manto wrote before leaving Bombay for Lahore were those of the collection *Chughad*, a group of stories primarily portraying the lives of members of the Bombay film world. Between the writing of these stories in mid-1947, and the publication in October 1948 of the unique, but virtually unnoticed, collection *Siyāh ḥāshīye* (Black Margins), a chasm opened in Manto's life. Threatened by increasing communal tensions in Bombay following partition, and encouraged by his wife and family, Manto left Bombay for Lahore in January 1948, abandoning more than a decade of friends and associations, as well as a comfortable niche in the Bombay film world. Totally disoriented in Lahore, without a job, separated from most of his friends, for several months he wrote virtually nothing.² When he finally reawakened intellectually and began writing again, the little volume *Siyāh ḥāshīye* was one of the first things to come from his pen. Brief, ironic, occasionally even humorous, the little collection grimly alludes to the changes that had taken place in Manto's life and foreshadows the tone that much of his later writing was to take.

A record of Manto's first shocked reactions to the violence of partition, *Siyāh ḥāshīye* is essentially a collection of anecdotes, some as short as two lines, others as long as five pages. Depicting looting, murder, rape, frantic attempts at escape or concealment, and police corruption and participation in the violence, the anecdotes all have for their theme man's inhumanity to man, and especially to man of the "other" religious community. Told with the barest distant third-person narration, in the least emotional, most stripped down language possible, devoid of character development or even of specific communal reference, with actions depicted in as little as a single sentence, the little anecdotes, with their grim themes, produce a chilling effect indeed.

The chilling effect begins to wear off, however, when it soon becomes apparent that, in contrast to other literature of partition, what is most important about these anecdotes is not their theme, but their peculiar brand of black humor. Often taking an ironic turn, the real effect of many of these stories lies in the contrast between the characters' understanding of the events in which they participate and our deeper (and, on reflection, horrified) understanding of both characters and events. In "Ta'āwun" (Cooperation), for example, long before the owner of the building which he is "helping" looters to raid announces his identity, the reader has guessed who he is, and when his large dog suddenly attacks the looters at the end, we are not surprised at all.³ Nor do we miss the point in "Karamāt" (Miracles), in which people light lamps in thanksgiving for the miracle of sweet water on the grave of a man who fell into their well trying to hide a looted bag of sugar.⁴ Similarly, the success of the four-line *Sā'at-e shīrīn* (Sweet Moment), a simulated newspaper report of the sweets distributed to children in celebration of the death of Mahatma Gandhi,⁵ turns on the narrator's and reader's tacit agreement that, under normal circumstances, such a death is no cause for rejoicing.

In the majority of these anecdotes, however, especially in the briefest ones, the irony and humor turn on the puns around which they are constructed, on common words and phrases used in an unexpected or unusual way, most often in the very last line of the anecdote. In "Taq̄sīm" (Partition), for example, two "partners" (*hiṣṣe-dār*) of the contents of a stolen trunk are themselves divided into four "parts" (*hiṣṣe*) when a fugitive leaps out of it,⁶ while in "Munāsib" *kar-ravaī* (Proper Activity), neighbors of a fugitive couple hand them over to people of another neighborhood, because slaughter is not the first group's "proper activity."⁷ Similarly, the irony in "Jelly" turns on a child's totally inappropriate characterization of the mixture of blood from the corpse of a murdered water-carrier and of water from his bag as "jelly,"⁸ while that of "Halāl aur jhatkā" turns on the reader's understanding of the difference between *halāl*, ritual slaughter of meat for Muslims, and *jhatkā*, prescribed slaughter of meat for Sikhs.⁹ In addition to the unexpected turn of phrase at the end, many of these anecdotes also contain grimly bitter puns mixed in with the narrative itself. Thus in "Mazdūrī" (Labor), for example, the "warm" trade in looting becomes even "warmer" when a fire breaks out, and the tearing open of a sack of sugar is described as opening its stomach, from which sugar, rather than entrails, "boils" out.¹⁰ Similarly, a man being chased by two murderers in "Hamesha-kī chuṭṭhī" (Vacation Forever) is called "prey" (*shikār*),¹¹ while in "Paṭhānistān" (Pathan Land) a man passes through a guard of Pathan soldiers by asserting his belief in the prophet "Mohammad Khan."¹² In short, all of these anecdotes, despite their themes, are at bottom jokes, which depend for their effectiveness not on the chilling horror of their themes, which are clearly secondary, but on the reader's understanding of the puns and verbal ironies which they contain.

For this reason, although Mohammad Hasan Askari is the only one to have seriously considered these anecdotes, it is difficult to regard as accurate his characterization of them. In his introduction to *Siyāh hāshiyē*, after a rather lengthy tirade against the partition stories of other unidentified writers, Askari makes much of Manto's mixture in these characters of both violence and concern for the niceties of everyday life, concluding that in these stories, "Man, even in his real shape, is acceptable to Manto, however he may be. He has already seen that man's humanity is tenacious enough so that even his becoming a wild animal cannot extinguish this humanity. Manto has confidence in humanity."¹³ To begin with, it must be said that only two stories, "Ghāṭe kā saudā" (Losing Bargain), in which two men buy by mistake a girl of their own rather than of the "other" religious community, and "Safāī pasandī" (Concern for Cleanliness), in which a man disdains committing murder inside a railroad car for fear of dirtying it, contain characters in which these mixed emotions are apparent. In the remaining stories, the narrative is so brief that there is scarcely any character delineation at all, let alone indications of mixed motivations. Moreover, it is overwhelmingly apparent in these stories that, in the punning and phrase-turning, irony and humor are uppermost, theme and character secondary. To me, Manto's flippant attitude toward the grim events of these stories says nothing about humanity. Rather it says that, in his first shocked reaction to the brutalities of the riots, the only way Manto can deal with such events is to divest them of all possible emotion and laugh at them as intellectual jokes. These anecdotes are clever and foreshadow later sarcasm, but they also show that Manto has yet to feel deeply the pain of partition. In later stories, after the dust and blood have settled, he will show that he has both kept his faith in humanity and felt this pain, and that he can express these feelings sarcastically, angrily, occasionally even tenderly, without the need of verbal irony and punning.

Following *Siyāh hāshiyē*, Manto's earliest attempt to deal more fully with the looting and violence, which had occupied him in the anecdotes, was the brutally shocking story, "Ṭhandā gosht" (Cold Meat), the title story of the collection of the same name. First published in March 1949,¹⁴ the story depicts the effects of a six-

day spree of looting and murder on the usually passionate and hot-blooded Ishar Singh. Unable to make love to his equally hot-blooded mistress Kulwant Kaur, he arouses in her the suspicion that he has been with another woman. Unable to appease Kulwant Kaur's violent anger, he is stabbed by her and mortally wounded, after which he confesses having attempted to make love to a young woman after murdering six members of her family. About to enter her, he discovers that she is dead, is "cold meat," which he himself becomes at the story's end.

Tightly constructed, without a wasted word or action, with the suspense of Ishar Singh's dilemma perfectly maintained, technically this story is one of Manto's masterpieces. The beginning of the story sufficiently and quickly establishes Kulwant's warmth, so that her later reaction to Ishar's impotence is believable, while Ishar's sexual powers are sufficiently hinted at to suggest that only a terrible experience could have robbed him of those powers: "Ishar Singh, his head bowed, was standing silently in a corner. His tightly tied turban had loosened, and the hand holding his *kirpan* was trembling a little, but it was obvious from his build and bearing that he was the most suitable man for a woman like Kulwant Kaur."¹⁵ Although we understand the personalities of these two, and although we suspect, therefore, with Kulwant Kaur that "something smells bad"¹⁶ even after she stabs him, we are, like her, still in the dark about what has happened to him. Thus totally unprepared for Ishar's confession, at the end of the story we confront with shock the revelation of the depths of evil to which human beings can descend, and we ourselves become, like Ishar and the corpse, "ice-cold meat."

Surpassing in importance the tight construction and successfully maintained suspense of this story, however, is the universally applicable theme that emerges from the behavior of Ishar Singh. Having committed the worst possible crimes against his fellow men, without remorse, in his violent reaction to the dead girl, Ishar Singh shows that even in this state he still has within him a glimmer of human sensitivity. In his defense of the story against charges of obscenity, Manto himself stressed this theme:

The story seemingly revolves around one aspect of sexual psychology, but, in fact, in it an extremely subtle message is given to man, that even at the last limits of cruelty and violence, of barbarity and bestiality, he still does not lose his humanity! If Ishar Singh had completely lost his humanity, the touch of the dead woman would not have affected him so violently as to strip him of his manhood.¹⁷

Moreover, as Manto himself points out,¹⁸ in Ishar's attempt to shield the dead girl from Kulwant's curses and in his realization that with the knife with which Kulwant has stabbed him he himself has murdered six people, in the last moments of his life Ishar Singh has furthered the process of growth in humanity which began in his reaction to the dead woman. Unlike the prostitute with a heart of gold in earlier stories or the Robin Hood-like criminal who reappears in later stories, Ishar Singh is hardly an idealized character. Nevertheless this story does show, as those of *Siyāh ḥāshiye* could not, that, as Hasan Askari rightly observed, despite the violence and difficulties of partition, Manto miraculously has not lost his belief in man's ultimate humanity. Shocking though the story may be, it still gives us grounds for hope.

Yet another of Manto's attempts to portray the humanity of those caught in the violence of partition is the somewhat later story "Mozel."¹⁹ Much more cordially received,²⁰ though ultimately less successful perhaps than "Thandā Gosht," the story portrays a young, unattached Jewish woman, Mozal, of uncertain occupation in Bombay, with whom an idealistic Sikh, Tirlochan Singh, had fallen in love four years before the opening of the story. Their liaison having dissolved, however, because of Mozal's unwillingness to marry him, Tirlochan has since taken up with a sheltered and innocent Sikh girl, whom he plans to marry, as the looting and murder of partition begin. Pondering how to rescue his fiancée Kirpal Kaur from a neighborhood in which she is surrounded by hostile Muslims, Tirlochan meets Mozal, who encourages him to break the imposed curfew and let her take him to his fiancée's house. Once there, she changes clothes with the girl, then acts as a decoy for a group of looters, thus allowing the girl to escape. The result of her courageous action, however, is her own death at the hands of the looters.

In comparison with the character of Ishar Singh, the character of Mozal, though perhaps in the end less believable, is the much more fully developed of the two. Though her being a prostitute is never made explicit, she is a foot-loose and fancy-free woman, knowledgeable, slightly westernized and worldly. She contrasts markedly with the less sophisticated Tirlochan and the sheltered Kirpal Kaur, with whom she is always implicitly being compared either by herself or by Tirlochan. In self-justification, for example, she says, "You really are a Sikh. Who said anything to you about having anything permanent with me? If it's a question of permanence, then go to your own people and marry some Sikh girl. It's always going to be this way with me."²¹ Later on when they meet again on the night of the rescue, the comparison, at least in Tirlochan's mind, is made even more explicit: "Tirlochan felt like telling her that he was in love with a respectable, chaste and innocent virgin, and that he was going to marry her, and that in comparison to her, Mozal was indecent, ugly, unfaithful and uncultured, but he wasn't low enough [to say such things]."²² Nevertheless, in her own way Mozal loves Tirlochan, and, knowing she is not really the woman for him despite his infatuation with her, she agrees to marry him if he will cut his hair and beard, certain he will not give up these signs of his religion. When he surprises her and comes back with his hair and beard cut, she has no choice but to run away. The real demonstration of Mozal's love for Tirlochan comes at the end of the story, when, having courageously led Tirlochan to his fiancée's house, disarming along the way both a policeman and a potential murderer, she sacrifices her life for Tirlochan and Kirpal Kaur, even urging him as she lies dying to take with him his turban in order that the chaste Kirpal Kaur not discover the shortness of his hair.

By the end of the story, however, interesting and well-developed as she is, Mozal has also become one of a sisterhood whose members have taken part in earlier stories, that of the prostitutes with hearts of gold, and she is for that reason at best disappointing as a character. But her actions and behavior in this story indicate that in her, Manto has gone a step beyond his earlier attempts simply to see the grain of goodness in those whom respectable society disdains. Here, through Mozal's sacrifice and courage, Manto asserts the even more challenging and hopeful ideal that, the looting and violence of partition, terrible though they were, made it possible for some individuals, even individuals in the lower levels of society, to attempt greater-than-usual efforts of courage and sacrifice. If some human beings sank to depths of evil heretofore unthought of, in Manto's incredibly optimistic view others at least rose to new heights of human achievement. Amidst the gloomy, blood-thirsty pictures of partition coming from the pens of other writers, it is not hard to understand how Mozal, though idealized and romanticized, so fully captivated Manto's audience.

In sharp contrast to these two stories, in two other relatively early stories, "Axrī salūt" (Last Salute) and "Ṭeṭwāl kā kuttā" (A Tetwal Dog), both in the collection *Yazīd*,²³ Manto deals with the peculiar conflict of loyalties felt by soldiers in the fighting over Kashmir after partition. Though not as brilliant nor as moving as "Ṭhandā gosht," "Axrī salūt" is the story of two soldiers, one a Muslim the other a Sikh, who, though fast friends from childhood and formerly members of the same regiment, now find themselves on opposite sides of a mountain stronghold shooting at each other's platoons. The Muslim, Subedar Rabb Nawaz, in particular as he fights, keeps recalling old faces from his battles during World War II, and he cannot understand why he has been told to fight for his "homeland:" "This was his homeland before too, the district he was from was now a part of Pakistan. Now he had to fight against part of his homeland, which had been his neighbor, with whose families his families had been related for generations. Now his 'homeland' was a place whose water he had never even tasted. . . ."24 In the midst of the fighting, Rabb Nawaz is hailed from across the valley by his old friend Ram Singh, who asks for a respite in the fighting so that his men can bring their tea things to a place for safety. Rabb Nawaz agrees, but, mistakenly thinking Ram Singh protected by rocks, he fires, mortally wounding him. In the fighting that follows, Rabb Nawaz's platoon captures the position of Ram Singh's platoon, and as Ram Singh lies dying, he and Rabb Nawaz exchange memories of their childhood and years together in the army. In the last moments, Ram Singh sees his former commanding officer, a Major Aslam, and salutes him, then realizing the gulf that has come between them, he confusedly drops his hand and looks questioningly at Rabb Nawaz, then dies. Although this story is marred by the abrupt shift of focus from Rabb Nawaz to Ram Singh, in its portrayal of the human relationship between the two soldiers that transcends their religious and national loyalties, and in its expression of the poignancy of Ram Singh's last act, the story is a moving testament to the pain of divided loyalties felt by many after partition.

Similar in setting, but much more sarcastic in tone, is "Ṭeṭwāl kā kuttā," the sad tale of a dog caught in a mountain valley between Indian and Pakistani troops. Opening with a description of the loveliness of the Kashmir foothills in late September, the story shows the entrance of a dog into a camp of bored Sikh soldiers who befriend it, after determining that it is not a Pakistani:

Banta Singh caught the dog's trembling tail, "It's a refugee, poor thing."

A soldier . . . said, "Now even dogs will have to be either Indian or Pakistani.

The Jamedar opened his bag and threw out a biscuit.
"Like Pakistanis, Pakistani dogs will also be shot!"

Someone raised the shout, "Long live India!"²⁵

The scene then shifts to the Pakistani side, to where the dog returns after a few days absence, bearing a note around its neck in Lahndi saying it is an Indian dog, to which the Pakistanis reply by sending it back to the Indian camp with a note in Gurmukhi declaring it a Pakistani dog. As it returns to the Indian side, both sides begin a game of firing at it, making it run back and forth. When the dog is finally hit and killed by a shot from the Indian side, the Jamedar dismisses it with the benediction, "It died just the death a dog should."²⁶ Although the story is certainly lightweight in comparison with Manto's other stories dealing with partition, in the obvious symbol in the dog of all those caught in the crossfire of conflicting loyalties,

the story makes a chilling assertion of the fate of those unable to commit themselves to one side or the other: the conflict will eventually kill them.

Finally, in three stories of this period, "Khol do" (Open Up), "Xudā kī qasam" (By God) and "Toba tek singh," Manto genuinely comes to grips with the human pain of partition, exploring with a remarkable combination of anger, sarcasm and tenderness the effects of the violence and dislocation on its victims. Considered the most shocking of the three,²⁷ "Khol do" (included in this issue on pp.) also the earliest and shortest, is the sympathetic story of an old man's attempt to find his only daughter, from whom he has become separated while escaping looters. When he wakes up in a crowded refugee camp, old Siraj ud-Din is at first completely numb and unable to recollect anything about the night in which Sakina disappeared:

At ten o'clock in the morning when Siraj ud-Din opened his eyes on the cold ground of the camp and saw the surging sea of men, women and children, his powers of thinking became even weaker. For a long time he just stared at the gray sky. Although there was noise all over the camp, it was as if old Siraj ud-Din's ears were stopped up; he didn't hear anything. If someone had looked at him, he would have guessed him to be immersed in some profound thought, but that wasn't the case. His senses were numb and his whole existence was suspended in space.²⁸

Coming at last to his senses, Siraj ud-Din engages the help of eight young men, volunteers who cross the border in search of the lost and abandoned, who promise to find his daughter. After ten days of praying and waiting, Siraj ud-Din is present when the corpse of a girl found on the roadside is brought in who, when, a doctor turns on the light in the room where she is put, turns out to be his daughter. Like a blow in the stomach, however, fresh on this discovery by the old man, comes yet another:

The doctor looked at the body on the stretcher, took her pulse, and said to Siraj ud-Din, "Open up the window."

There was a movement in Sakina's half-dead body. Her lifeless hand opened the top of her *shalwār* and pulled it down. The old Siraj ud-Din shouted joyfully, "She's alive, my daughter is alive!" The doctor was drenched in sweat from head to toe.²⁹

Equally chilling but without the brutally shocking ending of "Khol do" is the somewhat later story "Xudā kī qasam" (included in this issue on pp.). Told in the first person by a liaison officer involved with the recovery of "abandoned" woman, the story portrays an old Muslim woman in search of her only daughter. Wandering from town to town in Punjab, each time she is encountered by the officer, she is in worse condition, but when he tries to convince her that her daughter is dead and offers to take her to Pakistan, she is sure that her daughter is alive:

I saw her again on the third trip. Now her clothing was in shreds and she was almost naked. I offered her some clothing, but she wouldn't take it. I said to her, "Old woman, I'm telling you the truth. Your daughter was killed right in Patiala."

With that same iron-hard certainty, she said, "You're lying."

To convince her, I said, "No, I'm telling the truth. You've cried enough. Come, I'll take you to Pakistan."

She didn't hear me and started to murmur. Then suddenly she stopped. The feeling of iron-hard certainty in her voice was even greater. "No. No one can kill my daughter."

I asked, "How's that?"

The old woman said confidently, "She's beautiful, so beautiful that no one can kill her. No one would even lay a hand on her."

I thought, "Was she really that beautiful? Every mother thinks that no child is as beautiful as hers. It's possible that her daughter really was that beautiful. But in this storm was there any beauty that could escape man's savage hands? Maybe the old woman was deceiving herself. There are many roads to flee on; pain is the kind of crossroads that is surrounded with thousands of avenues of escape."³⁰

At last the liaison officer encounters the old woman in a bazaar in Amritsar, just at the moment when a handsome young Sikh walks by with a veiled woman on his arm. Pointing to the old woman, the Sikh says, "It's your mother," at which the young woman averts her face and walks by. The old woman, however, having seen enough, shouts after her and to the liaison officer that she has seen her daughter. He replies,

"She died a long time ago."

"You're lying!" she shouted.

This time I meant absolutely to convince her. "I swear to God she's dead."

As soon as she heard this, she collapsed on the street.³¹

In the ambiguity of the liaison officer's words, as consolation to the old woman and as a true description of the daughter, in terms of her relationship with her mother, and in the reaction of the old woman to those words, is summed up all the pain of the broken relationship -- for whatever reasons -- that came in the wake of partition. Truly more people died than simply those that were physically murdered.

The most powerful and most moving of these stories expressing the human pain of partition, however, is Manto's masterful portrait of an exchange of insane asylum inmates following partition, "Toba tek singh." Reminiscent in its tone at first of the anecdotes of *Siyāh hāshiye*, the story opens with a series of vignettes ridiculing political leaders on both sides and reflecting the confusion of identity felt especially by Pakistanis after partition. Thus, for example, an inmate name Mohammed Ali, who fancies himself Jinnah, gets into an argument with a Sikh who thinks himself Tara Singh,³² while other inmates, "were caught in the dilemma of whether they were in Pakistan or in India. If they were in India, then where was Pakistan? If they were in Pakistan, then how could it be that, staying right in the same place, a little while ago they were in India."³³

The story gradually focuses on one old Sikh inmate named Bishan Singh but called by all Toba Tek Singh because he had been a wealthy landowner in a village of that name. Although unable to speak in more than nonsense syllables, hearing about the intended transfer, he begins to try to find out whether Toba Tek Singh is in India or in Pakistan. Neither the other inmates and guards nor a former neighbor from Toba Tek Singh who comes to tell him his people have left for India give him a satisfactory answer, and, like the other inmates, he cannot understand why he is being uprooted from his home. When at the border he learns from a liaison officer that Toba Tek Singh is in Pakistan, he refuses to cross, and, all persuasions having failed, he is left standing by himself between the two border stations. Finally,

Just before dawn, an ear-splitting shout came out of Bishan Singh's throat. Several officers came running from different directions and saw that the man who had stood upright for fifteen years was now lying on his face. Over there, behind barbed wires, was India. The other way, behind the same wires, was Pakistan. In between, on this nameless piece of ground, lay Toba Tek Singh.³⁴

In its humor, in its focus of the pains and difficulties of a great historical event through the eyes of a small but genuinely sympathetic character, and in the irony that develops when the reader learns the fate of Toba Tek Singh before Bishan Singh does, in the visit of his former neighbor, this story is among the best, is perhaps *the* best story Manto ever wrote. In the poignancy of its ending, however "Toba tek singh" surpasses any and all of Manto's other stories. Although the brutally shocking ending, like that of "Thandā gosht," became Manto's stock-in-trade, here, in contrast to his usual practice, he has used a delicately ambiguous ending in which the phrase "lay Toba Tek Singh" refers both to the man called Toba Tek Singh stretched out on the ground and to the piece of ground itself, which at that moment has become for him the place Toba Tek Singh where he most wants to be. In his death he has finally reached his home in Toba Tek Singh. In that ambiguity and in Bishan Singh's ear-splitting cry and death are focussed all the pain and grief of the millions, who, like Bishan Singh, were forced to leave their homes, and, at the end of the story, in Bishan Singh's tragedy, we too are deeply moved by his and their pain. With its swift movement from laughter at the beginning to the depth of feeling evoked at the end, it is no surprise that the story has profoundly moved not only Indian and Pakistani readers, but American university students as well.³⁵

To complete our survey of the remaining stories of this period touching on partition, all vastly inferior to the ones discussed, one need only mention "Sharīfan" and "Darling" in *Namrud kī sudārī*, "Sahāe" and "Rām khalāvan" in *Xālī botelen*, *xālī dibbe*, "Yazid" and "Gurmukh singh kī waṣīyat" in *Yazīd*, and "Wo larkī" in *Sarkandōn ke pīchhe*.

From all these stories, and especially from the stories discussed in detail, it should be clear that, following his early preference for lower-class characters, Manto's great strength as a recorder of the effects of partition in Punjab was his ability to chart those effects in the lives of little people. Clearly, in Manto's stories the statistics of mass migrations, dislocations and refugees take on very concrete human meanings. Reflecting Manto's own dislocation in Lahore, his pictures of refugees and others forced to leave their homes are especially moving. What is more important is that his stories reflect an intellectual attitude toward partition shared by many Pakistanis. In them we see Manto's first shocked disbelief, his attempts to salvage some humanity out of the chaos, and his final acceptance of and

and attempt to portray realistically the deep pain and suffering caused by partition. Literary considerations aside, to those interested in both the tangible and the intellectual effects of partition, the stories of Saadat Hasan Manto have much to say.

FOOTNOTES

1. (Lahore: Maktaba-e Nau, 1948).
2. The fullest account of the intellectual limbo into which Manto fell after arriving in Lahore in January 1948 is to be found in his "Zahmat-e mihr-e daraxshan," the long introduction to the collection *Thanda gosht* (Delhi: Maktaba-e Nau, 1950), pp. 11-88.
3. *Siyah hashiye*, pp. 24-28.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-37.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-23.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
13. "Hashiya arai," *ibid.*, p. 16.
14. After unsuccessful attempts to get the story published in *Nuqush* which had been ordered closed for six months following the publication of Manto's "Khol do," in *Adab-e latif* and in Mumtaz Shirin's *Naya daur*, the story was finally published by Arif Abdul Matin in the March 1949 issue of *Javed*. A month later Manto was taken to court on charges of obscenity, from which he was later acquitted. "Zahmat-e mihr," pp. 17-19. A translation of this story by C. M. Naim and Ruth L. Schmidt appeared in *Mahfil*, I, No. 1 (1963), 14-19.
15. *Thanda gosht*, p. 90.
16. The Urdu is "Kuchh dal mein kala hai." *Ibid.*, p. 92.
17. "Zahmat-e mihr," p. 69.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 72ff.
19. *Sarak ke kinare* (Delhi: New Taj Office, 1953), pp. 123-155. A translation by C. M. Naim appeared in *Illustrated Weekly of India* (20 December 1970), pp. 14-19.

20. When before being published the story was read to the members of the literary group Halqa-e Arbab-e Zauq (Circle of Men of Good Taste) in Lahore, the reaction was stunned silence. All who heard it thought it so excellent that no one could suggest the change of even one word. Ahmad Nadim Qasmi, interview, Lahore, June 1972.
21. *Sarak ke kināre*, p. 130.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
23. *Yazīd* (Lahore: Maktaba-e Jadid, 1951). Quotes are taken from the second edition (Lahore: Albayan, 1969).
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
27. Urged by Ahmed Nadim Qasmi and Sahir Ludhianvi, the founders of *Nuqūsh*, to write something for it, Manto first offered "Ṭhandā gosht," to which Qasmi's reaction after reading it was, "Forgive me, Manto Sahab. The story is very good, but it's too hot for *Nuqūsh*." Manto's next offering was "Khol do," which Qasmi reluctantly published. Although readers were of one accord in their appreciation of the story, the government a month later declared it objectionable and ordered publication of the journal suspended for six months. "Zahmat-e mihr," pp. 14-17.
28. *Namrūd kī xudāī* (Lahore: Naya Idarah, 1950), p. 7.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
30. *Sarak ke kināre*, pp. 117-118.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
32. *Phundne* (Lahore: Maktaba-e Jadid, 1955), p. 11.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
35. The story has been a perennial favorite of users of C. M. Naim's *Readings in Urdu: Prose and Poetry* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1965), in which it is included, along with "Naya qānūn" (The New Law). A translation by Robert B. Haldane appeared in *Mahfil*, VI, Nos. 2-3 (1970), 19-25.