Final Report on

UGC-Major Research Project

Gendering Terrorism in South Asian Narratives in the Post 9/11 Era: A Select Study of Indian-Pakistani-Afghan and Sri Lankan Writings in English

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A NOTE OF THANKS

Though terrorism in literature is a sensational topic, the gendered reading of terror has been rarely pursued in the Indian literary scenario. My attempt at a gendered reading of selected texts from South Asian literature, in my opinion, is a viable area of new research. This is also a critical pursuit that is a follow up of my past interests in working on women's narratives for my M.Phil and Ph.D research, my supervising research on women authors and directing women centered plays and also my experience of research on Women and Violence in Indian drama as an Associate in IIAS, Shimla in 2013.

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We know the pain of erasure.

We, the poets of persistence.

We, who outran our destiny,

We, who cradle the ache of an unsung longing,

a lingering history.

We, who bear the burden of outliving our children.

We, who survived a genocide of colours,

a massacre of language.

We, who enwomb within us evanescence.

We, who have tricked forgetting.

We, within whom, flows a dark river of impossible love.

We, the wandering minstrels of hope.

We the balladeers of dawn.

We the elegists of night.

We the bards of loss.

We hear you. Do you?

- Kashmiri poet, Uzma Falak

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The epigraph above from the Kashmiri poet Uzma Falak represents the experience of suffering leading to endurance observed in victims walking the environments of terror. It expresses the pain of racial erasure from the terror-ridden society, the longing for normalcy and change in history, the will to outlive one's terror ridden destiny, the firm belief in persistence and endurance and the will to document the terror-ridden history through poetry. The interplay of dark and light images reveals the poet's will to survive the impossible. It is this rewriting of the terror incidents or the terror experience positively that reveals the possibility of the impossible spirit in terror victims, to give voice to their suffering, loss, no-end or relief zone experience, and to emerge unscathed with their will to survive. Therefore terror experience through literature/arts in the modern world has a special purpose to divulge the inexpressible, transcending the sensational violence to go beyond terror and to find a solution to the problems of terror. It is with the above perception that the research project "Gendering Terrorism in South Asian Narratives in the post 9/11 Era: A Select Study of Indian-Pakistani-Afghan and Sri Lankan Writings in English" had begun.

The subject of terrorism has also given rise to several definitions of terror. In general, the word 'terror' exists as a primordial emotion; the word 'terrorise' existed from old times as an ancient political strategy; however, 'terrorism' refers to the current practice of 'terror' and 'terrorising.' Hence the discussion of terrorism as a political issue has resulted in multifarious definitions and concepts of terrorism. Basically terrorism refers to the "use of violence to achieve

political ends," and there is also the new perspective on terrorism as 'the new mode of battle of one kind of civilization against one another' (Majumdar, xiv).

Terror dates back to the times of piracy and war. One can trace the acts of terrorising and tyrannicides, which were common since the 1st century A.D., from times of the Zealot occupation of Palestine, or the threats to the Egyptians by the seafaring raiders from Asia Minor, or those common with Greeks during Trojan War. Only in recent histories dating back to 18th century, terror as a strategy developed in the hands of revolutionaries - like the Jacobins' Reign of terror of 1793-4, or the Russian populists' use of terror during first half of the 19th century, or the terror by the Irish rebels in the early 20th century, or even the fight for independence treated as terror or coercion by the colonisers in the same period. We can primarily recognize terrorism in the modern era in the anti-colonial movements and state offensives in Palestine, South Africa, Ireland and India. Currently in the postmodern era, terror is identified with Islam and Islamic states, and hence, like the Jew of the mid- century, in today's terror discourse, the Muslim has become part and parcel of the terror narratives and insinuations on violence and terror. This is the interesting evolution of terrorism from terror as a major itinerary of the terrorists and terror producing / inducing agencies.

Terrorism as a concept has given rise to a wide range of discourses depending on the several definitions and views / viewpoints of terror the critics have adopted. Gayatri Spivak Chakravorty considers terrorism as 'an abstract enemy,' since the terrorists are on war, but not in uniforms, and also because it is not a military war that can be punished under specific rules ("Spivak on Terror"). Basically terrorism refers to the "use of violence to achieve political ends," and there is also the new perspective on terrorism as 'the new mode of battle of one kind of civilization against one another' (Majumdar, xiv). Arundhati Roy's opinion on terrorism is entirely different, drawing

attention to terror strike as a battle of the weak against the strong, making a statement on terrorism pertaining to the 9/11 terror thus:

> Terrorism as a phenomenon may never go away. But if it is to be contained, the first step is for America to at least acknowledge that it shares the planet with other nations, with other human beings who, even if they are not on TV, have loves and griefs and stories and songs and sorrows and, for heaven's sake, rights. (http://kasamaproject.org/2010/09/11/arundhati-roy-on-911-the-algebra-of-infinite- justice/ 24.11.11).

Terrorism in its contemporary form has gained the status of a magnified spectacle with the occurrence of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on New York City's World Trade Center. The World Trade Center, a symbol of Western capitalist success, was reduced to rubbles, and became the instance of the most sensational terror strike. It also became the instance of "… the vulnerability of power against the rage of the powerless." (Majumdar, xv). Consequently, today terror or terrorism occupies the centre stage of world politics.

Terror has also given rise to multitudinous narratives on terror and violence from those of bombing and being blown up with explicit or silent political messages, to those of burning of buildings and individuals with personal interpretations, and also to multitudinous stories about borders and ethnic cleansing. Hence narratives of trauma, fear and violence abound in literature reflecting emotional and physical violence. The discourse on terrorism in literature therefore covers vast areas such as descriptions of terror strikes and personal reactions to them, 'war on terror', aftermath of terror strikes and thereafter, discourses such as terror and victim discourse, gender and terror, trauma and terror, revenge and terror.

The relevance of the discourse on violence and terror to politics, religion, society, and literature in the 21st century is manifold. The uniqueness of the discourse on these issues is the international reaction that it created, both as a political discourse and the literary one. There are literary works, from not only USA but also from many other nations like Latin America, France, India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, responding to violence and terror in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. These responses alone speak about the spectacle and the shock the event evoked. While violence and terror and in literature related to the issue have been well discussed and debated, like violence and terror in relation to the holocaust, World Wars, religious genocides, 9/11 terror, or domestic violence, etc., the South Asian literary responses to violence and terror have been researched only in a limited sense compared to those on 9/11 terror or other terror attacks all around the world.

The experience of terror and its representation in literature is also not an unknown phenomenon. Terror is there since the bygone epochs of war, occupation, border tensions and it continues even in today's world of terrorism, whereas terrorism is a more modern phenomenon, surfacing probably from the 20th century. Most war or violent outbreaks such as communal violence, terror strikes and bomb blasts all over the world have given rise to literatures like holocaust literature, Partition literature, literature of trauma, literature on the 9/11 or 26/11 and many other forms of literature that reflect terror and terrorism, beginning from Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907).

Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) is the first terrorist work or the novel on terror that arises out of the Greenwich bombing of 1894 by the anarchists. What is interesting for me in the novel is the gendered and ethical aspect of terror that arises from a woman's fight against the

terrorist. Conrad in fact considers Mrs Winnie as 'the only character who performs a serious act of violence against another.' Mrs. Winnie's violence against her anarchist husband, who makes her autistic brother an innocent victim of the bombing, is an act of ethical cleansing for me and draws attention to how gender perspective becomes an important dimension to terrorism.

Today the themes of 'terror' and 'terrorism' have a particular emphasis in the literatures post the September 11, 2001 terror strikes on the World Trade Center. American tradition of war and terror writing dates back to the American Civil War, later the two World Wars and in the modern times, from global war on terror. Especially since 9/11, hundreds of American memoirs and press accounts from Iraq and Afghanistan have been published. Some novels are: John Dos Passos' *Three Soldiers* (1921), Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), Kayla Williams' *Love my Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army* (2006), Donald Rumsfeld's *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (2012), Sebastian Junger's *War* (2010), Deborah Amos' *Eclipse of the Sunnis: Power, Exile and Upheaval in the Middle East* (2011) and Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (2009) and Aukai Collins' *My Jihad: One American's Journey through the World of Usama bin Laden* (2011).

Scenes of terror, their planning and execution, stories of heroism, sacrifices by victims and rescuers, recollections of terror, individual and collective sense of loss, rise of ethnic conflicts, fear/trauma/social ostracisms after terror and politics behind terror attacks – are some themes represented in art and literature. In the works of contemporary writers like Don De Lillo, Joseph O'Neill, Jonathan Safran Foer, Tony Kushner, David Mamet, Viken Berberian, Amiri Baraka, Julia Lee Barclay, Joyce Carol Oates, Charlotte Delbo, Claire Messud, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Khaled Hosseini, Diana Abu-Jaber, Edwidge Danticat, Lorraine Adams, Sherman

Alexie, Mohsin Hamid, Ken Kalfus, and many others, terror appears in myriad ways. Similarly, there are several films on terror like *The Terrorist* (Tamil), *True Lies* (American), *Kurban* (Hindi), *New York* (Hindi), Michael Moore's documentary film *Fahrenheit 9/11*, *United 93* and *World Trade Center* (American).

The project initially explored the gender narratives of 9/11 terror in American literature and for this purpose focused on a few writers and their gendered terror narratives.

Joyce Carol Oates, an American writer of great repute, in her short story *The Mutants* (2001), gives a gendered vision of terror. In an eyewitness account of the explosions that rocked the twin towers of the WTC on September 2001, the author views the quotidian life of the young woman in contrast to the unusual nature of the 9/11 explosions which she is yet to come to terms with. What manifests here is not just the menace to the day-today life of an ordinary New Yorker, but also the stable American life, and the threat to the woman's dreams of marriage, peace and security. Here terror is viewed from the facet of how the crisis and danger around threaten a woman's very existence.

Similarly, Edwidge Danticat's short story "Children of the Sea" captures the terror and violence that arose out of the 1992 military coup in the Haiti. Haiti, the first independent nation in Latin America and the first black-led republic, is known for its poverty, continued political violence and instability. The author centres here the Haitian inmates' and fleeing refugees' experiences of the 1990s military coup and the hunting down of protesters and rebels. She also describes the fleeing refugees' long wait in the sea, in an unchartered boat, for US immigration to permit them entry. The double narration of the male and female narrators describes simultaneously

the plight of the refugees, mostly women, at the sea, and the plight of the Haitian locals, who remained inland despite military torture.

Many well-known critics and scholars have already studied terrorism as a perspective in the works of contemporary American writers, including Oates and Danticat in the post 9/11 context. What remain rather rarely explored are the South Asian terror perspectives in the aftermath of 9/11. For this purpose it is essential to look at representative English writings from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka and their evolution or creation in the terror's aftermath climate created by terror events like the 9/11 and the 26/11, and many other major terror occurrences that happened in the four countries.

In India the issues of violence and terror have been the subject of several writings in both regional and English writings, particularly from the times of the Partition. Further, events after 9/11 terror and also the violence of gang rape in Delhi are some events that have evoked on the one hand a response of shock and dismay and a retrospection of our own problems of terror as witnessed in the country and its neighbouring countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Particularly so in the North-East part of India, where the problems of insurgency and border sharing with countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan have increased the burden of suspicion and fear of violence and terror. There is also a looking inward whereby writers have been sensitized to the problem of violence and terror and its threat to peace. Hence today the spurt of literary writings ranging from novels to theatrical plays and films, from where arises the need to study the narratives of violence and terror in these South Asian texts written in English.

The South Asian perspective on terror was initially explored from the study of select fictions in English by South Asian writers as seen in Paro Anand's *No Guns at my Son's Funeral*

(2005), Shaila Abdullah's *Saffron Dreams* (2009), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* (Indian American) (2004), and in many writers like Mahasweta Devi (Kolkata), Indira Goswami (Assam), Temsula Ao (Nagaland), Taj Begum Renzu (Kashmir), Khaled Hosseini (Afghanistan), NadeemAslam (Pakistan), Mohsin Ahmed (Pakistan), Gamini Akmeemana (Srilanka), Maureen Seneviratne (Srilanka) and Jean Arasanayagam (Sri Lankan). Indira Goswami's fiction brings Assam in the grip of different ethnic insurgent groups fighting the Indian State. It talks about the reality of terror in the North East.

Paro Anand centres her narratives on child adults caught in the terror-stricken identities and violence in Kashmir. In her works like *No Guns at my son's Funeral* (2005), *Weed* (2008), *Wild Child and Other Stories* (published later as *Like Smoke: 20 Teens 20 Stories* (2011), Anand captures, more than a history of terrorism, the plight of terrorism on innocent teenagers, discussing war, terrorism, rape, sexual violence, trauma and identity crisis as issues affecting young adults particularly, with her writings inspired by her chance encounters of such victims of terror, violence and forced migrations.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's sixth novel *Queen of Dreams* (2004) weaves a narrative that flips between the mother and daughter, creating a narrative of memory and interpretation. In this novel, 9/11 appears only as an event that crisscrosses the mother–daughter narratives, particularly as a painting recollected in a dream. There are various perspectives to terror here –the personal, political, racial and diasporic, with these perspectives raising a hopelessly humanist question on terror expressed from the female narrator's point of view:

> I think of the people in the towers and in the airplanes, who lost their lives. The people grieving tonight, who lost their loved ones. Leaders and decision makers,

> who lost belief in their invincibility, and people like us, seeing ourselves darkly through the eyes of strangers, who lost a sense of belonging. So much hatred unleashed in the world today; where will it end? (272).

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) brings out a totally different discourse on terror. First, 9/11 is viewed as an event that changed the entire world, particularly the worlds of America and Afghanistan, where terror and its politics evoke patriotic responses from the American public:

> The American flag suddenly appeared everywhere, on the antennae of yellow cabs weaving around traffic, on the lapels of pedestrians walking the sidewalks in a steady stream, even on the caps of San Francisco's panhandlers sitting beneath the awnings of small art galleries and open–fronted shops (316).

Similarly Mohsin Ahmed, a Pakistani writer and the Indian writers and Srilankan writers mentioned above bring out the conflict and terror situations in their countries and the ensuing ramifications.

For the above-mentioned purpose, the project proposes to select representative English writings from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Srilanka. To understand terrorism reflected in the above works, the political conflicts and terror events of these countries are to be studied in relation to the reflections of terror in their representative works of literature. Further the following issues need to be explored, with regard to the texts taken for study. What is the vision of the author on the terror event? What are the changes / evolutions that take place when an author employs a literary medium in order to explore a contemporary terror strike or repercussions of that event?

What is the author's stand regarding terror or violence? Is it an anti-terror or pro-terrorist statement or a neutral spectator's position? What is the language of terror and violence?

There has been plethora of writings and criticism on 9/11 terror as a political event and as subject of literature in many American novels. The most relevant are Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* and John Updike's *The Terrorist*. Susan Faludi's famous book *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post-9/11* is an important text to contextualize the concept of terrorism in the backdrop of 9/11. South Asian literature has been the most relevant subject of research today, particularly with scholars and critics closely examining the comparative readings of cultures, languages and literatures of the South Asian regions. Similarly social science researches on the conflict situations of these regions have also been undertaken on a wide scale. However there are very few researches available on the perspectives on South Asian literary texts, particularly from terror and gender point of view.

A review of research available on the subject for this project revealed that there are individual critics writing on the terror or conflict pertaining to individual nations. For an instance, Goonetilleke's "Sri Lanka's 'Ethnic' Conflict in Its Literature in English"(1992) or Maryse Jayasurya's *Terror and Reconciliation* (2012) or Minoli Salgado's *Writing Sri Lanka* (2012) reveals the Sri Lankan narratives on conflict and terror in Sri Lanka. However a holistic perspective on multicultural South Asian texts, particularly viewing terror and gendering terror in the South Asian literary texts in the aftermath of 9/11 terror is yet to be examined. The beginnings have been made in Nivedita Majumdar's edited anthology *An Anthology of Writings on Terrorism in South Asia: The Other Side of Terror* (2011), since the book brings out some unknown literary works on terror in India and also Michael C. Frank and Pawan Kumar Malreddy's *Narratives of the War on*

Terror: Global Perspectives (2020). Most of the writings and criticism on terror and literature so far have mainly looked at trauma narratives and not on the emerging perspectives such as culture and gender specific views. The project intended would make some beginning in this objective.

In India the terror events after 9/11 evoked a mixed response, one of shock and dismay and on the other hand a retrospection of our own problems of terror as witnessed in the country as well as its neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Srilanka. The study is also found to be relevant to understand the parallel terror situations, like the Naxalite terror, the North Eastern Indian states infested with insurgency problems, Kashmir problem, etc. Hence there is also a looking inward after 9/11, whereby writers have been sensitized to the problem of terror and its threat to peace. Therefore there has been a spurt of literary writings ranging from novels to theatrical plays and films.

The preliminary survey also revealed the ambitious and vast nature of the study, if it took into consideration the regional writings. Therefore, in order to bring focus into the aspects of the subject studied, it was decided to focus only on texts written in English from these four countries and further filter the texts with the gendered perspective. For want of time, the vast tract of literary texts available in regional languages or in translation, no less inferior and in fact richer in themes, were not taken into consideration for this project. However some dimensions of relevant translated texts might be discussed time to time. Further, to relate the texts taken up for study, the study commenced with 9/11 American texts related to those of the South Asian ones. Hence the need to study the terror reflections in these South Asian texts written in English in the context of the aftermath of the 9/11 terror. There have been many films and literary works that reflect terror

situations and also the plight of women in the situation of terror. But so far there has not been a full length study on these lines.

The project began with the aim to explore the gendered spaces of terror, in order to understand the gendered perspectives that emerge from selected terror narratives from South Asian writings in English post 9/11, with particular emphasis on the articulations of terror in selected post 9/11 literatures in English from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Srilanka, attempting to arrive at a comparative perspective.

The methodology adopted was an interdisciplinary as well as a comparative methodology, where the theoretical framework for terrorism and political /social discourses on terror were viewed, critiqued and related to literary gender discourses on terror. For this purpose both primary and secondary sources and relevant documents were consulted. As planned, in the first year, a critical reading of the concepts and select American writings on terror after 9/11 were attempted (including field work and material collection), with the objective of achieving the following realistic goals:

Understanding the 9/11 terror and the literary critical views on the event

Understanding subject of terror along with its historical/political/economic/social implications

To arrive a critical framework for the research undertaken i.e. general and gendered views on terror in the select post 9/11American literary texts that encompass terror.

In the second year, an exploration of the Pakistan and Afghanistan writings in English after 9/11 (includes field work and material collection) was attempted as per plans for the second year. The target achieved as per plans is as follows:

Understanding the social, political and historical nature of the terror situations in the English writings of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Srilanka and India.

Reading and selection of seminal English literary texts and their representation of terror situations in the aftermath of 9/11

Arriving at an understanding of the gendered views in relation to the critical framework on terror.

To enhance this exploration and study and International Conference on Violence and Terror in South Asia was organized in November 2017.

The final of the year of the research project was spent on an investigation of select English fictions on terror from India &Srilanka after 9/11 and the terror situations they portray (survey, review of literature and field work). The intended goals were:

Understanding the social, political and historical nature of the terror situations in these writings.

Towards exploring the gender perspectives of terror

Towards a holistic perspective of the gendered aspect of terror in South Asian literature, based on the study undertaken so far.

Completion of the project

To prepare the outlines for a critical book on terror in South Asian writings in English.

The targets achieved were:

An edited volume on Violence and Terror in North East India was prepared

An edited volume on South Asian Literature with special reference to Tagore's drama was prepared.

A rough outline of the Project report was prepared

Introduction to the research concepts examined

Today, the themes of 'terror' and 'terrorism' have particular emphasis on the literatures passé the September 11, 2001 attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Terror, predominantly after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, has induced a series of rejoinders in all forums today, starting discourses on horror, anger, 'war on terror' reflexes, on privileging of safety over liberation, gendered views of terrorism, art critic analysis of terrorist focus on demolitions of buildings/monuments of culture and also on balanced religious and ethno-political reflections. Terror has found expression in graphic / visual arts, literature, media and film, and political and literary theory. Scenes of terror; their planning and execution; stories of heroism; sacrifices by victims and rescuers; recollections of terror; individual and collective sense of loss; rise of ethnic conflicts, fear/trauma/social ostracisms after terror, politics behind terror attacks–are some themes patented in art and literature. In the works of contemporary

American writers like Don DeLillo, Joseph O'Neill, Jonathan Safran Foer, Tony Kushner, David Mamet, Viken Berberian, Amiri Baraka, Julia Barclay, Joyce Carol Oates, Charlotte Delbo, Claire Messud, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Khaled Hosseini, and Edwidge Danticat terror appears in myriad ways.

Why has the 9/ 11 attack on World Trade Center, New York, become an important factor in world history? To understand the question, one needs to refer to political scientists and analysts, who have looked at the September 11, 2001 incidents closely:

The terrorists' attack of 11 September 2001 marked a key turning point in international politics:

> The significance of 9/11 is not in the immense loss of life that accompanied it. Catastrophic as it is, the 3500 casualties are dwarfed when compared to the 2 million deaths caused by the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 250,000 civilians killed by government backed militia in Darfur, and the 40,000 children who die every day in the developing world because of poverty and preventable illness. Even as a single act of barbarity, 9/11 was not unique or devastating–its casualty rate is less than half the number of Europeans murdered after the fall of Srebrenica in 1995. Yet it is 9/11, not 'Srebrenica,' 'Darfur' or 'Congo' that is singled out as the epoch defining moment (Alex J. Bellamy. "Introduction." Security and the War on Terror. NY: Taylor & Francis, 2008: 1)

We can also understand the importance of the incident from Bellamy's interesting observations:

> September 11 is significant and of global importance, only because it disrupted the sense of security that prevailed in Western states. The attacks cast doubt on the efficacy and legitimacy of both the actors responsible for providing security and the political institutions that had been established for this purpose. Individuals, living in stable Western countries, suddenly found themselves confronted with the agonies of war and mass killings.... (1).

The internal, personal fear - existential, psychological, etc–in modern tradition slowly developed into a community in fear i.e., terror. It springs from the internal fear organized into an institutionalized terror. Such a genre of terror literature, into which Ian McEwan is identified, is considered by Lidia Vianu as Desperado literature, which is known from the 1950s and often traced to the idea of an uncertain future linked to fear of terror. Other authors identified with this tradition are Orwell, Huxley, Golding, Doris Lessing, etc.

However, terrorism in its contemporary form is noteworthy, particularly after the most vital happening such as the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the downtown New York City's World Trade Center. The World Trade Center, a symbol of Western capitalist success, was reduced to rubbles, and became the instance of "… the vulnerability of power against the rage of the powerless." (Majumdar,xv). Hence terror or terrorism has gained a magnified spectacle, especially after the 9/11, which brought terrorism to the centre stage of world politics.

With 9/11 becoming an important landscape in the terrorist map, it also had its implications for state policies and governance. As a result, 9/11, remembered for its savage but intelligent destruction of a 'successful and glorious unipolar capitalist world by a few unarmed non-citizens' (Majumdar), resulted in the American government for the first time privileging security over

liberty, and the 'war on terror,' where people in Iraq and other terror prone nations faced attacks, the most recent being the US drone killing of the Iranian top general Qasem Soleimani. After 9/11 the US government passed the USA PATRIOT Act (Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) providing sweeping powers to authorities to conduct surveillance and access to all records–medical, tax, telephone bills, credit card statements, library loans, etc. Similarly, non-citizens were detained or arrested for months without being charged with any crime.

However, there have been dissenting voices too against treating 9/11 as the only terror attack worth mentioning, after which terror all around the world has received a status as America stamped and hence deserves counter attack. For scholars like Rustom Bharucha, conceptualizing terror has been an act of critical monopoly by the USA:

> Today's language of terrorism, I would respond, is inseparable from the larger discourse that has emerged around 'September 11', which has been primarily authored, produced, and performed by the United States Security and Defense Departments, buttressed by a plethora of war-mongering think-tanks and advisory committees, information and disinformation services. If one wishes to counter this discourse and emphasize the obvious fact that Americans are not the exclusive victims of terror, then one needs to acknowledge that terror is experienced in multitudinous, palpable, and infinitesimal ways across the world, where ordinary people live with terror daily. (*Terror and Performance* 3).

Terror has also become the watchword for defense spending and in the name of terrorism state could also turn a nation into warring factions pitting against one another. Very often terrorism has become the tool for manipulation of oppressive mechanisms of control and power mongering.

If the first phase of the project focused on narratives of terror on 9/11, in the second phase of the research project, several terror narratives of South Asia were studied. Particularly of interest were the Afghan, Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Indian narratives in English and among the Indian narratives, the point of interest was the North Eastern Indian narratives on terror. In relation to the terror narratives, the research also explored to comprehend the terror situations in South Asia. Though the study focuses mainly on the literary narratives, rather than the political narratives of terror, a bird's-eye view of the political and cultural dimensions of terror situations in South Asia is attempted as given below.

Political and cultural dimensions of international terror situations in South Asia

The study attempts to examine various terror situations from the political, historical and social perspective, in order to understand the terror situations in the relevant literary texts. Since the study focuses on the terror situations in South Asia post 9/11, it also attempts to understand the political and cultural contexts of terror in South Asia. An attempt to understand the history of terror in India brings us back to the root of the problem lying in the British induced Partition in 1947 of the undivided India into India and Pakistan, wherein lies embedded the thread of terror in the consequent communal riots and violence, and also in 1971 Indo-Pak War with Pakistan losing its territory of East Pakistan with India’s support for the nascent Bangladesh and also in the seeds of revenge sown by Pakistan in the Kashmir problem, even the Punjab terror problems and currently in the North East through insurgency, where Bangladesh and Sri Lanka pose another threat to

India's peace in the North East and South India respectively with training camps of the IS in Bangladesh, extremists groups like JMB, and with extremist cells in Sri Lanka threatening peace in South India, particularly around the Easter 2019 bombings in Sri Lanka.

Although the subject of the terror narratives in Bangladesh does not fall within the purview of this research, however, Bangladesh as a South Asian country bordering India and also falling very much into a South Asian matrix of terror situations, understanding its terror situation in the South Asian context becomes a necessity.

If the terror matrix in South Asia begins with India Pakistan conflict that lies centered in the Hindu Muslim conflict before Indian and Pakistan Independence, it got deepened in 1971, with the India supported Indo-Bangladesh War of 1971 leading to Bangladesh as a free nation liberated from Pakistan. Next to Afghanistan as Pakistan's terror base, Bangladesh developed another terror base for Al-Qaeda and also IS.

The several terror attacks on foreigners and non-Muslims in Bangladesh including the Holey Artisan Bakery attack on non-Muslims and foreigners, the Bangladesh terror situations only reveal that terrorism is no more nation centric but religion centric, with Muslim Jihadi posing as the saviour of the Muslim world through preservation of the sanctity of the Muslim ideology in Bangladesh, which is specially seen in the extremist outfits like JMB (Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh) and its youth wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir.

To go back to the roots of 9/11 terror, it can be traced back to Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 and the US intervention through the promotion of insurgents in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal

from Afghanistan, Pakistan was handed over the charge of rebuilding the devastated Afghanistan, since Pakistan was a close ally to the US during its cold war with the Soviet Union. Gradually, the late 1980s and the 1990s saw the rise of Taliban-Pakistan-Al Qaeda increase in and growth to strength in Pakistan. Political scientists explore Pakistan's sponsoring of terrorism in South Asia as because of various reasons, the major one being, for control and revenge against India for aiding the Bangladesh liberation from Pakistan. This culminated in Pakistan's creation of a bitter war with India in Kashmir through militants. The cultural attacks of these terrorist outfits prevented modernization of culture and led to oppression of civilians.

Further, the accession of Kashmir to India and Pakistan's non-acceptance on the pretext that it was annexed by force led to Pakistan's interference in Indian internal affairs through ISI. We can see the terror situations in Kashmir in the multifarious struggles in Kashmir, specially the killings of non-Muslims on the pretext that Muslims are in majority. The impact of Kashmir insurgency and terrorism led to large migrations as the result of displacement because of communal conflicts, female discrimination, etc.

> Let me cry out in that void, say it as I can. I write on that void:
>
> Kashmir, Kaschmir, Cashmere, Qashmir, Cashmir, Cashmire,
>
> Kashmere, Cachemire, Cushmeer, Cachmiere, Cašmir. Or Cauchemar
>
> in a sea of stories? Or: Kacmir, Kaschemir, Kasmere, Kachmire, Kasmir. Kerseymere?
>
> - Agha Shahid Ali, *The Country Without a Post Office*

It is in the above context that one should view the insurgency situations in the North East. The case of insurgency in Assam could be described in the following situations: the multiethnic and multilingual conflicts in Assam as seen in the Assam agitation of the 1970s and 80s, the rise of the ULFA and Bodo movements, Nellie massacre of Assam, etc. Similarly Manipur too witnessed violence as political protest, with armed state atrocities on civilians in the name of counter terror receiving huge protests. Sanjib Baruah considers AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Power Acts) as an act of war on society. Even Irom Sharmila's struggle against AFSPA and her staging the world's longest hunger strike never achieved the success of removing AFSPA. Hundreds of fake killings in Manipur, just as in Kashmir, made AFSPA into an instrument of colonial repression. Irom Sharmila's decision to give up is not accidental, according to Baruah, since there is a change in ideological approach after BJP took over at the Centre (From Sanjib Baruah lecture "Reflections on the Quality of our Democracy: The Strange Career of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act" in ICSSR NERC, Shillong on 22 February 2018). We have faced similar situations of insurgency in Mizoram and Nagaland. Hence North east witnessed separatist movements based on language, culture and ethnicity since independence and also violent insurgent movements and terror and counter terror operations affecting the normal lives of innocent people.

In India, the history of Kashmir is crucial to a comprehension of the conflict situation in Kashmir and Islam terrorism in India. The history of Kashmir begins with the Punjab Annexation of Kashmir Valley in 1819, under Ranjit Singh, who, after the anglo-Sikh War, of1845-6 gifted Jammu and Kashmir to noble Gulab Singh. It thus became a princely state ruled by the Dogra dynasty under the British, until 1947, when it became part of the Indian state given the special status of Article 370, which gave state autonomy under Maharaja Hari Singh and Sheikh Abdullah.

The initial conflict that began within the society, as early as 19th century began between the Kashmiri Pundits and the Kashmiri Muslims, when the former minority community was favoured by the Dogra rulers, who came from Jammu and who oppressed the Kashmiri Muslims. The political discontent grew over the years, further with the incarceration of Sheikh Abdullah in 1953, and the Congress rigging of elections and the crushing of the Muslim United Front from winning the elections in 1987. This helped to create two militant organizations–Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and Hizbul Mujahideen. 1989 witnessed armed resistance against the Indian state that had popular support.

There was victimisation of the Kashmir pundits, with a rise of Muslim communalism against them, with notions of 'Azadi' gaining prominence defeating, with increasing violence to achieve autonomy, the earlier secular notions of 'Kashmiriyat' ideology. The Indian government's mishandling of insurgents' abductions and their demands to release imprisoned terrorists, by particularly beginning with the kidnapping of Rubaiya and later of others, led to further escalation of the conflict. "The continued repression and lack of a political settlement led to the resurgence of the movement for Kashmiri independence, as mass mobilizations that recalled the large-scale protests of the early 1990s." (Shubh Mathur).

Despite female solidarity within the massive movement of Kashmir, there were very few women political leaders. Notable among them are Anjum Zamarud Habib, who was the founder leader of Muslim Khawateen Marqaz, Asiya Andrabi founding leader of Dukhtaran-e-Millat (meaning Daughters of the Nation) and Paveena Ahangar, who is considered as the 'Iron Lady of Kashmir' and who founded the Association for Parents of Disappeared People (APDP). In the words of these women, writing and narrative on terror and violence assume a different approach

to view gender violence. Habib says thus: "Writing has been a powerful means to express our anguish against the atrocities, against state terrorism. If crime on people continues, harassment and killings go on, if people's rights are trampled, then these writings will keep coming." (An Interview. Web). On the other hand, Asiya is blamed for the duality of her stand, to encourage Kashmiri youth to shun India and encouraging her son to live in Malaysia under an Indian passport. She is also criticised as a leader for the attempt to change the Kashmir identity and culture to a Muslim one. Paveen Ahangar won the Rafto Prize for Human Rights in 2017 for her 'protests against enforced disappearances'.

Though Parveen Ahangar has not written many narratives on Kashmir conflict, her speech at the time of her receiving of the above award at the 2017 Rafto Conference, in Bergen, Norway, reads like a life narrative of Kashmir women's struggle amidst terror and violence:

> My struggle began with searching for my son. I was illiterate and a woman living in a militarized zone. I had not stepped far from my house. The search for my son has led me far and wide. It has led me to others who were also searching for their children, their husbands, their fathers, their brothers. I now travel with APDP members across Kashmir not only in a search for the enforced disappeared, but to listen to, document, and witness stories of family members killed in extra-judicial encounters, torture, and rape. I know that this is also a struggle for many mothers like myself around the world. Some of these mothers include the Mudur de Plaza, de Mayo from Argentina, mothers in the Philippines, mothers in Sri-Lanka. I accept this award in the name of all these mothers as I accept it for the families and mothers of Kashmir. I am known as the 'iron' lady of Kashmir. And I say to you all–that all

> these mothers are iron ladies–we have been fighting for our children–and we will fight from beyond the grave. One of our APDP members, Mughal Masi, died waiting for her son after 20 years of waiting. But we carry on her struggle. We carry on this struggle by marking sitting in Pratap Park Srinagar every month, letting everyone know that our memories of our children or husbands, or fathers or brothers being taken away will not be erased. For us, our family members who have been taken away are our life. Our memories are the wound of injustice. Our memories are our resistance. This daily resistance is our life. ("ParveenAhangar'sRafto Acceptance Speech." Web).

In a photo of Anjum Zamarud Habib, behind her reads the following poem:

> Though battered
>
> and broken
>
> Like a wave in the sea ----------
>
> I shall be born
>
> Again and again.

It is such a perspective unique in its thought and fierce in its valor that defines the gendered justice that women demand out of the gender atrocities that happen around them.

When we read the political and social dimensions of the terror and conflict narratives in India, several gender issues do surface. In the name of preservation of the Kashmiri culture, the

nationalists oppress their women, thereby aggressively exercising their social control on women. Hence Nyla Ali Khan says that in the name of restoring the 'lost dignity of women', most barbaric acts are committed by the Indian army and by militant forces. Further, the oppression of women were made possible through state laws, which do not allow the Kashmiri women to marry outside the community, since by doing so they lose rights over their land and permanent resident citizenship.

Hence there was control of female sexuality and autonomy, due to which gender equality was denied to Kashmiri women. Further, women as victims of terror and female victimization by the both the military and the militants is a truth that cannot be denied in the annals of the Kashmir conflict. Then, Nyla Ali Khan says that 'more work needs to be done to strengthen the work of women in civil intervention in the conflict, campaigns for demilitarization, rehabilitation of dislocated Kashmiri Hindus, rehabilitation of detainees, revocation of draconian laws, and restoration of civil liberties.' (Web). Rita Manchanda mentions the 'absence of a gendered perception of armed conflict in history.' (Mridha, 136).

If the above are the terror situations troubling the Indian international border of the Western, Northern and North-Eastern regions, its southern borders too faced troubles because of terrorism through Tamils in Sri Lanka.

According to Harshana Rambukwella,…" what this brief history of terror in Sri Lanka suggests is that terror is a foundational category, closely tied to the formation of the postcolonial nation state and therefore of postcolonial subjectivity." (3). The post British Srilanka after independence in 1948 was a multi-ethnic society. A gradual escalation of conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils began from 1950s onwards with the declaration of the Sinhalese as the

official language and the gradual curbing of civil rights liberties of minority communities made Tamils feel isolated and discriminated, gradually leading to LTTE militancy's fight for a separate state for Tamils. The strife between the armed forces and the LTTE led to many civilian attacks, leading to thousands of Tamils reduced to refugee status, with displacement, rape, victimisation of women and also female terrorism.

As the LTTE terror attacks took a serious turn with the entry of IPKF and the subsequent assassination of the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991 and that of the Srilankan President Ranasinghe remadasa in May 1993. Finally, with the death of the LTTE Supremo Prabhakaran and his family members, the LTTE as a terrorist group died a slow death. Peace negotiations and the question of human rights issue, where the brutal killing of not only Prabhakaran but his innocent 10-year-old son, throws questions at the Srilankan armed attacks and its violation of human rights and state violence.

Sri Lanka and its terror situation is a case of both how state violence and terrorist violence had torn the small tear-like country, causing massive dislocation and killings, rapes, etc. The death of the activist doctor Thiranagama and artist Richard de Souza considered, to be doctored by the LTTE and the Sri Lankan armies respectively, as they were critical of and objected to the human rights violations on civilians are points to remember on the gender violence caused by terrorists and state players.

As the present report is being written, Sri Lanka has already entered the status of another South Asian country victimized by international terrorism on the Easter Sunday of 2019, when several churches and international hotels came under attack simultaneously by ISIS trained affluent Sri Lankan Muslims as human bombs to carry out terror attacks that killed over 270

innocent people and injured over 500. Despite the shared intelligence reports from India regarding terror attacks on churches, Sri Lankan police had failed to alert and follow up on the information provided.

Other than the above, Maoist insurgent attacks have terrorised Nepal. Bhutan too faces the influence of terrorism in India and is also plagued by the Gurkha strifes. Bangladesh is considered to be the base of the Al-Qaeda training camps. The several terror attacks in Bangladesh point to the training networks established by Al Qaeda and also ISIS, showing the potential threat India faces from Pakistan, with training of insurgents and making India's North East a vulnerable zone with its porous borders. India as the central hub of the South Asian countries can play a crucial role to limit terrorist attacks and also play a key role. Rather, the country has faced many terror attacks and also faces threats of terror attacks from time to time, making its border porous in the affinity of Kashmir, North-East insurgency problems and so on. Particularly interesting are the narratives on terror from Kashmir, North East and certain narratives, both fictional and non-fictional, on certain terror and communal riots events such as the Godra riots, Mumbai blasts.

The study therefore took cognisance of several definitions of terrorism, a few of which are discussed here. The US State Dept termed terrorism as a politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (quoted in Ruby 2002:10). Noam Chomsky considers terrorism as the use of coercive means aimed at populations to achieve political, religious, or other aims. Peter Chalk considers terrorism as the systematic use of illegitimate violence that is employed by sub-state actors as means of achieving specific political objectives, these goals differing according to the group concerned. According to Mickolus& Simmers, terrorism is the "Use of threat or use of

violence by any individual or group for political purposes" (Intro, ix). Another definition draws attention to the impunitive nature of terrorism as an 'act or threat of violence against non-combatants, with the object of intimidating or otherwise influencing an audience or audiences' (Stern).

The philosophical root of the terrorist act is referred to when Baudrillard mentions that "there is a terroristic imagination that unwittingly dwells in all of us, a universal allergy to any definitive order or power". There is one yet another definition that views the misconception on terrorism, that terrorists are underprivileged and uneducated. Enders and Sandler view terrorism as the premeditated use or threat of use of extra normal violence or brutality by sub-national groups to get a political, religious, or ideological aim through intimidation of a huge audience, usually not directly involved with the policy making that the terrorists seek to influence (2002:145-146).

Several other definitions of terror and terrorism were examined to arrive at a conceptual understanding of terror as a 'primordial primitive emotion', terrorizing as an ancient political strategy, and terrorism as the current practice of terror and terrorizing. It explored various definitions of terrorism and its characteristics as an act of organized violence; Use of threat or use of violence by any individual or group for political purposes." (Mickolus & Simmers. Intro, ix); as an act of perpetration of violence as for the cause of the anti-establishment; also one form of violence, where violence becomes terror, when it targets influencing attitudes / behaviour of an intended group going beyond the immediate victims, when its acts of terror transcends the act of threat itself, with far-reaching consequences; as a trauma inducer on a large scale that comprises psychological as well as physical damage (Elizabeth K. Carll Trauma Psychology) of both; use of

violence for political intentions; international nature of terrorism–crosses national boundaries in order to create fear / anxiety.

However, it is a futile exercise to find the single most definition of terrorism, since terrorism has developed over the years. Terrorism and its definition based on the widespread ravages it creates is also not a fair definition, since the ravages that war creates is much more. Particularly interesting are the newer dimensions of terrorism as highlighted by A.S.Raju when he says that 'technology has enhanced the lethality of terrorists' activities (2) or when T. Sreedhar points to the nuclear terrorism as a reality ("New Trends in Terrorism and Violence: Pakistan-Taliban-Al Qaeda" in A.S.Raju, p. 57) and the harsh reality of suicide terrorism or the use of suicide bombings as seen in India, Sri Lanka and several other countries..

A. S. Raju's definition of terrorism and terrorists is very comprehensive:

> Terrorism is the use of threatened use of violence for a political purpose to create a state of fear, which will aid in extorting, coercing, intimidating or causing individuals and groups to alter their behaviour. A terrorist group does not need a defined territorial base or specific organizational structure. Its goals need not relate to any one country. It does not seek a popular base of support. Its operations are very secret, and its activities do not conform to rules of law or warfare. Its targets are civilians, non-combatants, and its victims have no role in causing or correcting the grievance of the terrorists. Its methods are hostage-taking, hijacking, sabotage, assassination and indescribable bombings or suicide bombings (2).

Several terrorists even before 9/11 had planned attacks on the US homeland in the past, including Richard Reid, the so-called shoe bomber, and Jose Padilla, who was originally accused of planning to set off a dirty bomb in the United States. There are also several types of terrorism, given their nomenclatures based on the terror attack, such as state-sponsored terrorism, religious terrorism, suicide terrorism, transnational terrorism, home-grown terrorism, female terrorism and digital terrorism. Further, the subject of terrorism is not limited to extremist Islamic fundamentalism, Middle East conflicts, or Osama bin Laden. Terrorism lingers around the globe in all of its various forms.. For example, the non-Muslim terrorist organizations including Sri Lankan Tamils, South American revolutionaries, Basque separatists, US eco critics and far-right far right antigovernment extremists. Bin Laden had initially supported the US–backed Afghan warriors in their war against the Soviet Union in the 1980s, but he turned against the US after the 1991 Gulf War.

Various perspectives on terror and terrorism were examined for this purpose. First of all, terrorism as a 'hot war' compared to the 'cold war' on account of its sudden enactment of violence, unexpected nature of attacks and the attacks from often people belonging to imaginary communities. Second, Gayatri Spivak Chakraborty's opinion on terrorism as' an abstract enemy,' a war without militarization, terror attacks as the outcome of the US policy, considering the role of humanities 'to train the imagination, so that the ethical interruption can postpone the attempt to know the other–all these are pertinent observations on terror. Third, Noam Chomsky's views on terror–religious stereotyping of terror, gender perception of terror viewing that while US goes for modernization of weapons with 'faster- moving armies,' we forget that 'conquering armies violate women.' Chomsky's understanding of terrorism, speckled with a gendered perspective, certainly directs one to view terror as man-made, with women and children as the worst victims of terror.

There is also a confused definition of terror or violence unleashed by terror groups and revolutionary groups, where rebel infused terror against the state, as done by Bhagat Singh is often termed as revolutionary act of terror and the violence targeted on state and civilians by militants is termed as terrorism.

The following were some points arrived at as expressing the discourse on terror: Use of violence for political intentions or violence as an ideological weapon to fight the state or terrorism as a resistance movement of violence/terror; perpetration of violence as for the cause of the anti-establishment; international nature of terrorism that crosses national boundaries in order to create fear / anxiety; consequential effects of terrorism that hurts the natural cultures; view of terrorism as also one form of violence, but where violence becomes terror, when it targets influencing attitudes / behavior of an intended group going beyond the immediate victims and when the act of terror transcends the act of threat itself, with far-reaching consequences. Particularly relevant is the gendered discourse of terror, where terror, as pointed out by many feminists, becomes an instrument of female oppression and marginalization, where women are made instruments rather than agents of terrorist agenda.

The study also views certain relevant definitions of the term 'narrative.' Maureen Whitebrook's Identity, Narrative, Politics defines narratives as "complex organizational schemata which involve agents, events, time, consciousness, memory, judgment, language." Further, they can also be a record of experiences, where the diary writer or memoir writer expresses the voice of the voiceless. It is through narratives of terror that we can understand terror from a cultural, psychological and gendered perspective. Oral as well as written narratives reflect the recalling of the past trauma where 'construction / reclamation of oral narratives perform the act of narration as

reclamation of the past where terror victims become 'homopsychogeographics' (by AshisNandy) and where 'memory and the making of the menemo history' takes place (Ashes Gupta). Very often in narratives, landscape becomes a metaphor of one's nostalgia. For example, 9/11's WTC, as a landscape of nostalgia, leading to the act of memorialization.

The project which begins with a study of 9/11 as an important political event of the 21st century, aims to study terror narratives of South Asia intending to decipher 9/11 American and the South Asian narratives, through two perspectives: first, studying narratives of 9/11 from the 'Other' point of view of the South Asian narratives and secondly and most significantly, from the gendered point of view, with more emphasis on the female narratives. For this purpose, other than studying the 9/11 narratives from the South Asian gendered point of view, study of all gendered narratives of South Asia, emanating from both writings on 9/11 narratives and other terror narratives unique to the countries (like Sri Lankan terror with Sri Lanka or, as with India the 26/11, Mumbai terror attacks, the northeast Indian insurgency situations, Kashmir conflict, etc) are examined.

A significant aspect of the impact of a terror attack is the aftermath of the attack, when through writings, the missing, the unheard and the unseen resurface through narratives that touch our hearts and remove all fear, rumour and misunderstanding among people. Don DeLillo discusses the dire need and idea of the counter narrative of 9/11 in an American era where narratives bring out in the light of the loss and suffering the stories of those who resurface through these narratives and Abdullah too exactly does the same here, by throwing in counter narratives of racism, discrimination and stereotyping in the aftermath of 9/11. Her works also reveal Abdullah's

bold attack of the terrorists who call themselves as guided by the Prophet himself in their attacks, spreading more negativity in their actions.

Attempts to study and understand the gendered perspective of terror has been made. Bringing a gender perspective into concepts on terror means i) attempting a woman's perspective or a feminist / woman - centred / woman oriented analysis of politics, war and terror ii) making aware of the male oriented policies that cause terror (based on the notion of war as masculine and peace as feminine) iii) the need for female empowerment, in the spheres of politics, defence, education, policy making and human rights, to recharge these man-made policies iii) accepting the notion of gendered nature of terror itself in terms of the male violence on the female iv) supplanting the above in literature studies, especially the terror literature post 9/11 v) exploring a gendered discourse as a counter-discourse to terror vi) analysing the political /social implications of terror on the gendered being. vii) examining the adverse effects of terror on women and gender viii) adopting a gender sensitive approach to examine women afflicted by terror situations ix) understanding women's approach to the subject of terror / terrorism.

What is different about the gendered perspective of terror? When terror strikes, it is a massive unleashing of violence that makes no distinctions of gender or class or caste. Women, who are never part of the decision making or policy-making processes of terror or counter-terror, are very often the soft targets in the crossfires of terrorism. However, in today's terror ridden times, woman's role in terror has changed. Earlier woman's role in terror was mostly as a victim. But today, very often, terrorism takes advantage of the 'female as soft and gentle and innocent and hence arousing less suspicion than men. (C.L. Sjoberg et al., Introduction 1). Women's role has also become divergent in terrorism. Not that, women were not part of terror; for example, women

played an active role in the American South's Ku Klux Klan or in the German Baader-Meinhof gang.

However, the modern role of women in terror is an developing one in the past three decades, within which period the women suicide bomber induced terror has become an ordinary happening. Sjoberg lists women's divergent roles within terrorism across the globe thus: as support personal, logistic personnel, kinetic resource provider, attackers, kidnappers, hijackers and 'martyrs'. (1). If one remembers the 13th December 2009 attack by female suicide bomber to thwart a Pakistani military attack on a Taliban mountain stronghold, one can understand the increased role of female terrorists in terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda and ISIS, in women's role as terrorists, as suicide bombers or as supporters/facilitators of terrorism or as wives of terrorists. Also a study on female involvement in terrorism cautions about the women's involvement as due to 'personal, social motives' (Israel Government Report quoted by Sjoberg 1).

Whether it is the Sri Lankan female suicide bomber involved in the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi or the leaders increasingly inducted by the ISIS terror groups in Iraq and Syria or woman as the worst victims of terrorism becoming their soft targets or the absence of women in many decision-making bodies governing terrorism or terror attacks, one can understand that women and children are the most affected by terrorism, with women having literally no role to play in counter-terrorism measures. In Julia Bacha's TED Talk on Palestinian Israel border problem, she mentions woman's leadership playing an important role in stopping their village from becoming the battlefield through non-violent methods of protests against occupation. She mentions how women's role in many terror prone areas to fight against violence goes unnoticed because of wrong journalistic practices that give no attention to women's leadership skills. This attitude from

the media is ironic compared to terror groups' gender awareness for wrong reasons. In fact, counter-terrorism strategies need to "… grasp how extremist groups manipulate gender norms and gender dynamics" as mentioned by Hurlburt& O'Neill. (Web), since in today's times, one in five terror recruits by the ISIS happens to be a woman.

Very often the terrorists are said to be gender aware of four counts: they tap into the narrative that Western society has no respect for women and hence 'jihadi bride becoming a noble calling' (Hurlburt& O'Neill). Second, use of sexual violence for statecraft, by which terrorists, especially ISIS are said to blackmail state through violence on women, as seen the Manchester attacks, where the victims were mostly women. Third, the absence of women in counter terror mechanisms and defense bodies is being taken to advantage by making them the carriers of terror. Fourthly, terrorists use the women as weapon strategy, as seen in the terrorists' justification of violence through such mottos like 'an eye for an eye', a western woman for our woman'. As Hurlburt and O'Neill say, "… ISIS makes an explicit connection between its chosen targets and the suffering of civilians at Western hands in conflict across the Middle East. 'We terrify as they terrified' as an ISIS fighter identified as Abu Ithar al-Jazrawi said in a propaganda video. 'We scare as they scared. We make widows as they made widows. We make orphans as they made orphans.'" (Web).

"There is a saying, men wage war and women suffer. There cannot be any valour in violence against or rape of a woman." (AnjumZamarud Habib Web). Particularly seen is the oppression of women by terrorists, especially in Pakistan and Islamic countries, where militants impose restrictions on women like compulsory use of the burqa (pro-Azadi Kashmir) or giving up studies as experienced by Malalala in Pakistan. Such exclusion of women from public domain and

imposition of rules on women as embodiment and preserver of cultures, all reveal women as doubly marginalized from the discourse of terror, despite being the victim of terror very often. Hence there is a need to encourage the gendered discourse on terror particularly as a counter terror measure.

The relevance of the relationships between women, gender and terrorism cannot be ignored as a subject in academic work or policy analysis according to Sjoberg, though very few empirical studies have been done on this field. The motivations of women in terrorism and their exact reason for participation, whether religious only or political or personal, along with their additional motives if any need to be explored.

Further, is there any women's involvement different from one militant group to another? Why scholarly work on gender in terrorism emphasizes on viewing women's terrorism as different from men's? What is the image of a woman in terrorism? These are some areas explored by social scientists regarding women's role in terrorism. Very often contradictory images of woman as peacemaker and woman as terrorist or with terrorist leanings have been explored in terrorist studies and even in literary texts. Media very often portrays women as voiceless terrorists dominated by men, since the image of woman as terrorist or woman as violent is very often linked to woman's patriarchal role as sister / wife / mother to male terrorists, serving supportive roles to men. However, no exploration has been made by such studies about woman's role as a decision maker within terrorist outfits. Policy makers specially consider women terrorists as posing ominous threat 'due to their easy access to sensitive areas and their attacks as carrying significant shock value.

However, very often viewing the image of woman within terrorism, female terrorists are breakers of feminine stereotypes or as interceptors/interrupters of peace or as security threats.

Since the state normally creates the binary opposition around the image of the terrorist, as good versus bad, good versus evil, etc, is such binary opposition reflected with the image of woman? If so, is there negotiation between these two categories? If terrorists are 'heroic losers' (Rakhee Kalita 104) as the state maintains, where do female terrorists figure in such a world? Very often 'woman as terrorist' image is linked to women experiencing violence themselves, as rape victims, as victims of violence or loss of relatives, etc. A study of women's role as Naxalites or Maoists very much reveals women as victims of 'zamindar' or landlord power exigency that forced women to succumb to violence in the absence or weakness of police to handle the exigency. In a story entitled "The Crucifixion" by the Assamese writer Nirupama Borgohain, she narrates the recalling of rape memory of Andhra Naxalite leader Debuni Narsaiya's statement: "Our girls grew up with the knowledge that they would be raped by the landlord or his goons as soon as they attained puberty…" (157).

What is unique about gendered narratives of terror? Very often there is a 'male control of discourse' (Linda Kauffman, 3), as seen in the male discourse of terrorism as a narrative debunking or suppression of gendered voices. Hence due importance needs to be given to gendered narratives on terror, in order to exhume the suppressed women's angle on terror and conflict situations.

How are these narratives of terror gendered? This can be examined from reading these narratives as women's narratives, as expressing female perspectives, as narratives of the female as victim or perpetrator of terror and her coping with terror. Is there a new discourse that arises from the way women cope with terror? Slavoj Zizek, attempting at a distinction between 'symbolic violence' and 'systemic violence', confirms this new gendered discourse on terror.

These gendered narratives discuss the consequences of terror and its resultant disturbance of the peaceful communal life, and this strand is constant and recurrent in women's narratives. Woman representation in the terror narratives and also woman as victim of rape or violence could be seen in Phul Goswami's "*Upanta Upakul*" (Ruined Coast) (Assamese). Further, woman's loss and trauma over loss of a family member in insurgent attacks is seen in Arupa Patangia Kalita's collection of short stories *The Musk and Other Stories*, about the 'caught in between' condition of people trapped in the insurgency situations and how they suffer, particularly looking into woman as victim of such violent situations. Arupa Kalita's story "Ai" is about a woman's suffering because of insurgency that victimizes her husband in a bomb blast and also the loss of her two sons turning to insurgency or another son killed in a fake encounter situation. Finally, that leads her to mental imbalance. Debabrata Das' "*Appekkhat Urmila Athaba…*" (Urmila, waiting or…) (Assamese) is about violence on children and Jehiru lHussain's "*Saru Dhemali Bar Dhemali*" ("Little games, adult games") discusses the role of the writer in the terror narratives and their narrative construction of terror.

In such narratives, what is the position and viewpoint of the writer? Are these writers trapped in the terror conflicts between state forces and the militants /insurgents, with their narrative portrayal of women caught in the eye of the terror storm? Is there the presence of or erasure of accountability in these terror narratives? This brings us to the crucial question of the use of language in terror narratives. When it comes to the question of authenticity, truth or non-truth of these narratives based on true incidents of terror, there is a question to ponder over these narratives: Is there an authentic reproduction or a stereotypical erasure of history in these narratives? Do narrative shifts occur in their narratives? How does one describe the violent versus non-violent

conflict discourse in women's writings on terror? How does women's discourse of exclusion and inclusion of gender operate in these narratives?

This research study is inspired by Elaine Showalter's idea of gynocritics, i.e., to study 'women as writers'. Inspired by the above, my purpose is to study women as writers or documenters of terror, women as narrators, victims, witnesses and agents of terror in both the male authored and the female authored English writings of South Asia. Here, one should refer to Donn Schumacher's opinion of considering 'a text as an entity of potential meaning and criticism as constructing the meaning." (Ellen Messer-Davidow. "The Philosophical Bases of Feminist Literary Criticisms." *Kauffman's Gender & Theory*. 63-106.). However, this research on 'gendered narratives of terror in South Asia' does not merely bring out the gendered perspectives of terrorism, since every South Asian writer, male or female, contributes immensely to the idea of terror through their moving tales of loss, shock, trauma, coming to terms with the shock of terror and violence and umpteen other multifarious experiences of their encounter with terror. The gendered aspect of terror could be understood from a famous Bengali proverb on violence that 'When the king fights, it is the grass that dies', which refers to how wars or conflicts mainly afflict the innocent, the ordinary and the quotidian. Sanjoy Hazarika says that women are the most vulnerable, and the most marginalised in the acts of terror from either side. Hazarika recounts the Nellie massacre in Assam and the Manorama killing in Manipur in his article "In Times of Conflict the Real Victims are Women" observes that whatever be the Centre's reaction in either case, the worst sufferers are women. Acts like rape, sexual abuse and physical assault lead to deep emotional and psychological trauma. Similarly touching on the gendered dimension of terror, Gill says in times of conflict,

> T[t]hey suffer as civilians with their freedoms curtailed and shackled. They are assaulted, beaten, raped, humiliated, murdered during conflicts. The loss that women face in conflict time is not just emotional or physical to lose a loved one, but also transfers into the economic and the social spheres. (Gill 10)

By viewing the gendered perspective of terrorism, the following are achieved: understanding the impact of violence on women; women's involvement in militant and insurgent struggles, like women in LTTE or female Maoists and insurgents; female perspectives on the subject, for example, Malala Yousafzai says, 'With guns you can kill terrorists, with education you can kill terrorism'. Further, it helps comprehend the psychological nature of terror through identifying the trauma of the victims of terror, as Susan Faludi in her introduction to The Terror Dream refers to a doctor's study of the trauma after 9/11 experienced by 5 teenage girls who "…believed that some debris or body part from the destruction of the towers had lodged in their throats and produced the symptom." (from Judith Greenberg's Trauma at Home, quoted by Faludi.

The question to ponder should also be on this one: How to assess gender constructions or gender stereotyping in the terror texts of South Asia? Social scientists have recently been emphasizing the importance of a gendered perspective in policies related to terrorism, going beyond female stereotyping of woman as the victimized other or the passive receptor of terror, and to explore alternatives based on emphasis on woman as a decision maker on policies on terrorism and as preventer and perpetrator of terrorism. (Patel and Westermann 56). Then in literary studies the gendered perspective needs to be emphasized, in order to understand woman's role in terrorism and prevention and what and how do their narratives represent a gendered perspective.

Therefore, regarding the above, we need to decipher a terror narrative as constructed / reconstructed narrative from the gendered point of view. The following ideas were explored: how to assess gender constructions or gender stereotyping in the terror texts of South Asia? How are they gendered narratives of terror?–women's narratives, female perspectives, narratives of female as victims of terror, women's coping with terror. Is there a new discourse that arises from the way women cope with terror? The fights for sub nationalism through insurgency in Assam or Nagaland and how it affects women's private spaces. For example, whether it is Ao or Phukan or Kalita, they discuss how terror and violence in the public domain repress the private spaces of women; consequences of terror and its resultant disturbance of the peaceful communal life as constant and recurrent in women's narratives; woman representation in the terror narratives and woman as victim of rape or violence. Thus the terror experience deepens in South Asian literary narratives with works such as Phul Goswami's "Upanta Upakul" (Ruined Coast) (Assamese); woman's loss and trauma over loss of a family member in insurgent attacks as in Arupa Kalita Patangia's story "Ai" about a woman' and Debabrata Das' "Appekkhat Urmila Athaba…" (Urmila, waiting or…) (Assamese); violence on children, as in Jehirul Hussain's "Saru Dhemali Bar Dhemali" ("Little games, adult games").

Certain concepts of gendered terror were examined, the most relevant being on women and violence and the trauma of terror. Violence against women has several forms such as generalized violence (attacks on buildings, religious places,); political tortures; systematized violence /terror on women where women become spies, enemies of the state or terrorists to be systematically exposed, studied, tortured and punished; violence against women who are attacked only because of their affiliations with males considered as threats; and violence against female prisoners. Very often violence or female terrorizing amounts to violation of the female body, violation of the

female dignity; whereby she undergoes incarceration both physically/mentally leading to a quick/successive degeneration; brutality on women considered as relative to the male enemy; sexual oppression of women only forces them to confessions; carefully planned mental torture of women; survival of female prisoners with no hope; psychotic or psychopathic torture on women; sexual violence amounting to gang rape or even rape in front of the family members as with state violence in Mizoram and Nagaland or the Kunon Poshpora villages violence in Kashmir; and violence in family or domestic violence; violence related to tradition such as customs, dowry, widowhood rites, sati or genital mutilation; laws governing violence against women; violence through religion as seen in partition violence; violence as honor killing and suicide as violence.

The state or the terrorist violence on women is one of the worst kinds of violence inflicted on the woman's body. In Asomiya fiction, very often such violence is discussed or represented. The word 'trauma' refers to the act of experiencing 'trauma' or shock because of an unexpected event of terror or fear that unfortunately triggers a sense of stigma or obsession in the recalling of that event and the senses / objects associated with it, leading very often to stress disorders.

The discourse of trauma of terror very often related to some the victims' encounter with specific forms of violence and terror, focuses on the study of the origin of such trauma and also on the path of recovery of the trauma. Judith Herman lays emphasis on the need for these victims of terror and trauma to be treated for stories that go 'underground' which need to surface over the ground (2). Narratives that express the trauma of terror are engaged in the rewriting of stress, pent up anger, trauma and repression, depression and memory. For healing for any experience of violence and trauma can be achieved through 'silence and speech or memory and forgetting or pain and healing (Bhutalia 267). Also, the speech or voicing the memory of violence committed

or experienced becomes an important fact that can lead to healing the trauma. As Bhutalia says, "Not looking at it, pretending it is not there, will not make it go away." (267).

Oral as well as written narratives reflect the recalling of the past trauma–'construction / reclamation of oral narratives–narration as reclamation of the past' refugee or terror victims as 'homopsychogeographics' (by Ashis Nandy) 'memory and the making of the menemo history' (Ashes Gupta). Sometime terror trauma is all about or linked to idealization of the lost space or land or life (idyllic approach) and therefore narration becomes a means to achieve metaphorized reclamation, what is destroyed cannot be reclaimed in the same manner. It can also lead to creation of landscape as a metaphor of one's nostalgia. For example, 9/11's WTC becomes often a landscape of nostalgia, leading to the act of memorialization.

Sometimes trauma is linked to narratives through images. In the aftermath of 9/11, images played a significant role. They were used to act out the collective trauma, which according to the historian Dominick LaCapra is "the tendency to relive or reenact the past through flashbacks, nightmares, and compulsively repeated words and images. Over time, these images also became a way to "work through" the trauma, a means to gain critical distance from the events" ("The Depiction of 9/11 in Literature: The Role of Images and Intermedial Reference"). Another example is the image of the 'invisible prison' in which Nagas are living in the words of Kire whereby they are 'denied freedom of expression, freedom to nationhood and most painfully, freedom to life itself' (Kire).

With the above multifarious perspectives of terror as standpoint, American and South Asian literatures on terror post the 9/11 terror event were explored to understand terror from the perspective of the ordinary, as a pursuit of truth and also to understand the artists' positive struggle

to see and write narratives as though it was ‘poetry in the times of terror’. Can one consider 9/11 as a hallmark in the 21st century world history that defines and shapes literature definitely, in the same manner in which two world wars influenced literature? Can one consider 9/11 as the product of the South Asian Frankenstein monster that America once nurtured for its own purposes and which turned against itself?

Chapter II

Understanding the 9/11 Terror Narratives

Understanding the 9/11 terror and the literary critical views on the event is also relevant for this research because: First, in general, literature as the ‘mirror of life’ provides a worldview that crosses barriers of bureaucracy, fiefdom, dictatorship, falsehood and lies that very often accompany imaginary worlds of terrorists, power mongers and dictators. From the epic age to Shakespeare’s times and even today, writers from Joseph Conrad to Amitav Ghosh have addressed victimization because of terror and violence. If one reads Draupadi as a character who stages a gendered struggle against violation of her dignity, rather than the traditional view on her as the root cause of Kurukshetra War in Mahabharata, we would understand Vyasa’s gendered perspective of the heroine as a powerful woman in revolt against the injustice done to her dignity as a woman.

The importance of 9/11 could be recognized also from the several contemporary theoretical concepts planned on terrorism. The debate on terrorism depended on the identity of the particular terrorist concerned and also his cultural beliefs and especially his religious and regional

affiliations. Terrorism sometimes stood for the battle between the good and the evil. Also, several complicated issues rose surrounding violence, terrorism and backlash, where terrorism became unacceptable as a target against civilians, whereas terrorist operated violence supported by the state raises questions on violence. For example, one could compare the deaths of 9/11 and the civilian deaths in Nagasaki and Hiroshima bomb explosions. Spivak considers the Taliban as created by the US to counter Soviet influence in Afghanistan, and refers to how the American support for 'war against terror,' which targets Afghanistan, 'ignores the history of development of the Afghan intelligence and its genuine involvement with the Left.'

There are interesting concepts such as the relation between terrorism and imagination, where terrorism is the consequence of 'imagination of the unimaginable' and terrorism as a replay of 'historical memory' represented through 'narratives, performances and inscriptions'. The terrorist is also conceptualized as 'one who imagines a set of ways to inflict pain in order to show power' (Strathan, 13). The role of rumour in spurring imaginary acts of violence and terrorism is an important concept related to terrorism, where the myth created by the US intelligence about Saddam Hussein's possession of enormous weapons led to large scale US invasion of Iraq. Such rumours about terrorism 'lead to produce terror and to massive military action' (Strathem, 15). Similarly, the rumour and the resultant fear about anthrax war by terrorists show the role of rumour, gossip leading to fear of the terrorist as a witch or a sorcerer. Hence 'imagined responses to events themselves play a central role' in terrorist acts (Strathan, 16), as seen in the 9/11 destructions and the corresponding reactions, fears and anxieties.

From the above ruminations on terror and its concepts, terror has also given rise to multitudinous narratives on terror and violence from those of bombing and being blown up with

political messages, to those of burning of buildings and individuals with personal interpretations, and also stories about borders and ethnic cleansing. Hence narratives of trauma, fear and violence abound in literature that reflects emotional and physical violence. The discourse on terrorism in literature therefore covers vast areas such as descriptions of terror strikes and personal reactions to them, 'war on terror', and so on.

The study particularly viewed the history and the nature of the 9/11, which comprised the four attacks on World Trade Center, Pentagon, unknown target and bioterrorist attacks with anthrax, where were visible the different techniques of terror attack and also how new patterns of terror emerged and these put an end to the traditional wisdom on terrorism which claims that terrorism wants many people 'watching, rather than many people dead.' Therefore, the 9/11 terror reversed this traditional notion of terror to claim that it wants all people dead; hence the number of people dead in the 9/11 attacks exceeds the 'global total for the previous decade of international terrorist attacks (Mickolus & Simmers, x).

Importantly the targets achieved by Al-Qaeda differed from earlier attacks: aimed for mass deaths; while historically terrorists targeted publicity, for Al-Qaeda publicity was only a byproduct; unlike use of terror tactics as part of a negotiation, Al-Qaeda made spectacular attacks with no bargaining tendency; ability to coordinate simultaneous complex attacks unparalleled in the history of terrorism; patient preparation on terror attacks.

The following were the ramifications of the 9/11 terror attacks: the gulf between Al -Qaeda and other terror groups widened; Bin Laden's inherited wealth gave access to resources previously not available to terrorists; the amount of damage created was nothing compared to terror attack expenditure; it "altered American sense of security, trust and a just world" (Mickolus & Simmers,

Intro, xii); further, the attacks 'returned the importance of simple fellowship to the forefront of American daily life." (xii).

The writings on 9/11 terror could be categorized based on how the writings approach the terror incidents and what they focus about 9/11. Jeffrey Archer's False Impression is a thriller on the events during and immediately after 9/11, while Don DeLillo (contemporary Italian-American novelist / playwright) sketches American life in the 20th and 21st centuries) in Falling Man (2007), the story about a man who survived the 9/11. It is about the rebuilding of relationship once estranged, in the aftermath of the 9/11. It is like the terror attacks gave a whole new perspective to living life in full. Ian McEwan's Saturday (2005) brings out the Desperado theme of violence and terror, and, in its trust in family ties to ward off this fear, it moves away from the Desperado tradition.

It is a suspense narrative focusing finely on the terror of violence weaving the narrative through the stream of consciousness of a neuro-surgeon, Henry Perowne, caught in the dilemma of his potential for violence and his inability to be violent. It is about terror growing into a political and a philosophical one continuing the fear / suspicion of the recurrence of terrorism. The bleak message made by the author is that we live in a desolate world of terror, from which nothing escapes and nothing hopeful is to be expected. Art Spiegelman narrates about the destruction of the twin towers and the aftereffects of 9/11 in his work *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004). Jonathan Safran Foer's second novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) brings home the story of a 9-year-old boy's father loss in 9/11 and his coping with the loss. Colson Whitehead (African–American novelist from Manhattan), known for his novels *John Henry Days* (2001) and *The Colossus of New York* (2003), recounts the creation of a cyborg (a cybernetic creation of a

kind of organism) and its rampage of New York. Ken Kalfus' *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country: A Novel* (2006) at its nest reflects a failed marriage in the backdrop of 9/11, with a couple with two children facing divorce and terrorising each other. In keeping with the title, the novel reveals the disorder at home as peculiar to the country that faces terror and also terrorises nations. Unlike the construction of masculinity constructed in American novels, this novel discusses failed masculinity and thereby debunks gender constructions. O'Neill Joseph (Irish born American writer) recounts the tale of a family in the background of 9/11, with the protagonist witnessing the family on the verge of disintegration in Netherland (2008).

Since 9/11 is a subject closer to contemporary writers, one finds many writers, both American and writers, around the world too writing on 9/11. Some of these texts are as follows. Daphne Joyce Maynard's *The Usual Rules* (2003) (one of the first novels to deal with September 11, 2001); Iain Banks' (Scottish writer) *Dead Air* (2002); Lawrence Block ' (American crime writer) *The Small Town* (2003); Joyce Carol Oates' "*Mutants*" (part of the Short story collection *I am No One You Know*) (2004); Paul Auster's (American crime writer blending it with absurdism) *Brooklyn Follies* (2005); William Gibson's *Pattern Recognition* (2003) belongs to the American, Canadian science fiction (sub genre – cyberpunk), using 9/11 as a backdrop; Stephen King's (American horror fiction writer, popular culture genre) 6th Dark Tower novel, *Song of Susannah*; Arthur Nersesian's (American novelist/playwright/poet) *Unlubricated* (2004) about a character witnessing the attacks and the resulting confusion; Jean Bethke Elshtain's *Just War Against Terror* (2004); James Turner Johnson's *The War to Oust Saddam Hussein* (2005) and Oliver O'Donovan's *The Just War Revisited* (2003)

Philip Roth's (American novelist) *Everyman* (2006) is a tale about a man's migration to the New Jersey shore because of his experiences of fear after 9/11. Turki al-Hamad's (Saudi novelist) *Winds of Paradise* (2005) is also on the 9/11 attacks; John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) views 9/11 from the point of view of a radical Muslim youth and his Jewish guide -counselor. Martin Amis writes nonfiction on 9/11 called *The last Days of Mohammed Atta,* which is part of the collection *The Second Plane: September 11: Terror and Boredom* (2008). Jay Mclnerney's The Good Life (2006) outlines events before, during, and after 9/11. Also, two French novelists deal with 9/11, one being Frederic Beigbeder, whose Windows on the World captures the last moments of a father and two children trapped in a window of the World restaurant in the Northern tower of the World Trade center. And the other novel Luc Lang's *11 Septembre mon amour* engages in an angry attack on America and Bush politics. A New York based journalist David Halberstam's story on 9/11 *Firehouse* (2002) pens the tragedy of the firefighters as the first respondents to arrive at the scene of 9/11. Arunabha Sengupta's *Big Apple 2 Bites* is a novel about an Indian engineer in New York on an assignment during 9/11. David Llewellyn's (Welsh novelist) *Eleven* (2006) describes the effect of 9/11 on the people of the UK and follows the modernised tradition of the epistolary novel through emails. Arnon Grunberg (New York based Dutch novelist) has written Tirza – about a man's madness as a result of his hedge fund collapse due to 9/11 and as a result of his daughter's affair with a Muslim man.

There are also many films on 9/11 Terror: Jarek Kupsc (Writer/director) brought out *The Reflecting Pool* (9/11 investigative drama) of 2008; *Fahrenheit 9/11* (a documentary narrative on 9/11); *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2011; adaptation of Jonathan Savran's novel of the same name); *9/11* (2017); and so on. These films were viewed only with the aim to enhance

understanding of the subject, since they do not fall in the research's purview or focus on English writings on terror from a gendered perspective.

The American stage and world drama had witnessed several plays staged on 9/11 terror themes. Adriano Shaplin's *Pugilist Specialist*; (New York based dramatist, co-founder of Riot Group, theatre company where he serves as resident playwright - published by Oberon books); David Hare's Stuff Happens (British playwright); Sangram Guha's *Anticlock* (first show, 15 Sept 2007 and 51 shows till 15 June 2009), a documentary drama that marks an investigative case study of the 9/11 to reveal the secret of the government sponsored state terrorism); Presynakav Brothers' *Terrorism* (2003); Anne Nelson's *The Guys* (first performed on Dec 4, 2001), retelling the memories of a fire captain and a writer who helps him to give shape to his praise of his dead colleagues as eulogies; Neil La Bute's *The Mercy Seat* (Dec18, 2002), successful play about a survivor faking his death and looking at the attacks cynically different from any New Yorker; Charles Evered's Adopt a Sailor (on the 1st anniversary of 9/11) as part of a premier performance of short plays called "*Brave New World*", about a NY city couple playing the host to a sailor and the effect of the attacks on their relationship one year later. Craig Wright's *Recent Tragic Events,* dated 12 Sept 2001, is about a blind date between a man and woman and about the woman's attempts to reach her sister in NYC premiered in Washington in 2002.

Many poetry books abound on terror, such as Poetry on terror by American poets like Robert Hass, Claudia Rankine, Mark Doty and Bob Perelman; Richard Howard's "*Fallacies of Wonder*" (a fantasy of how the twin towers looked like, now that they are gone); Seamus Heaney's Poem "*Anything Can Happen*" which is a loose translation of Horace's Ode 1.34 veiling the

reaction to terror attacks; Ben Learner's poem "*Didactic Elegy*" about the 9/11 attacks. Seamus Heaney's "*Anything Can Happen*" runs thus:

After Horace, Odes, I, 34

Anything can happen. You know how Jupiter

Will mostly wait for clouds to gather head

Before he hurls the lightning? Well just now

He galloped his thunder cart and his horses

Across a clear blue sky. It shook the earth

and the clogged under earth, the River Styx,

the winding streams, the Atlantic shore itself.

Anything can happen, the tallest towers

Be overturned, those in high places daunted,

Those overlooked regarded. Stropped-beak Fortune

Swoops, making the air gasp, tearing the crest off one,

Setting it down bleeding on the next.

Ground gives. The heaven's weight

Lifts up off Atlas like a kettle lid.

Capstones shift. Nothing resettles right.

Telluric ash and fire-spores boil away.

Some of the nonfictional writings on 9/11 are scintillating with their thought challenging exercises. Yessica Gonzalez's book on *Sex, Literature and Terrorism* describes the woman's reaction to the 9/11 in the persona of a woman character in "9/11 as Estelle Rigault." Here she describes the experience of 9/11 and what it did to people who witnessed it:

> What I can tell you is what 9/11 means to me. It defined a moment in time where many felt free to feel. Unconditional love and understanding became imperative. People ended up getting married faster, making love a little sweeter, having children without planning. The simple things in life gave us pleasure. Life was valued. (27.07.2009 http://www.nyu.edu/classes/keefer/joe/gonza.html).

Susan Faludi's writings on 9/11 as well as Goerdon Coonfield's and Gayatri Spivak's were influential.

On 9/11, whatever else happened, the most basic political element of collectivity, the territory, was breached. Watching and recording were but preludes to a much more widely pervasive set of performances, expressive enactments through which territory was remade. By way of cultural studies, I hope to connect performance studies and media studies in order to consider the relation of news images to lived images—the relation between images made, selected, edited, and circulated via the news process and the myriad ways in which images were experienced and

taken up in the everyday performances through which, I argue, a post-traumatic landscape is (re)possessed, (re)marked, and maintained.

In doing so, I draw on the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari to argue that public trauma makes up a radical deterritorialization, one that compels the kinds of performances through which territory can be reconstituted. Performances, however traditional or novel, ritualized or improvised, operate as refrains: territorial assemblages that contract images and matters in acts of repetition and expression that are potent cultural forms in their own right." (Gordon Coonfield. "Performance as Refrain: News Images, Lived Images and the Post-9/11 Landscape." *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* Vol. 5, No. 1, April 2009. ISSN: 1557-2935 (online) http://liminalities.net/5-1/refrain.pdf)

A survey of American narratives on 9/11 terror, mostly gendered, was mainly attempted. Some of the thematic / textual summaries are given below. A non-fictional book, Benjamin J. Luft's *We're Not Leaving: 9/11 Responders Tell Their Stories of Courage, Sacrifice, and Renewal* (2011) brings out an energetic first person narrative, made from the close vicinity of World Trade Centre, partaken by American citizens from disaster workers, police officers, firefighters, construction workers, and other volunteers at the site of the WTC.

The book is divided into five parts, with each part consecutively titled as "Caught in the Collapse", "Looking for Survivors", "Recovery, Recovery, Recovery", "The Responders Need Help" and "Renewal". These introductions summarize the narrative and insights into the individuals telling their stories, as well as into the trauma experienced by them. The author is a native New Yorker who was deeply affected by the 9/11 attacks and was inspired to establish the Long Island World Trade Centre Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program which provides care

to over 6,000 disaster responders and has become an incubator for several important research and treatment programs that emphasize both mental and physical well-being.

In this non-fictional narrative the responders give us a factual account of how they were caught by chance in the horrific maelstrom perpetrated by the terrorists and those heroic men who jumped into the process of recovery and reclamation of the site at Ground Zero, sifting the colossal mountain of debris and looking for survivors, if any. The author in the preface states that,

> Throughout their work on the Pile, the responders inhaled caustic fumes of burning debris and the stench of decomposing bodies. They were exposed to rapidly recurring episodes of significant trauma from the gruesome loss of colleagues, friends, and fellow citizens, witnessing death, destruction, and repeated episodes of threats to life and limb by the extreme and unstable environment (xi).

Philip, an inspector with the New York City Department of Buildings, elaborates on his sense of disbelief as he saw the papers blowing out of the window, then smoke and suddenly the tower swirling down like a tornado. His office desk overlooks the tower, and what he saw was something inexplicable:

> I could actually see people jumping out of the window. For the life of me, I couldn't understand why anybody would jump out of a window. Never knowing about the gas and they were trapped and they couldn't go through. It was very overwhelming. I did not know what was going on, and it was very obvious everybody around me did not know (16).

Anthony, who was a New York City police detective when the twin towers were attacked, shares a similar perspective, "Survivor guilt is huge. I have no qualms in saying it- I suffer from PTSD from the events of 9/11…" (163). On seeing the emergency rooms flooded with injured people, Anthony observes,

> I've seen dead people many times in my career…Things of just utter evil you can't understand, like a father who hacks his whole family up…This, the World Trade Center getting dropped by two planes, that wasn't in the sheet. You're not prepared for this. When I signed up to be a cop, I was going to chase bad guys and I was going to help people and respond to accident scenes. Yes, there was going to be gore and stuff like that, but not this. This is a war zone ("Hope Was All We Could Give", 165).

But Michael, who is a homicide detective with the New York City Police Department, brings out the most inspiring story of 9/11. He was amazed at not only the self-sacrifice of the responders, but at the power and compassion of the national community. He feels that seeing the people and the nation come together was a life-changing experience that he will never forget. But even for him the spectre at Ground Zero was unnerving and disturbing: "It's almost like you're numb to it" says Michael "but you're not". "You're dying…not dying inside, but it's just there was nobody you could explain it to" (*The Dump* 159).

These were a few snippets from the book *We're Not Leaving* that is arguably the first and the most poignant and powerful narrative that chronicles the tragedy of 9/11. The survivors and the rescuers speak animatedly about the deeply personal stories on their harrowing escapes from the falling Towers, the egregious environment they worked in for months, their shared value of

courage, duty, patriotism, self-sacrifice- which bears a testimony to their personal strength and renewal in the ten years since. Particularly interesting is the narrative of a woman police officer, Carol, who describes her experience of refusing to leave but entering the debris to rescue trapped victims. Luckily she escaped, though injured, and had to retire from service due to the ill effects of the injuries incurred. Hence, Dr. Benjamin Luft makes a poignant use of Carol's words 'We are not leaving' as a title for his book. Further, he also brings out the trauma of a widow who lost her husband in the attacks. These viewings of a woman's reaction to terror strikes and its aftermath experiences provide a gendered perspective to the event where one senses woman's strength in facing the emergency and her decision not to quit.

Jonathan Safran Foer's novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2006) tells the story of Oskar Schell, a precocious nine-year-old boy traumatized by his father's death in the World Trade Centre. Since his father's death, Oskar struggles with insomnia, panic attacks, and depression. Oskar begins a quest that takes him across New York's five boroughs and into the jumbled lives of friends, relatives and complete strangers. Since the novel is a narrative of trauma, images play a very important role: there are photographs inserted into the narrative, changes in typography and blank pages.

These images are necessary as insights into Oskar's traumatized mind. Different photos of locks and door knobs show Oskar's need to 'unblock' his own trauma, which hides in the quest's fulfillment. In the aftermath of 9/11, images played a significant role. They were used to act out the collective trauma which according to the historian Dominick LaCapra is "the tendency to relive or reenact the past through flashbacks, nightmares, and compulsively repeated words and images. Over time, these images also became a way to "work through" the trauma, a means to gain critical

distance from the events" ("The Depiction of 9/11 in Literature: The Role of Images and Intermedial Reference")

Major themes of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2006) include trauma, mourning, family, and the struggle between self-destruction and self-preservation. In literature, trauma narratives tend to depart from linear sequence and make use of experimental devices to reflect the unsettling experience. Stylistically there are visual images, textual gaps, repetitions, and shifting viewpoints as readers are made to feel the disorienting positions of characters. Jonathan Safran Foer's novel was one of many narratives that confronted the aftermath of the attacks through the eyes of a New Yorker.

As seen earlier in Bannerjee and Hosseini, there are many narratives by South Asian writers on 9/11 or the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The novel Home Boy (2010) by H. M. Naqvi is a post-9/11 story told from a Pakistani's perspective. It centers on the lives of three Pakistani immigrants in New York City. For them, their origins mattered less than the talent for self-invention, and they had the guts to claim the place as their own. The story is told through the eyes of Chuck, one of the immigrants. He is a student on a work visa studying Literature in New York University who turns into a banker and then later, as the situations worsens, into a cab driver. The three friends' world turned upside-down after the events of 9/11 when the city that they thought embraced them, turned hostile. The three friends are detained by the FBI on mere grounds of suspicion and are thrown into the Metropolitan Detention Centre. For the three young Pakistanis it seemed as if their universe had diminished. When things changed, they seemed to change for the worse. In the detention centre it was a tragedy of a different scale, which Chuck explains,

It seemed routine, the invective, the casual violence, the way things are, the way things are going to be: doors would open, doors would close, and I would be smacked around, molested, hauled back and forth between cells and interrogation sessions…I was dragged down one corridor and then another, slipping and scraping against the linoleum. In a changed America, it seemed anything could happen. I could abide the cursing and spitting and casual violence, but the threat of systematic brutality stirred a profound sense of panic, so when the interrogator shambled in, I found myself trembling (112).

H. M. Naqvi provides a very poignant yet morbid description of the U.S. prison where the protagonist Chuck is held captive:

> There is no meaningful way to convey the abjectness of prison life. You review the events that led to your incarceration again and again and again…When lunch or dinner finally arrived- lentil like gruel and a piece of round, hard bread served on a plastic tray-it tasted like old oatmeal and Styrofoam and made me even hungrier. Prison is like that; no consolations, no catharsis. You might hold your head in your hands, pound your fists, sob like a baby, but the floor will remain wet, the toilet backed up, and your cell will continue to stink like a chicken run. And just when you think you've figured the routine, things change (117-18).

Home Boy (2010) presents an immigrant's view of New York City after 9/11 and what it means to be a Muslim in a charged and changed America. Although they considered New York to be their home, once they face a harrowing treatment in the prison meted out by the FBI, they are forced to reconsider their national allegiance to the country.

Akin to Naqvi, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2008) overtly deals with the disillusionment of a young Pakistani with the 'American Dream' in the wake of 9/11 attacks. Changez is an excellent student who completes his bachelor's degree in Finance from Princeton University and joins Underwood Samson, a consultancy firm, as an analyst. But after a disastrous love affair and the September 11 attacks, his western life collapses and he returns to Pakistan in a disillusioned and an alienated state of mind. The narrative rolls back and forth with Changez's developing concern with the issues of cultural identity, American power, and the victimization of Pakistan. In the interim, Changez sees himself as a servant of the American empire that has constantly interfered with and manipulated his homeland. He returns from Chile to New York without completing the assignment and ends up losing his job.

Mohsin Hamid gives us a peek into Changez's consciousness on the day of the collapse of the Twin Towers, "…the twin towers of New York's World Trade Centre collapsed. And then I smiled. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased" (72). Changez himself declares that he was never at war with America. Far from it, he was the product of an American University. He was earning a lucrative American salary and was infatuated with an American woman.

But the attack stirred something crucial which had been lying dormant within him for decades; the pathology of grief over his homeland, Pakistan. In the global scenario, after the September 11 attacks, there is an air of suspicion towards Pakistanis. Changez, because of his privileged position in society, is not among those detained or otherwise abused, but he notices a change in the way he is treated in public, "My entrance elicited looks of concern from many of my

fellow passengers. I flew to New York uncomfortable in my face: I was aware of being under suspicion; I felt guilty…" (74).

The novel explores how capitalist forces of the developed countries enter every conceivable space and convert such space into a habitat for market logic, often creating a reenactment of past imperial strifes. Changez is haunted by the specter of American militaristic interventions into countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan, which are not quite enemies but hardly friends. He interprets the destruction of Twin Towers as a counter-violence imparted to America at large. He is the embodiment of the argument that says that America has created its own enemies.

John Updike's novel *The Terrorist* (2012) is a profoundly curious piece of 9/11 literary projection since it doesn't indulge in narrating the events from a victim's perspective but explores the worldview and motivations of religious fundamentalists. The story centres on an American born Muslim teenager named Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy and his thoughtful, disturbing insights into the moral and spiritual dimensions of Jihad.

His faith provides fertile ground for ideological instruction, which comes as long discourses on Islam in the modern world, one of the didactic areas of the novel that some readers may not have much patience for. He dissects and condemns the American morals and lifestyle, calls the Government 'Satanic' and so he seeks solace at his mosque and in the study of Quran under the guidance of his suave Armenian Imam, Shaikh Rashid. As the young man's faith is welded into fanaticism, Ahmad recites precisely the dogma we expect from a suicide bomber. His vehemence against the Western values is clear in the monologue,

> DEVILS, Ahmad thinks. These devils seek to take away my God. All day long, at Central High School, girls sway and sneer and expose their soft bodies and alluring hair…The teachers, weak Christians and nonobservant Jews, make a show of teaching virtue and righteous self-restraint, but their shifty eyes and hollow voices betray their lack of belief…They lack true faith; they are not on the Straight Path; they are unclean" (3).

Ahmad desires to become a truck driver on the advice of his Shaikh because driving is a practical skill of good merit, whereas academic studies serve only to advance (American) secular beliefs. Trucking is also the path that leads Ahmad toward involvement in a terrorist plot directed against the American 'infidels' (non-Muslims) — an attempt to blow up the Lincoln Tunnel under the Hudson River. A relatively innocent in a dangerous world, touchingly eager to show the intensity of his devotion, he is drawn far out of his depth by the imam and expertly guided into the arms of those who can capitalize on his hunger for Paradise. One of those were the Chehabs, a Lebanese family whose apparently respectable second viewings of a woman's reaction to terror strikes and its aftermath experiences provide a gendered perspective to the event where, one senses woman's strength in facing the emergency and her decision not to quit her husband whose secondhand furniture business provides a frontal face for shadier dealings, like recruiting Ahmad for the bombing plot,

> Ahmad, you must think of it as a war. War isn't tidy. There is collateral damage…An empire (America) sucks the blood of subject peoples so cleverly they don't know why they're dying, why they have no strength…Everyone is innocent-they are innocent, the people jumping from the towers were innocent, George W.

> Bush is innocent, a simple reformed drunk from Texas who loves his nice wife and naughty daughters. Yet, out of all his innocence, somehow evil emerges. The Western powers steal our oil, they take our land (187-8).

Towards the end, Ahmad reconsiders his interpretation of Islam, deciding that God does not want him to kill anyone and aborts his terrorist mission. He and Jack ride through Manhattan together towards the George Washington Bridge to return to New Jersey. Ahmad submits before the authority but he still loathes the decadent West and the book closes with the same monologue it began with, "These devils, Ahmad thinks, have taken away my God" (310).

Martin Amis' short story "*The Last Days of Muhammad Atta*" fictionalizes the last days of Muhammad Atta," a man completely fed up with life. He is not a religious fundamentalist or even a devout Muslim unlike Updike's protagonist, but someone full of spite, "who executes the order of a suicide attack simply for the core reason of causing war and suffering…" (Yale Review). In the article "Close Neighbours to the Unimaginable: Literary Projections of Terrorists' Perspectives (Martin Amis, John Updike, Don DeLillo)" Birgit Dawes states that, "By appropriating the perspective of Atta, Amis caters to the psychological need for comprehension from a perspective that is 'safe' in the sense that it undercuts empathy" (503). Atta's actions are explained by emotional deficits, both romantic and religious feelings are declared as parts he didn't have, self-hatred, misogyny and an all-inclusive detestation. This is not a character readers are likely to sympathize with.

In sharing the perpetrator's perception of death, Amis' tale does more than merely present readers with a detestable Other to be pitied or scorned. In fact, the indifference that drives Atta

until the very end is symptomatic of the capitalist society he battles, and the story identifies terrorism as a logical and counterpart to the "net increase in world boredom" (157).

In *The Terrorist's Son* (2014), the author Zak Ibrahim traces his remarkable journey to escape his father's terror legacy. Traversing the eastern United States, from Pittsburgh to Memphis, from a mosque in Jersey City to the Busch Gardens theme park in Tampa, The Terrorist's Son is the story of a boy inculcated in the dogma of hate—a boy presumed to have followed in his father's footsteps—but the man who eventually chose a different path, the path of peace, nonviolence and forgiveness. Zak's take on terrorism takes a detour from the usual path of terrorism and the ideological motivations that drive men and women from all walks of life and away from terror as a mysterious act of vengeance or martyrdom.

Rather, his outlook contributes significantly to the reconfiguration of both the literary history of evil and the larger cultural imagination of the post 9/11 world as he dedicates his life to speaking out against terrorism and spreading his message of peace and non-violence. Zak was the son of a terrorist, El-Sayyid Nosair, who killed the Founder of the Jewish Defense League, Rabbi Meir Kahane, and also who from the prison masterminded the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. But gradually he was awakened to the evil designs of his family and, with the help of his mother, left the family. Listening to Zak's TED Talks is inspiring to see something positive and hopefulness emerging from a writer's experience with terror and hatred for the other.

Nicholas Rinaldi's *Between Two Rivers* (2005) consists of clusters of stories about the residents of Echo Park, a fictitious Battery Park condominium and its Romanian concierge, Farro Fescu. The story revolves around the interactions among the residents including a quilter commissioned by the United Nations, an undertaker, an ex-Luftwaffe pilot and a plastic surgeon

specializing in sex change operations, all intertwining themselves into love affairs, rape, suicide and poisoning. It also includes the impact on the residents of both the 1993 bombing and 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center.

Claire Messud's novel *The Emperor's Children* (2007) focuses on the stories of three friends in their early thirties, living in Manhattan in the months leading up to the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Each of the three is well-educated and privileged, but struggles to realize the lofty expectations for individual, personal and professional lives.

In Eric Walters' *We All Fall Down*. (2006) a ninth-grader Will Fuller shadows his father, the vice president of an international trading company based in the World Trade Center. He is not looking forward to the visit, as his father has always been very focused on his work and Will worries that his father will not bother to make time for him. Will's visit takes place on the morning of the September 11, 2001 attacks, and is told in rapid first-person narration as Will, his father, and other staff in the tower offices attempt to escape during the building's collapse. Will's best friend James's father works as a New York firefighter, adding another element of danger to the narrative. *We All Fall Down* received predominately very positive reviews, but received some criticism for lengthy exposition designed to explain the background of the terrorist attacks to readers.

Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* (2000) is his deftly conceived first novel, which immediately marked him as an uncommonly gifted and ambitious young literary talent. It tells the story of Daru Shezad, who, fired from his banking job in Lahore, begins a decline that plummets the length of Hamid's sharply drawn, subversive tale. Fast-paced and unexpected, Moth Smoke was ahead of its time in portraying a contemporary Pakistan far more vivid and complex than the exoticized

images of South Asia then familiar to the West. It established Mohsin Hamid as an internationally important writer of substance and imagination and the premier Pakistani author of our time, a promise he has amply fulfilled with each successive book. This debut novel, meanwhile, remains as compelling and deeply relevant to the moment as when it appeared more than a decade ago.)

Hamid's *Discontent and Its Civilizations: Dispatches from Lahore, New York and London* (2014) gives us a portrait of a man coming to terms with not only his place in that world but also how its convulsions and changes shape so many of us - for good and ill. Whether writing of his home life, about being a migrant or of today's geopolitical fault lines, Hamid gives us his deeply personal take on life at the beginning of the 21st century. Mohsin Hamid has been writing about what it means to be an individual in an increasingly fragmented world.

Hanif Mohammad's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2011) represents a quizzical politicalization in Pakistan of the 1980s. In august 1988, Zia gets into the presidential plane, Pak one, which explodes midway. The question arises about who had killed him – whether the army generals growing old waiting for their promotions, the CIA, the ISI, RAW or Ali Shigri, a junior officer at the military academy whose father was a whisky - swilling Jihadi colonel. Was he murdered by the army? The novel takes a caustic view of the American officials complicit in turning Pakistan into a base of global jihadism during the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* is the story of Jassim and Salwa, who left the deserts of their native Jordan for those of Arizona, each chasing mirages of opportunity and freedom. Although the couple lives far from Ground Zero, they cannot escape the dust cloud of paranoia settling over the nation.

The works discussed above gave an impetus to the project to attempt at a gendered perspective of terror post 9/11.

The study aimed to arrive at a critical framework for the research undertaken i.e. general and gendered views on terror in the select post 9/11 South Asian literary texts written in English that encompass terror. For this purpose, a critical survey of several South Asian terror narratives was attempted. The following were the texts studied.

The project at a preliminary stage, first of all, attempted to study the articulations of the 9/11 terror in English writings of both American and South Asian literatures, viewing them from a gender perspective on global issues like terror, trauma or violence. It centered the terror narratives from representative short stories, plays and poems from contemporary American literary scene, post 9/11, to view and understand these works from a gendered perspective. An initial attempt at an analysis of the manifestations of terror was made, in includes short stories of Joyce Carol Oates (*The Mutants*, 2001), and Edwidge Danticat (*Children of the Sea*, 2004), and also the novels of Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2012), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* (2004) and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003).

These four authors represent terror from different ethnic cultures – American, Haitian, Indian and Afghan. They also represent different situations and reactions to 9/11 terror. Joyce Carol Oates depicts the New York's World Trade Center scene of 9/11 but through the eyes of a young woman living in an adjacent apartment in Battery Park City. Edwidge Danticat, a young African-American writer, brings out a double pronged narrative of the terror in Haiti Island arising out of the military coup unseating the constitutional government and also of the plight of revolutionaries branded as terrorists in the aftermath of 9/11.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, after registering the initial shock of the 9/11 attacks, describes its political, social and cultural repercussions and their threatening implications to Indians who always considered themselves as Americans but are branded as non-Americans in the aftermath of 9/11. Khaled Hosseini views mostly the Afghan experience of terror since the times of Russian and Taliban rule, and how the fate of the country changes in the aftermath of 9/11. If Oates describes an eyewitness account of terror, Danticat discusses the politics behind terror, Divakaruni reflects a sense of hopelessness in her humanist perspective, and Hosseini renders a humanitarian, gendered aspect, viewing 9/11 and America's war against terror as creating hope for Afghanistan.

Hypothetical Questions that arise from the terror ridden texts

Viewing terror from a gender perspective, the study intends to probe the following questions: Are these texts sensitive to women's or gender problems / concerns? Do they reflect feminist positions on terror, war and peace? Can one see any difference between male and female writings in their creative representations of life / world of terror?

There are also other queries on the terror based texts which need to be looked into for further exploration of the subject. How do these writers narrate, record, account for, remember, or reproduce their traumatic experiences of atrocity and violence? What is the process of women's remembering or 'memorialisation', 'narrativisation' and 'writing back'? What are the challenges such narratives pose on established narratives such as state narratives on terror? Is there an element of human right struggle present in their writing? Do these writings represent a 'protest against their situation in literature and life writing representation'?

Is there a sense of 'querying the construction of the past and the workings and function of memory in their representation? Do these narratives deliberately turn to 'themes that illustrate the aesthetic problem of reconciling normality with horror, the displacement of consciousness of life by imminence and pervasiveness of death and torture, and the constant violation of the coherence of the self'? By resorting to describe torture or trauma or terror, do these writers make aesthetic writing problematic to deal with terror? How do they represent the 'physical trauma performed on body' using writing? And how do they relate literary aesthetics and human rights? Finally, how do they use their power of imagination to conjure up images of terror especially when its memory is too terrible to remember? (Helena Grice, 8).

Further, the following issues need to be explored regarding the texts taken for study. What is the vision of the author on the terror event? What are the changes / evolutions that take place when an author employs a literary medium in order to explore a contemporary terror strike or repercussions of that event? What is the author's stand regarding terror or violence? Is it an anti-terrorist or pro-terrorist statement or a neutral spectator's position? What is the language of terror and violence?

Analysis of Select Texts written in English on 9/11 Terror that present a gendered perspective

Joyce Carol Oates, an American writer of great repute, in her short story *The Mutants* traces a young woman's faceless encounter and shadowy experience of the 9/11 from her 36th floor apartment in the Battery Park City of downtown New York, which is next to the ill-fated towers of the World Trade Center. The omniscient narrator, closely at the heels of the young woman to be married at the 'romantic turn of the year,' gives a close camera view account of the woman's

bump into the sounds of the first explosion on the twin tower and her instant reaction of "running into the building, her place of sanctuary" (Oates 282).

The narrator's mention of the young woman's apartment building in NYC as a 'sanctuary' sounds incongruous, especially because 9/11 has proved that no building is safe today. As Alex J. Bellamy and Roland Bleiker mention, "September 11 is significant and of global importance, only because it disrupted the sense of security that prevailed in Western states.....Individuals, living in stable and safe Western countries, suddenly found themselves confronted with the agonies of war and mass killings...." (Bellamy & Bleiker, "Introduction" *Security and the War on Terror*). With the 'second deafening explosion' that follows, the female protagonist gets further confused when she thinks that she probably imagined the first one. The enormity of these explosions do strike her, and she believes that "she would go out to work as usual: but perhaps a little later" (283).

The woman then spends the day in the apartment, making a series of guesses about the noisy explosions as indications of a hurricane, fire accident, an earthquake and lastly a chemical warfare. From her gradual awareness of the changed environment around her – like the heated surroundings, full of soot and tremors felt in her apartment, and the disappearance of the beautiful view of the city from her window – she is led to a realization of her mistaken notions and also to her imaginary panic thoughts of a chemical warfare destroying the whole city where she may be the sole survivor. However, she shows no intention to leave the building, lest her fiancé find it difficult to locate her. One last hope for her to identify herself is through her gesture of lighting all the candles and placing them on the windowsills:

> Quickly she locked the door behind her. She lighted several candles. She lighted all her candles! Arranged them on the windowsills of all her windows. Like Christmas,

> there was an innocence to this. She thought. This is the right thing to do. If her fiancé looked up from the street, he would see her lighted candles and know that she was alive (287)

The story ends with the poignant moment of her witnessing candle lights rising in the adjacent towers of the World Trade Center: "Several candles, a half-dozen candles, floating in the dark, brave and festive in the dark" (287).

In an eyewitness account of the explosions that rocked the twin towers of the WTC on September 2001, the author views the quotidian life of the young woman in contrast to the unusual nature of the 9/11 explosions which she is yet to come to terms with. What manifests here is not just the threat to the day-to-day life of an ordinary female New Yorker, but also the stable American life, and the woman's dreams of marriage, peace and security. Here terror is viewed from the facet of how the crisis and danger around threatens a woman's very existence.

However a terror narrative like Saffron Dreams strikes a positive note in the sense of how one's dreams can become an everlasting legacy over one's loss. The autobiographical or the memoir mode of writing further enhances Abdullah's engaging in the woman's search of identities which is a hopeful and positive one as the title suggests, since sleeping in the pillows filled with saffron suggests peace. Abdullah's work very often deals with the female Asian experience in the United States, particularly the conflict between the two worlds and the culture of her adopted country. The interesting dimension of the woman's sorrow of marital loss is brought out by Shella Abdullah in terms of female bonding over loss of husband that happens because of Arissa's chance meeting with Ann Marie, who also lost her husband in Vietnam War: "For once I let the tears flow,

and so did Ann Marie…We were joined by a chance meeting, unified in our sorrow, years apart in our losses".(127).

Shaila Abdullah' protagonist's reaction to the west's cultural stereotyping of the Muslim as terrorist is matter of fact and coercive: "Don't they know that terror has no religion? That religions don't preach terror?" (155). Similarly, her analysis of home in the multi-ethnic context steers the novel to a brilliantly respectable heights: …when you leave a land behind, you don't shift loyalties – you just expand your heart and fit two lands in You love them equally." (174). Her interesting exploration of the veil is noteworthy:

> Is the veil really a barrier, as Jack Straw showed, or is it a symbol of modesty? It is different for different women. It irritated me it was a political game for some high-ranking individuals, a tug-of-war of sorts, a way of attaining the limelight albeit negatively. (120).

Arissa's abandoning of the veil signifies her helplessness in the first place, since she abandons her Muslim identity in the wake of threat to her existence as a Muslim woman in the post 9/11 America. Second, it signifies her initiation into finding a new identity in an alien world that will gradually lead her to adaptation in the new world; her arriving at a positive outlook towards her misfortune of personal loss, widowhood and incumbent motherhood and develop an independent streak as a writer and artist.

The discarding of the veil by Arissa is a gendered act initially but transcends the borders of Muslim identity, when Arissa ascribes Muslim identity not to the veil but to larger virtues of "tolerance, peace and bridge-building" as the "concept of Islam". (120).

Edwidge Danticat's short story "*Children of the Sea*" captures the terror and violence that arose out of the 1992 military coup in the Haiti Island. Haiti, the first independent nation in Latin America and the first black-led republic, is known for its poverty, continued political violence and instability. The author centers here the Haitian inmates' and fleeing refugees' experience of the 1990s military coup and the hunting down of protesters and rebels. She also describes the fleeing refugees' long wait in the sea, in an unchartered boat, for US immigration to permit them entry.

The story is based on the author's encounter with a Haitian family in the USA, sharing their experience of fleeing from Haiti, in a lonely boat, and their fear of dying unknown in the sea. The author identifies the refugees' fear of dying unknown in the sea with the Afro-American diaspora of homelessness. The story narrates the double tales of a Haiti-based young revolutionary and his girlfriend, and their encounter with black terror in separate spheres. It recounts the other side of terror that rose out of the "coup d'état that unseated the constitutional government in Haiti" (Edwidge 43) and its aftermath. The young man, one of the revolutionaries raising voice against the de facto military government, is trapped in the sea in a boat of refugees waiting to be repatriated to the USA in the aftermath of 9/11; his girl friend, left behind in Haiti, witnesses the terror and torture in the land.

The double narration of the male and female narrators describes simultaneously the plight of the refugees, mostly women, at the sea, and the plight of the Haitian locals, who remained inland despite military torture. The double narration brings out alternately the picture of fear, terror, death, violence and hopelessness both in the homeland and the sea. If the refugees in Haiti live in fear of their spaces threatening to be busted anytime by the soldiers, the refugees on the sea fear a watery

death in the endless journey on the sea. The violent memories of terror, torture crowd both the narrations, as the narrators flee the land of terror.

Images of terror and violence abound in the double narrations of the young revolutionary and his girlfriend: the image of a severed head of a young boy carried by his mother, the mother herself shot dead by the soldiers, the soldiers' gang rape of a girl of 15, the black butterflies that dominate the female narrator's dreams, etc. A sense of foreboding of the male narrator's death in water is seen in the dream of his existence in water with nymphs and mermaids, and also the black butterflies that never leave the female narrator's environment.

In a woman's viewpoint of terror, the story underlines the insecurity of innocent people, who are the most affected group in the dawn of terror and violence. The world of innocence, delicate hope of endless / eternal love and marriage, camaraderie, dreams of education/achievement, are all revealed being shattered with terror that follows the crumbling of the constitutional government in Haiti. Also, the youth's choice of death over the 'chains of slavery' and the 'blood-drenched earth' shows the authorial anxiety over the world and the threat to its peace in the face of terror. Even the situation of the male narrator facing death in the sea, despite escape from terror, reveals the authorial anxiety over genuine revolutionaries becoming victims of the politics of terror that delays justice in the aftermath of 9/11 explosions, with state suspicion on all revolutionary groups. Danticat's narrative brings out the Haitian Black civilian experience of homelessness and alienation because of terror, politics of terror attacks.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's sixth novel *Queen of Dreams* follows the female protagonist's ability to foresee the occurrence of 9/11 in her dream and her inability to alert the authorities. The novel traces the aftermath of 9/11 and the harassment faced by Indians and Pakistanis; it weaves the story

of a mother - daughter relations, where the daughter finds her mother an unusual woman, an interpreter of dreams, who never talks about her life in India. Only after the mother's accidental death, the daughter Rakhi gets a glimpse of the mother's life experiences through her diary. The narrative that flips between the mother and daughter creates a narrative of memory and interpretation. In this novel, 9/11 figures only as an event that crisscrosses the mother – daughter narratives. 9/11 appears as a painting recollected from a dream in Rakhi's daughter Jona, a progeny of her grandmother. Ironically while most mishaps in the novel are averted through nightmares, 9/11 becomes the only inevitable dream-come-true.

The description of 9/11 and its aftermath take place in three dimensions. Firstly, the author attempts a straightforward narration of the event and the initial tragic sensations it generates. Viewing the crumbling structures telecast again and again, the female character reacts in a typical American manner thus: "There are people out there who will do whatever it takes us to destroy us – even kill themselves. That's how much they hate America – and they want us to know it." (255). Second, from the personal level, the narrative moves on to the political level, where the Americans are described - from touching upon the political appeals from Mayor Giuliani to the public to remain calm, to President Bush's avowal of revenge, to the American witnessing the news broadcast of the rejoicing and handing out sweets in a Middle East street, because "the American devils have finally got what they deserve" (255).

Thirdly, the author records the public reaction to the terror strikes on WTC, from the American to the Middle East. In a street in the Middle East one witnesses the following "Men in turbans and black beards clap their hands and chant slogans. Children are waving miniature flags. There are women in the crowd too, in long black burkhas, their heads covered in shawls, faces

gleaning sweaty satisfaction. One of them shouts, 'Let them learn what we live with every day" (255-6). Ironically, the American reaction is felt by the female protagonist, in her restaurant Kurma House International, which is under attack by fundamentalists, who consider all non-Americans as terrorists or accomplices to terrorist acts.

Amy Waldman's absorbing novel *The Submission* (2012), written ten years after 9/11, puts forth a new aspect of post 9/11 milieu in America, i.e. Islamophobia. Discrimination in the US has various labels including Islamophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment, or racism. Xenophobia or the fear of the other is not an American invention; however, in the wake of 9/11 attacks, because of the myth-making capabilities of the American corporate media, new 'fears of the other' or the immigrant have been systematically induced in the minds of the American public. In the post 9/11 America attacking Islam and Muslims became the fashionable sport for the radio, television and print media. Unfortunately, the events of 9/11 an excuse to greatly magnify the hostility toward Muslims and cloak it in pseudo-patriotism. Muslim-bashing has become socially acceptable in the United States.

Amy Waldman's story revolves around the political furor and media storm that ensues after the selection of a Muslim architect named Mohammad Khan to design the Ground-Zero memorial. His winning design brings him notoriety and condemnation instead of praise:"The piece of paper containing the winner's name was passed from palm to palm like a fragile folio. There were a few gasps and "hmmms," an "interesting," an "oh my." Then, "Jesus Christ! It's a goddamn Muslim!" (19). The Wall Street Journal wrote headlines in the following manner:, "Two decades of multicultural appeasement have led to this: we've invited the enemy into our home to decorate"

(147). The people came out on the streets with by-now familiar slogans like “NO MECCA IN MANHATTAN or STOP JI-HIDING” (157).

In her novel, the author charts how one decision or choice can turn into a billiard ball, hitting at unexpected angles and creating chain reactions, especially when it’s been put in play in a tinderbox of ethnic, religious and regional politics, and its impact has been magnified and distorted by the echo chamber of 24/7 news media coverage. The novel is an extraordinary emotional work, and that reminds us how inextricably linked are the personal and the political, and what the private and the public have become in our post-9/11 world.

Ms. Waldman effectively shows how terror victims try to grapple with their loss of relatives other than their own confusion and conflicting emotions, even as they find themselves caught up in a political conflagration. So a humanist and typically woman’s point of view of terror emerges in this novel, where Amy does not take the quotidian perspective but thinks as a humanist individual, revealing how in one stroke of the 9/11, the multicultural reality of the American land transforms into a land of racial suspicions and racist targets against the Muslim community, where even Muslim women face harassment.

There are three different perspectives to terror here – personal, political and also racial. Above all, the novel raises a hopelessly humanist question on terror expressed from the female narrator’s point of view: “I think of the people in the towers and in the airplanes, who lost their lives. The people grieving tonight, who lost their loved ones. Leaders and decision makers, who lost belief in their invincibility,. And people like us, seeing ourselves dark through the eyes of strangers, who lost a sense of belonging. So much hatred unleashed in the world today; where will it end? (272).

The female protagonist's view has also raised a diasporic perspective of terror that simultaneously reveals consciousness and repugnance of the post 9/11 reality of imagination and fear of the American other and its inevitable cultural consequences of the ordinary American linking race and ethnicity to the terrorist identity:

> I look at my reflection in the glass – the brown skin, the Indian features, the dark eyes with darker circles under them, the black crinkles of my hair. It's familiar and yet suddenly, alien.
>
> You ain't no American, One of the men had said.
>
> He's racist idiot. I tell myself.
>
> Is that so? My whisper voice gibes. And how many others in this country would have agreed with him today?
>
> But if I wasn't American, then what was I? (271)

The loss of belonging to a country in which she is nurtured enables Rakhi to examine the defensive insecurity of the Indian community, who take precautionary measures of not wearing Indian clothes, putting up American flags in their environments, etc. But more ironical is the sketch that reveals an Indian woman's sense of being unwanted and feared in the American environment: "She grows accustomed to suspicious glances on the street. Twice people cross over to the other side so they won't have to walk near her. How is it, she wonders, that one can become overnight, both so frightening and so vulnerable?" (275).

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's is not an eyewitness account of terror like Oates, but her narrativisation of the 9/11 terror and its aftermath points to the discourse of the power of imagination regarding terror, seen in two ways – through the power of ideas seen in "…the workings of the emotions and the imaginative capacities of people" through terrorist acts of dismembering, bomb blasts, destroying buildings, etc, and also through the "…great multiplications of reactions to these [terrorist] acts and the fears that these acts arouse in people's imaginations" (Strathan & Co. *Terror and Violence*, 9). It draws attention to how terror and violence become the topical worry of the modern life, where all take part either as victims or observers or perpetrators of terrorist acts. Similarly, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Oleander Girl involves family secrets, Hindu and Muslim clashes, traditional vs. new India, and even the lingering effect of 9/11 on immigrants.

In Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* the Afghan American novelist looks at life before and after 9/11 in several ways. First, 9/11 is viewed as an event that changed the entire world, particularly the worlds of America and Afghanistan, where terror and its politics evoke patriotic responses from the American public: "The American flag suddenly appeared everywhere, on the antennae of yellow cabs weaving around traffic, on the lapels of pedestrians walking the sidewalks in a steady stream, even on the caps of San Francisco's panhandlers sitting beneath the awnings of small art galleries and open – fronted shops" (316)

Secondly 9/11 is an event that triggers positive changes in Afghanistan: "Soon after the attacks, America bombed Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance moved in, and the Taliban scurried like rats into the caves" (316) Thirdly Hosseini views the terror strikes and the war against terror as instilling a general interest in Afghanistan, its cities, its cultures, its politics, etc. Then the terror

strikes are beginning "…the process that might someday end over twenty years of unhappiness in their watan" (316). Despite the limited narrative space that the description of the 9/11 scene occupies in the novel, the discourse on terror reminds one of what Jean Baudrillard says on 9/11 terror: "This is terror against terror – there is no longer any ideology behind it" (1).

From the select 9/11 narratives studied here, the discourse of terror traced in these works surfaces thus: first person collectives or trauma narratives that describe the shock of the event as victim or eye witness; the aftermath of 9/11 and the cultural stigma of brandishing certain communities as terrorists and stereotyping them or in other words, Islamaphoebia; terror from the fundamentalist perspective; understanding subject of terror along with its historical/political/economic/social implications.

Terror existed as 'ancient political strategy' from beginnings of civilization. But it gradually evolved into a 'systematic strategy towards revolutionary arms,' especially from the 18th century till now. It is only in the 20th century that terrorism acquired newer meanings with associations linking it to freedom movement and revolutionary offensive. After 9/11 terrorism gained a momentous and magnified spectacle pushing terrorism to the 'centre stage of world politics.' 9/11 as a terror event is remembered as a landmark in the terrorist map.

Chapter III - Terror Narratives of Afghanistan and Pakistan

Afghanistan, once considered to be a 'cradle of civilization' later became the site for 'clash of civilizations' post the Cold War nations using the site to promote clandestine terrorism, as once hypothesized by Huntington that post the Cold Wars, the future international conflicts will be mainly along cultural lines, with non-Westerners no more played by Westerners but entering as players in the conflicts.

To understand the problematic discussed in the Afghan novels in English, one needs to go back to the history of Afghanistan and its ethnic conflicts. Huntington quotes R.R. Palmer, who says, "The wars of kings were over; the wars of peoples had begun" and opines that post the Cold Wars, it is no more ideologies but civilizations that will be in clash and hence conflicts in future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating civilizations. (3-4).

Whether one agrees with or not to this above contention, the fact remains that Afghanistan has become the site of the most devastated war fought in the recent times post 9/11, with over a lakh dead in the wars fought, with the Northern Alliance's occupation of Kabul from December 2001 demanding the Taliban handling of Osama bin Laden claimed by the US as the perpetrator of the 9/11 strikes on the USA. If internal ethnic uprisings /conflicts had ravaged the citizens of Afghanistan, the history of wars fought by Soviet Union and USA tell the woes of the ordinary Afghan caught in the middle between militants and western countries. In the wars fought for the capture / killing of Osama bin Laden, a lakh lives from all groups and mainly the people were

lost. No wonder feminist political scientists demand that there is a need for a gendered perspective of all policies related to terror, war and violence.

Afghan writers' writings reflect therefore the vulnerable lives of the ordinary individuals living in the country, caught historically between the ethnical strife between the Taliban and the Mujahideen, and international strifes between the ethnic Muslim groups and the Soviet interventions and those between them and the American CIA operations later and even now.

The Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini's first novel, *The Kite Runner* (2003), is one such narrative that brings out the susceptibility of ordinary people trapped in between the warring factions. It narrates the story of Amir, a young boy from the Wazir Akbar Khan district of Kabul, who is the closest friend of Hassan in the novel. The story is built against the backdrop of tumultuous events such as the fall of Afghanistan's monarchy through the Soviet military intervention, the exodus of refugees to Pakistan and the United States, and the rise of the Taliban regime. Themes of guilt and redemption feature prominently in the novel. Hosseini has commented that he considers *The Kite Runner* to be a father–son story. Hence, the central characters are all Afghan men, while women remain in the novel's periphery.

While the novel traces the life of an Afghan father and son with intricate cultural ties to Kabul and their escape to America from the Russian occupation, it also brings out simultaneously the history of terror in Afghanistan from the fall of monarchy to the American attacks on Afghanistan after 9/11. The story is about a young Afghan migrating to San Francisco with his father, both unable to forget their grand life in Kabul that vanishes overnight after the Russian invasion and the later Taliban occupation. Though they succeed in America and build up ties with

the Afghan brotherhood in San Francisco, with Amir the protagonist becoming a writer, his visit to Kabul becomes inevitable after his father's death.

His shared childhood with his bosom friend Hassan, who is his illegitimate half – brother, as he later understands, his shared victory with Hassan as the best kite runners in Kabul, his penchant for reading and writing stories, his love for his father's friend Kharim, and many more ties with Kabul brings Amir, the protagonist back to Kabul, only to be met with the shocking reality of Hassan's death in the hands of Taliban terrorists and of his orphaned son facing child sexual abuse in the hands of the Taliban leader Assef. The story describes Amir's struggle to bring his nephew Sohrab to the USA, battling all odds of immigration procedures and his return to America at the right time, after which the 9/11 strikes change the American relations with Afghanistan.

The novel ends with a note of hope, with Amir sensing the drastic decades of Taliban terror ending and with his involvement in humanitarian rescue operations of Afghan refugees, after the American strikes on Afghanistan. The narration also strikes a positive note on the gradual transformation that he witnesses in Sohrab, from a frightened silenced child to a young eager boy willing to be a kite runner to his uncle, in a new land that promises safety, peace and a normal existence. The act of flying a kite, now in San Francisco, becomes an act of rejuvenation, hope and a happy childhood revisited. It also signifies the freedom from terror in the foreign land.

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2008) novel is an incredible narrative of thirty years of Afghan history. It is an intricate story of an unforgiving time, an unlikely female friendship, and an indestructible love. It also explicates the causes that led men like Zaeef to take up arms against the foreigners who according to him were unwise to occupy his homeland. The theme of female bonding is developed in the novel when the two female characters, Mariam and

Laila, build camaraderie between them as they endure the ever escalating dangers around them both at home and in the streets of Kabul.

Apart from that, the theme of terror unfurls in the fiction when women live in terror of being brutally beaten by men having no way to protect themselves from physical abuse and becoming victims to their husbands' frustrations and angers. Besides these predicaments exists the terror of the Taliban that controls almost every aspect of Afghanis' lives. The horror looms large in the novel when the spies of Taliban lurk everywhere to report on the civilians' listening to music or radios that according to the terror group are offenses. However, the novelist never cannot show the redemptive power of love that often becomes the key to survival.

My Life with the Taliban (2006) is an autobiography of Abdul Salam Zaeef, one of the founding members of the Taliban. His memoirs, translated from Pashtun language, are more than just a personal record of his extraordinary life. It offers a counter-narrative to the standard accounts of Afghanistan since 1979. The background of the autobiography is tumultuous with the information of Zaeef's initiation into the jihad in 1983 and his joining the Taliban movement from its early beginning; it deals with his experience Taliban's ups and downs, including the story of the U.S. intervention to topple the Taliban and the subsequent arrest of Zaeef and his being handed over to American forces.

The autobiography was published soon after his release from the prison, where he spent four and a half years, from 2006 in Pashto. The book offers a rare insight into the perspective of the Afghans whom the United States and its allies fought against for a long period. The book happens to be very critical of what followed 9/11. My Life with the Taliban offers a personal insight into the rural Pashtun village community that was the bedrock of the Taliban. The most

significant dimension of the novel is the viewing of terrorism from a terrorist perspective, providing therefore a counter narrative of terrorism. It describes his growing up in a rustic province of Kandahar in utter poverty.

However, "… Zaeef's account is perhaps the most notable for what he ignores. No mention is made of the Afghan Hazaras and other ethnicities who suffered massacres during the Taliban's reign or of the Taliban's Draconian bans on everything from kite flying to female education and employment. Zaeef is busy criticizing international funding for coeducational schools in Afghanistan but has no time to condemn those Talibans who throw acid on the faces of schoolgirls or target mosque attendees with suicide attacks." (Sirrs & Sirrs Web).

Therefore, the obvious silence on the writer on the strong gender issue surrounding the subject of terror makes this book a glaring non-gendered narrative. Though Zaeef mentions the strong presence and influence of his mother and later his sister in his writing, they are only treated as women to be placed on the man's pedestal. Other than these two women do not figure in either as victims or as collective who are denied human rights.

Another very interesting narrative on terror that brings out the plight of women in the Taliban ruled Afghanistan since 1996, is Latifa's memoir My Forbidden Face (2001), where the Taliban regime imposed restriction on ordinary living, and where terror and female oppression reigned in multiple forms, through denial of education or profession for women, forced dress code for women, denying women any proper medical care in the absence of women doctors, with a 16-year-old girl Latifa being a witness to her world crumbling because of terror incited by religious fundamentalism.

The Afghan gendered narratives of terror bring out the devastating effects of Taliban terror and international war on terror on innocent individuals, particularly women, in a country that cares very little for women's welfare amidst growing religious fundamentalism. If Afghan narratives are characterized by the above circumstances of terror, Pakistani writings in English are equivocal in their concern for terror. Pakistani writings are voluminous and richer compared to the nascent writings in English from Afghanistan.

Among the terror narratives from Pakistan, *Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid presents an all pervading sense of alienation experienced by its protagonist, Changez. The protagonist of the novel is of Pakistani origin and an expatriate in the U.S. He began his life in the U.S. attending Princeton University and later started working for the US Company, Underwood Samson. Changez used his Pakistani background to the ultimate positive effect in Princeton University, where he gained the greatest lesson of how to be indoctrinated into the ideology of American dream. But a change takes place after the collapse of World Trade Centre towers in September 2011. Changez is subjected to prejudice and discrimination for being a Pakistani and he also nurtures suspicion and hatred for the U.S. a sense of alienation permeates him and that is augmented when a distance is wedged in the relationship between him and his girlfriend, Erica.

Kamila Shamsie's six novels, which are mostly women centric and mostly revolve around the conflict ridden nation, are: *In the City by the Sea* (2017); *Salt and Saffron* (2001); *Kartography* (2004); *Broken Verses* (2005); *Burnt Shadows* (2010); *A God in Every Stone* (2014) and *Home Fire* (2017). *Burnt Shadows* (2010) begins in Nagasaki, Japan, just before the second nuclear bomb drops, and then the story shifts to India, Turkey, Pakistan, and New York as it follows two families, one of German-English and another Japanese-Pakistani extraction. It traces the shared

histories of these two families, from the final days of the Second World War in Japan, and India on the brink of Partition in the early 1947, to Pakistan in the early 1980s and also New York in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 and Afghanistan in the wake of the ensuing US bombing campaign. Shamsie reveals through multicultural characters the predicament of being a German in Japan during the second world war, that of an educated Indian servant to a British family, also that of citizens in Pakistan and Afghanistan - supporting the mujahideen, that of a person on the run (both in Afghanistan and America), and that of a Muslim in New York after 9/11.

Her *Home Fire*, which won the 1918 International Women's Prize for Fiction, discusses the difficulties of the Pakistanis in the event of 9/11, particularly difficulties faced by immigrant Muslim women in the event of terror. Reworking Jean Anouilh's Media, Shamsie projects her female characters Isma and Aneeka and their male sibling Parwaiz who joined ISIS, as facing the results of the father's terror crimes. The novel brings insights into the difficulties faced in the aftermath of 9/11 when Muslims are looked at with suspicion and when Muslims try to integrate themselves in the western environment, as Eamonn does by taking a western spelling of the Muslim 'Aymen'. It reworks Sophocles' Greek classical tragedy Antigone to tell the story of a British Muslim family's connection with Islamic State. Home Fires presents the story of three orphaned siblings - elder sister Isma and twins Aneeka and Parvaiz - burdened by a turbulent past of having a Jihadist father. In the story, Parvaiz leaves London forever and joins ISIS as its media arm. Eamonn, one more character in the story is the son of the British Muslim home secretary, who enters the lives of the aforesaid characters, ignites a spark of hope in Aneeka of using him to save her missing brother.

The book traces the distinct ideologies of two different Muslim families in London and is narrated through shifting perspectives of the five main characters, quite non- typical to Shamsie's style of narrative. The book is more than a simple story line juxtaposing the author's personal conflicts, love and loss with the greater contemporary realities of the world. It is characterised by a rich undertone, especially in Islamic terrorism, and shows how the terrorism affects the lives of ordinary Muslims capturing their self consciousness in a foreign land. The way it explores the clash between society, family, and faith in a modern world makes it a unique work.

Burnt Shadows (2009) is a historical novel that traces the journey of a Japanese woman through a world which is on the verge of nuclear annihilation. The locales covered by the novel are Japan, India, Turkey, Pakistan and America. The time frame of the fiction is also huge. Japan is viewed against the backdrop of the dropping atom bomb in Nagasaki during the Second World War. India is viewed before partition in 1947, and Pakistan is presented in the early 1980s. A view of New York is given after 9/11 and Afghanistan is seen against the resultant war on terror. The relationship that binds two families together over decades and generations is tested to the extreme with unpredictable consequences against such a setting in the novel.

Shaila Abdullah, a Pakistani American author, focuses on the strength and weakness of Pakistani women and their unconventional choices in their lives. Her work also deals with the Asian experience in the United States, the conflict between two worlds and the culture of her adopted country. *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* (2005), her debut book is an award-winning collection of stories about Pakistani women's struggles to find their individualities despite the barriers imposed by society. Beyond the wall lie women of or from Pakistan, a region of shifting boundaries, where these women are eternally challenged by the looming traditional wall that

separates the acceptable from the sinful. It captures the cultural chasm, and sometimes the collision between the East and the West, as the characters dare to go beyond the wall that divides their traditions and the world outside.

Abdullah's *Saffron Dreams* (2009) explores the tragedy of 9/11 from the perspective of a Muslim widow. It is a tale of love, tragedy, and redemption contextualized in the darkest hour of American history. ArissaIllahi, a Muslim artist and writer, discovers in a single moment that life is actually predestined even though one strives to carefully map it. The discovery of her husband's manuscript following his death in the collapse of the World Trade Centre marks Arissa's reconnection to life. Her unborn son and the unfinished novel combine in her mind into a life-defining project that ignites her to struggle for her emotional survival and the redemption of her race.

The above novel further is about developing identities and the events and places that shape them. It reminds the readers that amid tragedy, one's dreams can work as a lasting legacy. It is the tale of the aftermath of 9/11 seen from the perspective of a Muslim widow who lost her husband in the 9/11 terror attacks when he was working in the restaurant in the World Trade Center.

Malala Yousafzai's *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up For Education and Changed the World* (2014) is an autobiographical narrative that traces the studious young Pashtun girl's lone and phenomenal fight against Taliban's terror campaign against girls' education in North Western Pakistan. In a nutshell, the story of Malala could be summed up in her own words thus: "Talib had fired three shots at point-blank range at three girls in a school bus – and none of us was killed. One person had tried to silence me. And millions spoke out." (179). Further, Malala's words emphasize the indomitable energy and fervour in doing something for girl child's education: "…the Taliban

have shot me. But they can only shoot a body. They cannot shoot my dreams, they cannot kill my beliefs, and they cannot stop my campaign to see every girl and every boy in school." (192).

When Taliban increased in the Swat Valley of the north-western province, the terrorists destroyed not less than four hundred schools. Since Malalala fought against it by giving talks in BBC, she was targeted in a bus shooting incident that she survived. Her dedication to fight the injustice done to girls and women by terrorism won her the first the International Children's Peace Prize, followed by the Pakistan Government Malala Prize and ultimately the Nobel Peace Prize that she shares with the Indian social activist Kailash Satyarthi in 2014. Her trust started with the award money helps education of girls all around the world. Malala named after Malalai, meaning a woman known for her suffering, was called so since her name without 'i' denoted happiness.

Malala Yousafzai's autobiography represents an exemplary story of a teenager who refused to succumb to the gender oppressive tentacles of terrorism of the Taliban that spread its misogynist and culturally narrow minded policies of education, denying women their basic right to education. It implies a positive, hopeful message that no matter what, gender violence and denial of humanity to women promoted by terrorism needs to be opposed tooth and nail. Of course, Malala is considered as a tool of the West to justify its strike on the Taliban as a crusade against the savage terrorists.

However, when one reads Malala's Nobel Peace Prize talk, one can sense that it is not so. She asks: "Why is it that countries which we call "strong" are so powerful in creating wars but are so weak in bringing peace? Why is it that giving guns is so easy, but giving books is so hard? Why is it that making tanks is so easy, but building schools is so hard?" ("Nobel Lecture" 5). Further, when Malala Yousafzai faces the threat of death from Taliban, all she has to tell herself is this:

"'Malala,' I said to myself, just tell him what is in your heart. That you want an education. For yourself. For all girls. For his sister, his daughter. For him.'" (121).

Fatima Bhutto, the grand daughter of the executed Zufikar Ali Bhutto and the niece of the assassinated Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, made her debut as a litterateur with her novel *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* (2016). The novel reveals the troubled times of the region of Waziristan, formerly a tribal territory till 1894 and then the territory of Pakistan post Pakistan independence in 1947. It was a region that saw upheavals against Pakistan, and leanings towards Afghanistan that was quashed by Pakistan government amidst spying, torture and violence. Ms. Bhutto focuses the scenes of violence and terror unleashed in a small town Mir Ali, known perhaps after the great tribal leader Mirza Ali, who fought the British tooth and nail resisting British attempts to provincialise it under Pakistan, till people themselves decided to join the country. Mir Ali in the novel is revealed as small tribal town that has witnessed three-pronged conflicts – the American drone warefare against the Taliban, Sunny versus Shia Muslims conflicts and also anti-Pakistan terror strikes.

The novel is the site of a family consisting of three brothers – Aman, Sikander and Hayat - of the family of the dead resistance leader Inayat in Mir Ali. It locates violence and terror, both in the past and the present, unleashed in the small town and affecting the family. The novel begins and ends on a Friday morning and depicts the calamity affecting the family in three hours. Insurgency is seen first as the product of the state power and terror. While describing the war of the 1950s in which the father Inayat taken part against the central government, he recalls the struggle of their tribes and the state overpowering them after two decades, when violence was unleashed on the town:

Thousands of them, in convoys of armoured vehicles, weighed down with garlands of assault weapons and hand grenades, flooded into Mir Ali…men were kidnapped from their streets, women were widowed and children were orphaned to teach the town its most important lesson: there was no match for the ruthlessness of the state. (18).

Further, as a town that witnessed international terror conflicts, the family is the most affected by the terror attack on the hospital where Sikander worked as doctor, killing his son Zalan that made his wife Mina become lifeless and an eternal mourner.

A review of the novel says that "Women are the heartbeat of this novel; they are extraordinary for their spirit and strength of heart and mind in a region where their voices are impermissible." (Sethna. Web.). Also, some of the women characters are memorable: "Mina, in all her madness, remains the most interesting for her understanding of the changes that they must grapple with being Shia and anti-Taliban in Mir Ali." (Sethna).

Bhutto's memoir *Songs of Blood and Sword: A Daughter's Memoir* is a memoir on her father's Murtaza Bhutto. The book traces the death of her father liasoned by her aunt Benazir Bhutto, the then President of Pakistan, who orchestrated the whole murder, perhaps out of family clashes. The memoir is known for the daughter's love for her father and her contempt against her aunt, who she believes to have orchestrated as he posed a threat to her very existence as a politician.

Imtiaz Dharker, a Pakistani British poet, in her book of poetry *The Terrorist at My Table* (2006) asks crucial questions about how we live now - working, travelling, eating, listening to the news, preparing for attack. What do any of us know about the person who shares this street, this

house, this table, this body? When life is in the hands of a fellow-traveller, a neighbour, a lover, son or daughter, how does the world shift and reform itself around our doubt, our belief? Imtiaz Dharker's poems and pictures hurtle through a world that changes even as we pass. This is life seen through distorting screens - a windscreen, a TV screen, newsprint, mirror, water, breath, heat haze, and smokescreen.

Her book grows, layer by layer, through three sequences: The terrorist at my table, the habit of departure and Worldwide Rickshaw Ride. Each cuts a fresh slice through the terrain of what we think of as normal. But through all the uncertainties and concealments, her poems unveil the delicate skin of love, trust and sudden recognition.' Hers is a strong, concerned, economical poetry, in which political activity, homesickness, urban violence, religious anomalies, are raised in an unobtrusive domestic setting, all the more effectively for their coolness of treatment' - Alan Ross, "London Magazine". 'Here is no glib internationalism or modish multiculturalism...Displacement here no longer spells exile; it means an exhilarating sense of life at the interstices'. There is an exultant celebration of a self that strips off layers of superfluous identity with grace and abandon, only to discover that it has not diminished, but grown larger, generous, more inclusive. Her poems express a concern for the growing Islamaphobia and the Muslim women as the double oppressed individuals.

Analysis of Select Texts from Afghanistan and Pakistan written in English on 9/11 Terror that present a gendered perspective

As we have seen above, women writers of Pakistan have a unique voice, voicing out their double oppression, within family and by the outside Islamophobia, as seen in a Hindi film like *My Name is Khan*, where the identification of the name 'Khan' with a terrorist in the post 9/11

American world incapacitates a Muslim woman, even if she is a respectable professional. Both Afghan and Pakistani writings in English exhibit a sense of concern bordering on anxiety on this double oppression, where narratives on 9/11 and on war on terror present this concern.

Hosseini's narratives reiterate the individual's freedom to lead a free and fair life, free from the terrorists and free from their cultural policing of ordinary people, with emphasis on child abuse and female harassment as human rights issues and the western life, despite is Islamophobic atmosphere, offering freedom and right to live a free life away from terror.

Throughout *The Kite Runner*, the readers observe various injustices meted out to women who are inferior to men because of the Taliban rule and the cultural conflict in Afghanistan. Hosseini chooses the wives of Amir and Hassan, Soraya and Farzana, to represent the injustices to which women in Afghanistan are subjected. Similarly, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the theme of love, female bonding and sisterhood that save the two women from domestic violence amidst the Taliban terror and Afghan wars gains emphasis.

As a terror narrative, Shamsie's *Home Fire* offers a sympathetic portrayal of characters affected by the shadows of terror in their family and how they cope up with it, as seen in the older sister Isma, the more tolerant sibling, who wants nothing to do with crime but only pursue her PhD in the US, while the Media - like sibling such as Aneeka can go to the extent of seducing an influential man like Eamonn for the sake of her brother's protection from the police. Shamsie's treatment of the terror theme is bold and also subtle, bringing a gendered perspective to the issue, by looking at it from a woman's perspective of what it is to be the daughter and the sister of a terrorist and also what it is to be a Muslim woman in the western world. It shuns the oft beaten

track of the story of Muslims versus Non-Muslims, or state versus terrorist, etc weaving a story beyond the binaries.

Saffron Dreams reveals how the female protagonist copes with a troublesome pregnancy and with the loss of her husband, who aspired to complete a novel. It attempts an unflinching look at the societal pressures of widowhood, the role that art can play in the healing process, and the impact of media bias and stereotyping on the Muslim American community in the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks. Arissa's story representing the 9/11 widow and the female Muslim victim is one of a kind that narrates the double loss of a Muslim woman in the post 9/11 American society.

Latifa's and Malala's memoirs reveal the awareness of these two Afghan and Pakistani writers of their oppression in the hands of religious fundamentalists and their ultimate will to escape to safety and further expresses their feminist will to expose gender discrimination and injustice meted to women and also their voicing their enragement to the world.

Chapter IV

Terror Narratives from Sri Lanka

Srilankan writings in English and Tamil writings and Sinhalese writings have for a long time been shaped by the ethnic violence that disrupted the normal lives in the Srilankan island. Three important contexts of ethnic violence in the island are remembered to this day – the declaration of Sinhalese as the official language, the 1983 pogrom that maimed the culture of the Tamils through destruction of the Jaffna Public Library and then the Janata Mukthi Vahana struggles however brief, and finally the ethnic wars of the 1980s and 1990s that once for all had put an end to the LTTE as a terrorist outfit through state violence that ripped apart the civilian spaces and caused human rights violation from both the state and the terrorists leading to major displacement and upheavals. There are works that view Tamil struggle for independent state against the dominating Sinhalese nationalism, and there are also Burghers (the ethnic group of Dutch or Portuguese Burghers and Sri Lankan descent) giving an in between perspective, while there is also a Sinhalese perspective to the whole issue of Srilankan terror.

The following are attempts at critical summaries of the seminal works on Srilankan writings on terror. There are two strands in the Srilankan writings on terror, one focusing on the ethnic violence in the island and the other on the youth uprisings of the 70s and the 80s. Some of the Srilankan writers are Ediriweera Sarachchandra, Martin Wickramasinghe and Gunadasa Amarasekara. The Srilankan writers in English include Jean Arasanayagam, Kamala Wijeratne, Romesh Gunesekera, Perera, Michael Ondaatje, Minoli Salgado, Roma Tearne, Ru Freeman, Ambalavaner Sivanandan, Shyam Selvadurai and Nihal de Silva.

The Sinhalese narratives viewed Sinhalese as colonial victims and Tamils as a privileged minority benefiting from colonial governance. To this was added the romantic notion of a glorious Sinhala pre-colonial past and the need for the postcolonial state to restore the rightful place of the

Sinhalese within the nation state. For many Sinhala writers and artists therefore the urgent postcolonial task at hand was the promotion of Sinhala culture and identity – clear in the upsurge of Sinhala cultural production in the 1950s in the work of artists such as Ediriweera Sarachchandra, Martin Wickramasinghe and Gunadasa Amarasekara.

There is a sense of tragic irony in Sinhalese literature in terms of its unquestioning portrayal of violence against the Tamils. The association of Sri Lanka with a blurry violence is also seen in its diasporic literature sensed in a few novels. While Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* (1994) views communal violence from a gay child's point of view, Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (2001) traces the extra-judicial killings that took place in Sri Lanka. Identity, as seen with Ambalavaner Sivanandan's *When Memory Dies* (1997), is another site of violence in Sri Lankan literature. Some writers like de Silva create a 'what if' situation to create a dialogue between ethnic opponents to understand and resolve the ethnic situations of conflict and terror as in his novel, *The Road from Elephant Pass* (2003).

Kamala Wijeratne's poetry collections engage in the anxiety over the insurgency, counter-insurgency, ethnic conflicts and their mournings, but with a tinge of pride as a Sri Lankan and with a tinge of bias against the Tamils that often comes out in her writings, even when she sympathizes with the Tamils known to her and their losses. While engaging in an act of memorialisation in poems like "Mabs", a portrayal of a Tamil friend and her physical / psychological losses because of ethnic conflicts, she might also engage in 'what if' situation of a Sinhalese personal meeting of a Tamil to create a platform to address the conflict, not as ethnic individuals but as nation sharing individuals in her poem "*I Will Not Forget Dutugemunu*".

Wijeratne's poems deal with the pointlessness and irrationality of senseless violence and the breakdown of relationship because of ethnic conflicts, just as Sivanandan does, though they reflect Sinhalese nationalist sentiments in her poems. However, her poem "To the Student" is an exception, where she empathizes with the students, as a teacher and explores an anticipation of the students' struggle with concentration due to ethnic disturbances and violence.

Jean Arasanayagam, more accomplished as a writer, is a Christian belonging to the Burgher community of the Dutch and Sinhalese descent and married to a Tamil Hindu, Arasanayagam's worldviews encompass both Sri Lankan and Tamil positions of terror and violence. Her trajectory of poems traces her journey with terror, from her initial portrayal of distant viewing of 1971 conflicts to the insider's or victim point of view after the 1983 riots, in picture-perfect metaphors of violence that convey the writer's concern over senseless violence. Her poems like "*Black July*" and "*It's happened to Me*" trace the transformation that both the persona and the poet experience as a woman and as a citizen, as a traumatized individual caught in the realms of an unresolved ethnic conflict. Her writings "…charter the development from a personal to a public voice." (Salgado 75). Her poem entitled "*1958,--'71-- '77-- 81--'83*") points to this development, where the years between 1958 to 1971 point to her growth as poet of nature and landscapes till 1970s when, with growing insurgencies, her poetry started reflecting the distant chaos, with her poetic landscape still unmarred. But gradually from 1976 onwards, her changing identities as a writer who is not merely appreciative of life around her but also committed socially and politically. Hence emerges her "…poetic discourse that centres the peripheral, disturbs ethical distinctions, and engenders resistant readings, effectively creating its own frontiers by dividing readers into cultural insiders and outsiders." (77).

Like Arasanayagam, Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* also focuses on the 1983 riots. The novel is a coming- of - age novel against the backdrop of Srilankan patriarchal realms of society and also corridors of terror. However, in my reading, I particularly consider the novel as a narration of a young boy's growth, of his awareness of marginalisations prevalent in the Srilankan Tamil patriarchal society in terms of gender, race and class.

It is also about his maturity attained through his realization of the social and racial fetters that stagnate a society and environment through unleashing of ethnic hatred, riots, destruction and violence, from where there is no respite but to escape the place. Through Arjie's eyes we follow the life of a Srilankan Tamil family facing racism and terror, while Arjie himself is caught in coming to terms with the gender disparity that he senses to exist in the female members of his family and also in his own awareness and experience of homosexuality.

Several issues come to the fore from Arjie's narratives of violence and terror on Colombo riots, Jaffna violence, killing of Daryl Uncle in Jaffna, the panic of violence all around slowly caving in to the destruction of the family owned house, hotel and Arjie's own paternal grandparents, in whose house he spent his "spend-the-days" Sundays all his childhood. The novel actually begins with these memories that build Arjie's narrative. Other than violence and the ethnic cleansing that worsens the situation for Sri Lankan Tamils, resulting in their exodus to countries abroad, there are also pertinent issues of gender that resurface from Arjie's narratives of his Radha Aunty's love for a Sinhalese man leading to her negation of it after her experiences of racial attacks faced in Jaffna; also his narrative of his observations on the secret love relationship of his mother with her former boyfriend, Daryl, reveals the patriarchal Tamil mindset and the Sinhalese versus Tamil prejudices for one another and the gradual failure of cohabitation among the two races.

Similarly, the misconceptions on gay identity and the belief a man cannot be feminine and how it affects Arjie's identity with all that is feminine. Further, Arjie's protest against violence and corporeal punishment by his school Principal, Black Tie, reveals his objection and avenging the Principal through his jumbling of his recital of two poems. His assertion of his gay identity and also his rebuttal of the tyrannical acts of the Principal through non-cooperation expressed in his adamancy and bad recital ultimately reveal Arjie's acceptance and confirmation of his complex identity. Sivanandan, married to a Sinhalese, had to leave Sri Lanka to London, amid Civil War. Sivanandan approaches the life, society and politics in Sri Lanka from an anti-capitalist stand, viewing capitalism and colonialism as the sickness of the country that got divided into the Sinhalese and the Tamil minorities, because of colonial greed for power and control over the colonised. In his novel When Memory Dies that fictionalises the three generation saga of life in the island country from the 19th to the 20th centuries, portraying lives of three men, the grandfather, father and stepson. The father, whose Sinhalese wife is raped by the Sinhalese mistaking her for Tamil, instigates his leaving for London and the death of the grandson in encounter shows the tragic life and existence of the family members caught in the crossfire of communal clashes..

There are many writings by Tamil poets like Cheran and A. Nuhman on the pain of the loss of the precious artefacts of the Tamil culture, beliefs and values and also a lament on the loss of humanity emanating from the ethnic strifes that began with a socialist ideology but ended in a military terror. Particularly articulate become the writers' anxiety on the July 1983 pogrom staged by the Sri Lankan state. Jean Arasanayagam and A. Sivanandan particularly voice the shock of the ordinary people's victimization as destruction of their property, business and cultural lives.

Minoli Salgado's *A Little Dust on the Eyes* (2014) narrates about the late 1980s abduction and torture of Bradley Sirisena's father during the violent struggle for power between the state and local insurgents. Savi, a Sri Lankan research student long settled in the UK, has lost her way in both her thesis and her life, when she receives a wedding invitation from the uncle she would rather ignore. Meanwhile, in a coastal fort in Sri Lanka, her cousin Renu continues to uncover the secret of Bradley's father's disappearance as she works with the wives and widows of the disappeared. Reunited on Savi's return to Sri Lanka, the cousins are engaged in rediscovering that help understand both the past and themselves. As the story draws to its inevitable end, a tsunami strikes and carries them all into a future that promises to be even more disturbing than the past.

Ru Freeman's *On Sal Mal Lane* is a Sri Lankan terror narrative about the Civil War and the polarization of the country into Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils that deals with several relevant issues such as violence / terror / conflict, rumours, direction versus geographic lines, loss of innocence of children, violence that deepens racial identities and conflicts and loss of cultural unison because of terror.

Among the writers in English, Jean Arasanayagam and A. Sivanandan stand out with their strife ridden stories tinged with a gendered, humanist perspective. Particularly noteworthy are the works of Jean Arasanayagam. Her Tamil and Burgher identity, her direct experience of Sri Lankan ethnic conflicts along with her status as a marginalised writer makes her writing from the late 1980s a literary space to explore a variety of themes. Rambukwella discusses the writer thus:

> While terror figures as a dominant theme in her writing it is not the terror of the terrorist or suicide bomber that we are today familiar with and has become the

> normative discourse of terror but the terror of a marginal figure who insistently calls attention upon the precarity of her life. (Unpublished paper).

Roma Tearne is a British-born writer of Sri Lankan - Sinhalese origin, whose parents migrated to England. Whether it is her first novel *Mosquito* (2007) or her recent novel *Bone China* (2008) her novels are centered on the Sri Lankan Civil War. *Mosquito* is a story about the love between a Srilankan writer Theo Samarajeeva and a much younger Sri Lankan painter Nulani Mendis, amidst the escalating violence in Srilanka because of Civil War, in which they get separated. Theo is kidnapped first by the army and then by the LTTE and Nulani too is kidnapped by the LTTE, but their escape back to England and their last reunion in England is an inevitable end which true love meets with.

The novel significantly becomes the site for the Sri Lankan Civil War, where Theo's support for LTTE puts him in trouble. The torture and humiliation which he undergoes in military captivity is inexplicable. The militarization of Sri Lanka and the utmost power yielded by the Sri Lankan army make the young Tamil boys join LTTE in silent protest against the rape and torture of their mothers and sisters they were witness to, as seen in Vikhram, who is enticed to join the LTTE cadre by the leader Gerard. Similarly, *Bone China* is partly a reflection of the struggle of her parents of Tamil and Sinhalese origin and the social ostracization they faced because of their marriage, leading to their leaving the country and settling in England.

Romesh Gunesekera's *Heaven's Edge* (2002), reveals how the militarization of Sri Lanka reduces the Island country to a wasteland where the protagonist's journey to the country in search of his father leads him nowhere.

Since the present study is concerned primarily with the South Asian English writings on terror, particularly gendered narratives, we make an attempt to analyse select texts of the Sri Lankan writers writing in English.

Analysis of Select Texts from Sri Lanka written in English on 9/11 Terror that presents a gendered perspective

While discussing gender narratives on terror, one cannot ignore the role of women as terrorists with LTTE movement, introduced as a policy on three or four counts: because of a dearth of male militants, for more social acceptance of LTTE as an ideologically gender sensitive organisation, out of pressure from women themselves to join the movement and finally, especially in terms of women's role as suicide bombers to camouflage women in their discrete infiltration into terror act with their more acceptable attires, personality, etc. (Miranda Alison in Sjoberg & Gentry 132). It is in Sri Lankan women's narratives that one finds multifarious perspectives of woman as infiltrator or perpetrator of terror, as victim and also those writers caught between ethnic conflicts that make peaceful coexistence before 1970s as a thing of 'passé'.

Sri Lankan women's writings in English express a conflicting stand from Sinhalese, Tamil and Burgher writers experiencing an inbetweeness in my view, unable to completely integrate culturally or take solace peacefully in their dislocation from their homes some of them had left, amidst the seething ethnic conflicts that raged the island for three decades.

Several works of Jean Arasanayagam trace the troubling issues of terrorism, ethnic conflicts and their impact in her poems and short stories. Her vast poetic works, short stories and unfinished play on the Sri Lankan ethnic wars from the 1970s to 1990s, deserve an in-depth

research as valuable resources of a gendered perspective on terror; however, there is no space for such in-depth research in this project and hence I have focused for the project on her collection of poems *Apocalypse '83*, and a few stories in order to understand the gendered perspective. In one poem from this collection, through the thought processes of a mature, poetic persona, one comprehends a vision of a woman seeing violence closely:

When they came strangers,

Our house went up in flames

Thrown in like faggots, my parents

Blazed crackling, they burnt

Like two lizards in the fire

My sister too, she, tiny

Chameleon turned first green, then

Livid red,

Brands they bore,

Swords, shining blades

Soon they will forget

Me and all others and the night.

My house went up in flames

Together with

My sister, father, mother

And will they come again?

Strangers?

(Arasanayagam 30 Apocalypse 83)

Several other poems in the above collection trace in a simplistic prosaic poetic string of chilling images the anguish, helplessness, the absence or no protection of god from evil, the need to practice ahimsa in the face of violence ("Ahimsa Sutra"), the changelessness and perpetuation of terror in the island ("1958,--'71-- '77-- 81--'83"), homelessness and refugee status ("*Refugee* Part I").

Sivanandan views racism in a perspective that changes the way we viewed earlier the theme. 'When memory dies, a people die' is what the title means where the crux of racism is contained in this idea, in the sense that the hatred towards a particular race of people can cause havoc and the culture of the people or a race is very much linked with one's memory of oneself, which is constantly eroded by the threat of racism.

Selvadurai's novel becomes a lesson in gender awareness and assertion of particular gender identities, but only subsumed by racial identity, conflict and diasporic escaping as the only option left to Sri Lankan Tamils.

Chapter V

Terror Narratives on India

Narratives on Kashmir Conflict

For Kashmir Insurgency, critics identify several types of narratives on terror, such as pro-Azad Kashmiri narratives, as seen by Basharat Peer and Anjum Zamarud Habib, Kashmiri Pandit narratives, cinematic narratives, documentary film narratives, fictional narratives, narratives by

Indian officials as seen in Wajahat Habibullah and Jagmohan Malhotra and also narratives by army personnels.

Similarly, various perspectives emerge from these narratives based on the position taken by the narrators, some of them being, Freedom struggle (JKLF), Ethno-national ism (Baruah), movement seeking autonomy (pro-India political fraternity in the state and Wajahat Habibullah), fundamentalist perspective (as seen in the jihad propounded by Hizbul Mujahideen) and other Islamic fundamentalist group, Secessionist or terrorism groups, as seen in Jagmohan and also struggle against occupying force as in Fahad Shah.

Other than the narratives mentioned above, there are also non-Kashmiri literary narratives by Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy, documentary films on Kashmir problems, like Sanjay Kak's *Jashn-e-Azadi* (2007), or Sonia Jabbar's *Autumn's Final Country* (2003). There are also Hindi films beginning from the 1990s that mostly stereotype the Muslim as a terrorist, with the harsh realities of insurgency affecting the quotidian life.

Despite stereotypical portrayals, these films throw light on the harsh realities of political conflicts, of armed conflicts, harsh military presence, AFSPA bashing, state terror, women, children and the elderly in conflict zone and power imbalances. Sanjay Kak's Jashn-e-Azadi is a poetry on screen that captures in a non-linear narrative the fate of a nation that is nation less in its spirit, an empty nationalist state of India that has witnessed power, violence, death, militancy and armed struggle and counter-militancy, ending up with nothing but funerals and multitudinous graves of more than a lakh, revealing Kashmir as a timeless zone of martyrdom, insurgency and counter-insurgency. Hence the title of the documentary 'How we celebrate freedom' becomes a mockery of the celebration of nonexistent freedom of the trapped peoples of Kashmir.

Sonia Jabbar's *Autumn's Final Country* discusses the plight of four women as victims of marginalisation, displacement, gendered violence and abuse and patriarchal oppression.

Paro Anand's first book *No Guns at my son's Funeral* weaves the story of a teenager Aftab in a northern Kashmir town, Baramulla and his associations with terrorists, with his final suicide bombing leading to his mother declaring that there will be no guns in her son's funeral to his friends who come with weapons to honor his martyrdom. To discuss the pro-Azadi narratives, the following works can be mentioned: Agha Shahid Ali's collection of poems *The Country with a Post Office* (1997) and Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Nights: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love and War in Kashmir* (2011), Iftikhar Gilani's *My Days in Prison* (2005), Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator* (2011), *The Book of Golden Leaves* (2014), Anjum Zamarud Habib's *Prisoner No. 100: An Account of my Days and Nights in an Indian Prison* (2011) and Nitasha Kaul's *Residue* (2014).

The Kashmiri-American poet Shahid Ali's poems trace his concern for the conflict-ridden zone, where there is no post office, which spaces for the army troops, and where letters pile up without being delivered. Such an image of the post office is even more ironic today in the post Article 370 era when Kashmir faced disconnection of the internet, with the region devoid of the virtual post office and becoming a no internet zone for over two hundred days or more. The poem thus reveals the anxiety of the civilians about the disruption and disconnect of the quotidian lives of the Kashmiris.

Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Nights: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love and War in Kashmir* is a moving narrative of the closely seen Kashmir conflict, wherein, Peer combines tales of woe and regret of the Kashmiris caught between the Indian army and the militants and wherein

Peer also combines the experience of a journalist and also his memories as an insider in Kashmir. The novel begins with his memories of a happy atmosphere of Kashmir dotted with his childhood memories of harvest, farmers, relatives and cultural ties and then slowly moves on to the scenes of terror, conflict and insurgency affecting the simple and the ordinary.

From the moving tale of Peer as a teenager wanting to join militancy and his father's intervention leading Peer to promise to study first and achieve something, to his poignant tribute to Kunan Poshpora, the only place he could never muster courage to visit, Peer's writing brings out the Kashmir issue inside out and shatters to pieces the myths and stereotypes of Kashmiri Muslims as terrorists, intentionally revealing the atrocities committed by the Indian army as far-reaching and sustainably authoritarian and violent. It is a novel that not only won him international recognition as a writer but also put Kashmir in the international map.

Iftikhar Gilani's *My Days in Prison* is a prison diary that reveals the journalist and editor of Kashmir Times, documenting Gilani's harrowing experience of being accused and imprisoned for the attack on the Parliament. He wrote this book during the nine months of the Tihar Jail life, a torturous time when he was ill treated by jailers and convicts together and was forced into humiliating conditions. As a prison in literature, his novel in Urdu translation won him a Sahitya Akademi award.

The Kashmiri Pandit narratives on conflict are: Tej N. Dhar's *Under the Shadow of Militancy: The Diary of an Unknown Kashmiri* (2002), Sudha Koul's *The Tiger Ladies: A Memoir of Kashmir* (2002), H.K.Kaul's *Firdaus in Flames* (1995), Nitasha Kaul's essays "*Kashmir: A Place of Blood and Memory*" and "*Everything I can tell you about the Politics of Representing Kashmir*" , Kema Kaul's diary *Samay ke Baad* (2002), Siddhartha Gigoo's novel *The Garden of*

Solitude (2010), Dr. K.L. Chaudhary's *Faith and Frenzy: Short Stories from Kashmir* (2012), Rahul Pandita's novel *The Moon has Blood Clots* (2014) and Arvind Gigoo, Adarsh Ajit and Shaleen Kumar Singh's edited short stories *From Home to House* (2015).

Tej N. Dhar, a retired Professor of English, located a diary from a Kashmir's Pandit's destroyed house and reworked on it to bring it to the present shape of this book, Under the Shadow of Militancy: The Diary of an Unknown Kashmiri. The diary narrates the story of vandalism, humiliation, fear and anxiety of the Pandits amidst the growing militancy and armed control, particularly in the 1990s.

Sudha Koul's memoir presents a kaleidoscope of the Kashmiri life, society and culture, where though there was no integral mixing of the Kashmiri pundits and the Muslims, their harmonious cultural and social cohabitation was seen in their dependence on the Pashmina vendors and their treasured goods becoming indispensable to any marriage event.

H.K.Kaul's *Firdaus in Flames* is one of the fifteen volumes of poetry written by him and reveals Kashmir as the paradise in flames with a poetic concern for its chaos and anarchy and the poetic hope for better times to come.

Siddhartha Gigoo's novel *The Garden of Solitude* is about the life a Pandit boy Sridhar, who represents Gigoo's own experience of a life of exile away from his home in Srinagar. Similar to Gigoo, Rahul Pandita's *The Moon has Blood Clots* is also autobiographical, sketching the vows of his family members, who had to leave their home, treasures and savings all behind amidst the horrors of militants' demand for the Pandits to leave the land and the long curfew days.

Arvind Gigoo, Adarsh Ajit and Shaleen Kumar Singh's edited short story collection *From Home to House* combines the narratives of many exiled Kashmiri Pandits and attempts to create a space for their alienated and marginalised experiences.

Famous as a poet, K.L. Chaudhary's short story collection Faith and Frenzy captures once again the Pandits caught in the quagmire of militancy and armed forces of the two countries, India and Pakistan, and having to live in exile being forced to flee from the terror of persecution. The stories capture the experience of exile, homelessness and nostalgia for what was once home and alienation in house away from home. The exile does not allow them to forget the torture experienced in Kashmir, such as the story of a father tortured by militants who suspect his sons to be informers, or the narrations of separated families, struggles for survival, and broken homes.

The non-Kashmiri literary narratives, which reveal Kashmir in rising Hindu fundamentalism, demolition of Babri Masjid and 1992 communal riots, are: Humra Quraishi's *Kashmir: The Untold Story* (1995) Shashi Warrier's *The Homecoming* (2008), Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* (2008), Jaspreet Singh's *Chef: A Novel* (2010) and Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). Rushdie's novel, considered as the post 9/11 work, reveals the idyllic valley transformed into a terrorist zone with intervention of the iron mullahs of Pakistan.

Arundhati Roy, as a strong champion of the cause of Kashmir freedom struggle and as a sympathizer for the cause of Kashmiri people rights and freedom struggle has always come out openly with her criticism of the Indian state paralleling its tactics with British imperialist tactics towards the innocent Kashmiri people. Arundhati Roy's novel is a tale that moves from Godhra terror to Kashmir terror, retelling the story of a nation torn by religiously divisive forces.

The novel that weaves historical stories narrated from the time of Indian independence history, moving chronologically towards communal clashes post partition and post Godhra towards Kashmiri exodus and militancy, alongside the sub-textual history of marginalisation of the animals, birds, Muslims, Dalits, hijras, Kashmiris, etc. Thus while weaving the story of the hijra, Anjum, struggling with her/his identity and livelihood amidst the country brewing in the turmoil of post Godhra in Gujarat and equating the Godhra terror with that of the Kashmir one, Roy adopts a multiple viewing, by which she views both as symptoms of the internal decay of the Indian state, caused by multiple problems within the society, including caste / religious prejudice, victimisation and environmental instability because of environmental insensitivity and disregard..

At the outset, the epigrammatic divulges a mini narrative of environmental endangering of aspirin-fed cows as deadly baits to cow-eating vultures, abused by over-fed societies demanding more dairy based desserts, leading to environmental abuse and species endangering. It makes a commentary on the vulgar materialism and the deliberate environmental insensitivity of the post-modernist societies that marginalise and endanger the animal species. The mini narrative sets the tone for the existing social prejudice / oppression against / of hijras, women and Dalits.

Other than the above, there are also non-Kashmiri non-fictional narratives such as Jagmohan Malhotra's *My Frozen Turbulence* (2002), Wajahat Habibullah's *My Kashmir: the Dying Light* (2014), Major General G.D.Bakshi's *The Siege of Warwan* (2011) and Abhay Narayan Sapru's *In the Valley of Shadows* (2011). Malhotra and Habibullah give the civil servants perspective of the conflict, while the last two are narratives from the point of view of the army officers.

Jagmohan Malhotra's *My Frozen Turbulence* brings in the Kashmir conflict from the view of an administrator, since he had served two terms as the governor of Kashmir. Similar to Jagmohan, Wajahat Habibullah's book *My Kashmir: the Dying Light* examines Kashmir from an administrator's perspective.

Set in the beautiful Kashmir valley, Major General G.D.Bakshi's *The Siege of Warwan* brings out the idea of terror and war and as a war novel, it brings out the efficacy of war in the least it can do to help if not disrupt lovers. The novel reveals the disease called terrorism and its ravage of places in Kashmir plagued by violence and conflict.

Abhay Narayan Sapru's *In the Valley of Shadows* is a tale of conflict between an upright army officer and a powerful terrorist with a beautiful Gujjar girl caught in between, told from an army officer's point of view of war and terror as something to be fought tooth and nail, but where sadly the loss is to humanity and the innocent public.

Other than the above, there are also thriller narratives such as those of Mukul Deva's *Lashkar: Into the Heart of Terror* (2008) and *Weapon of Vengeance* (2015). His thrillers combine the experience of the author who is an Indian Army officer, and international counter-terrorism expert and private security provider. His *Lashkar: Into the Heart of Terror* is an exciting action thriller that moves from Delhi to the rugged mountains of LOC in Kashmir, to Lahore, Karachi and Multan. Lashkar is a gripping tale of terror and counter-terror, and terrible fall-out of the games that government plays. It is the story of a young boy from Aligarh, drawn towards terrorists and about his crossing of the border to join the terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Toiba, instrumental in creating terrorist attacks in India, the one which took place in a busy market in New Delhi.

In the thriller *Weapon of Vengeance*, Mukul Deva tells the story of a female terrorist who also is the daughter of an Indian father who is an army officer and a Palestinian mother who is also a terrorist and her reunion with her father in India. But the father, Ravinder Singh Gill, who is given the responsibility of the peaceful conducting of the Commonwealth Games and the additional responsibility as security provider to an upcoming middle east peace conference, as the head of the National anti-Terrorism Task Force, cannot enjoy his reunion with his daughter since they find themselves are now on the opposite sides of a deadly encounter.

Further, the interesting aspects of the narratives on Kashmir, irrespective of the categories, narrate untold, unreported and repressed stories of Kashmir conflict. Hence, "despite the violence, threats, and sedition charges, the silence on Kashmir—the history, the abuses, the solutions—has been broken. Kashmiri and Indian writers, filmmakers, artists, cartoonists, musicians, journalists, academics, and civil rights advocates have made it impossible for the Indian state to put the genie back in the bottle." (Mathur) (Web).

Mathur's general comments on Kashmiri narratives are relevant to be quoted here:

For anyone wanting to learn about this chronicle of grief and resistance, the place to start is by listening to voices of the conflict generation. Fahad Shah's book Of Occupation and Resistance is essential reading, as is Malik Sajad's graphic novel *Munnu, a Boy from Kashmir*, *The Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed, *Curfewed Night* by Basharat Peer, and the edited collection Until my Freedom is Come by Sanjay Kak fills in the history and lived experience.

The cartoons of Malik Sajad and Mir Suhail and the dreamlike artwork of Rolli Mukerjee bring life and death into stunning clarity. A couple of films are currently available for online

viewing: Sanjay Kak's *Jashn-e-Azadi* (How We Celebrate Freedom) and the deeply moving *Take It in Blood* with the young rapper MC Kash exploring the conflict through his own experience and his meeting with Parveena Ahanger, one mother of the disappeared in Kashmir who has founded a movement for justice. Parveena Ahangar and the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons are also the subject of a film by Iffat Fatima "*Khoon Diy Baarav*", *Blood Leaves a Trail*. (Web).

The narratives on Kashmir are the most gender – sensitive narratives of terror according to me, since they have sensitized in several mediums of art the prolonged terror disturbances in the region that particularly have enraged women and childcare in the region. An analysis particularly of the gendered narratives on and of Kashmir reveals the nuances explored, as seen in Sonia Jabbar, Paro Anand Sudha Koul and Arundhati Roy. Also, these narratives differ in their approach to terror and violence based on the stand of the Indian state and that of the Kashmiri nationalists. Recurrent motifs in these narratives trace the use of children for causing violence, 'Kalashnikov' as a double metaphor, sometimes of violence and sometimes as that of 'Azadi', with several Kashmiri Pandit narratives giving alternative perspectives to terror and violence.

It is interesting to understand Paro Anand's portrayal of the female teenager Shazia, Aftab's sister, whose confused identity of herself as the lover of the terrorist Akram, is only the tip of the iceberg to reveal a teenage adult woman's confusion of identities and her leanings towards hero worshipping a terrorist. Sudha Koul's memoir presents a gendered perception of the Kashmir conflict, drawing attention to four generations of women, ramming home the perspective of women's double marginalisation by the nationalists and familial patriarchy. Hence the narrative not only touches on political conflict and women's terror but also observes women's oppression within home through denial of education, as with her mother.

Arundhati Roy adopts an interesting technique of multiple viewing to represent gender oppression. Hence Anjum's bisexual status and the ensuing gender oppression experiences get refracted through the casteist, cultural, political and religious fundamentalist prisms. She does not take any side of terrorism or the state, but critiques both the Indian state oppression and the terrorist advocacy of Kashmir Azadi. Hence Roy's gendered stand advocates a critique on the lack of gender neutrality in politics, culture, arts, and all spheres of Indian life that experiences at the root a case of insensitivity to environmental awareness and exhibits a rampant environmental deterioration that is symptomatic of a decadent society / nation.

Narratives on specific terror attacks or communal riots within India

Communal riots

Terror and terror strikes need not be those created only by terrorists or insurgency groups, but also by religious fundamentalists and or religious extremists. India as a country has witnessed several such communal riots, be it the Hindu-Muslim riots of Partition pre and post Independence or the post-Godra communal conflicts in Gujarat, or the anti-Sikh riots post Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination or the Hindu-Muslim riots post Independence in many places or the post-Ayodhya riots. Confining only to the post 9/11 era, an analysis can be made of a few gendered narratives of communal terror that were unleashed. There are writings in English, particularly on communal riots and how they evoke terror. For example, Shashi Tharoor's novel *Riots* (2001) or Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* brings out the communal riots and the loss, anxiety and trauma they create on affected individuals.

In *Riots*, the narration of the story is done in the backdrop of the Hindu–Muslim riots in an imaginary Uttar Pradesh town, Zalilgarh, when the whole of North India was politically disturbed with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's intention to build Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The story revolves around the mystery behind the killing of an American woman, Priscilla Hart, amid the communal riots. Obviously the killing is not because of any hatred towards her but because of her affair with the District Magistrate of Zaligarh, Lakshman, whom both the communities' fanatics wanted to strike, since they hated Lakshman for the strong action he took against both.

This story is an example of how women become the worst victims of any riot or act of terror, as they become soft targets as the surrogate of man to be appropriated and destroyed, opening up the discourse of why woman becomes the effigy of the fanatic rioters unleashing terror. In Anjum's escape of violence in the Godhra riots unlike her Muslim companion killed mercilessly by Hindu extremists, Arundhati Roy underlines another angle of gender oppression of the transgenders through cultural beliefs and superstitions or supernatural beliefs built around the hijra and the hijra potentiality for doom to violence perpetrators–on the hijra ability to curse.

Anjum's decision to liberate herself from the hetero-normative society as seen in her choice to live in a graveyard away from the clutches of the normative society shows her will to choose to be free. If Roy deals with transgender oppression as a reality of one section of the marginalised society, woman as an oppressed category incurs an ironic presentation in the portrayal of Tilotama's oppression in the hands of the police in the name of interrogation and in her shared experiences of the oppressed women of Kashmir, who rise like phoenix despite the crushing in by the army men and the militants. There is an attempt by the writer to even rethink the gender categories as categorised by the patriarchy, as seen in Anjum's refusal to live within the confines

of the society and her choice to make graveyard as her territory and also in Tilotama's refusal to grow her hair after the interrogators shave away her hair.

26/11 Terror

Sandeep Unnithan's *Black Tornado–The Three Sieges of Mumbai 26/11* describes how Mumbai, India's commercial capital, had suffered many attacks since 1993. Once again, it became the target of terrorists from across the border on November 26, 2008, but this time the enormity of the destruction and the loss has defied expression. The author Sandeep Unnithan presents the reader with a comprehensive account of the unpreparedness of the Indian officials to face any such dastardly attack, and how, earlier, any decision made after each attack to strengthen the security was abandoned half-way or not followed regularly.

On top of it, the intelligence inputs given by RAW and IB repeatedly about fidayeen suicide attacks, a seaborne attack, the list of hotels that might be the targets, and even the dates of attacks were not dealt with the seriousness it demanded, by the officials concerned. Unnithan vividly describes, at this backdrop, how a group of ten highly motivated young terrorists, who had been specially trained and heavily armed with sophisticated modern weapons, laid siege of three vantage locations in Mumbai CST station, Hotel Taj Residency and Nariman House after killing many innocent people ruthlessly at various places and how the army, navy and air force of India joined to thwart their evil ploy.

The author opines that the aim of these attacks might be to affect the Indian economy adversely and to increase the tension between India and Pakistan so that the 'peace outreach'

between the two countries, started by Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, would turn into a mission impossible. The author conveys the fact, which is news to many of the readers, that the blueprint of this brutal execution of civilians was from Al Qaeda's 'Landmark Plot' to attack high-profile hotels in New York which was stymied by the counter-terrorism officials of the USA. The author mentions about the eight Palestinian terrorists' plot to capture either the Manshia Youth Club or the Tel Aviv Opera House, in 1975. They reached a beach in Tel Aviv in two inflatable rubber tubes with outboard motors attached. They lost their way and reached the brightly lit, four-storied Savoy Hotel and took ten hostages. At the end of the firefight with Israeli forces, seven of them blew themselves up and the eighth one was captured alive. But unfortunately, despite the similarities, these lapses did not occur in 26/11 attacks.

The book does not end with the conclusion of the operation Black Tornado. Sandeep Unnithan takes us beyond Black Tornado operations, to reveal streaks of the bleak future of counter-terror operations and the harsh reality of the future of strikes in India. In the high–level meeting held on 28 November 2008, at 6 p.m., among the then Prime Minister Mr. Manmohan Singh with the three service chiefs, National Security Advisor M.K.Narayanan and the heads of RAW and IB, in response to the Prime Minister's question, "What is that you all can do?", the Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Suresh Mehta said that his force was not ready for war. As the Chief of Army Staff was away in South Africa, no decision could be made on his behalf by the Vice Chief of Army Staff. The Air Chief Marshal Fali Homi Major was ready to attack any target specified within sixteen hours. The meeting was inconclusive, says the author.

The following meeting held on 4 December 2008, at 5.30.p.m. reiterated the fact that the army and navy were unprepared for retaliation. When the Prime Minister asked the Army Chief,

General Deepak Kapoor, “Did the army have a plan to punish Pakistan?” The NSA, M.K. Narayanan, put forth five alternatives which were discarded, citing various reasons. The author raises many questions, talks about many things in the aftermath of this tragedy in his Epilogue. We agree with Sandeep Unnithan, when he concludes with the prediction of the possibility of similar attacks in future and says that failing to learn from this one would be the biggest tragedy. This book is written in a simple, lucid style with a wealth of information to impart. One must read it if one wants to get a comprehensive idea of 26/11, especially to understand the role played by the NSG’s 51 SAG.

Commandos are real life heroes for the Indian public just as army personnel are. NSG christened this operation as ‘Black Tornado’ which they proved to be. NSG’s counter-terrorist wing, the 51 SAG successfully neutralized nine of them and captured one alive. But for them, many more precious lives would have been lost to the bullets and grenades of the terrorists. The entire book is a saga of a detailed narration of the valor and grit of these commandos who fought and eliminated the terrorists at these locations, the difficulties they faced, the solutions they arrived at, the bondage they had with each other and how they dared to risk their lives to save the civilians and the nation, so to say. The reader, after reading about all that they had to undergo, cannot but salute them for their commendable services.

The non-fictional account narrates the saga and heroism of the Indian security forces that could thwart the intentions of the terrorists to siege the economic capital of the country.

7/11 Attacks

The non-fictional narrative Six Minutes of Terror by Nazia Sayed and Sharmeen Hakim, traces, in their own words, 'the untold story of the 7/11 Mumbai Train Blasts' which killed 189 people and injured over 800 with the danger posed by Lashker-e-Taiba who supported by SIMI members, responsible for the train blasts lurking behind. The authors interviewed the family members of the victims, innumerable investigators involved in the case, lawyers from both sides of the case, many SIMI activists and many more. Bombs with Research Department Explosives (RDX) packed in pressure cookers (later termed as 'household utensils' in the charge sheet) were planted in seven first-class compartments of seven different trains in Mumbai local train network, on the Western Line.

It took just six minutes to kill 189 and injure over 800 innocent passengers returning home after a day's work. The book makes a detailed presentation of both sides of the case and the much-awaited verdict. Thirteen men were accused of the planning and execution of the 11 July 2006 train blasts, tried in the court and only one, by name Abdul Wahideen Mohammed Shaikh, was acquitted on 11 September 2015. Among the rest, five were given capital punishment besides a huge fine of Rs. 2,15,40,000 and the remaining ones received the sentence for severe life imprisonment, in the judgement pronounced on 30 September. Of course, the masterminds remain at large, perhaps even today.

The confession of Indian Mujahideen's five operatives, including Sadiq Israr Shaikh after their arrests by Mumbai Crime Branch on 24 September 2008, of their hands in all the terror attacks brought a twist in the investigation as the thirteen accused in 7/11 case, who were under trial did not belong to IM. The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), handling 7/11 case, sought the custody of Sadiq from the special court. The media was banned from reporting on the investigation into the

7/11 case of train blasts immediately. Sadiq was discharged on 11 May 2009 due to lack of evidence. The similarity in this case and Malegaon case also is brought out. The book is investigative. There is no reference to any gender issues, women don't feature here. It gives a blow-by- blow account of the reasons, planning and execution of such a dastardly act and the aftermath.

Much had been written on 26/11 covering the brutal attack from different angles. To cite a few, one writes mainly about the commandos and the other compiles daily reports or articles. But the authors, Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott- Clark have adapted a unique approach in the layout, the treatment of the matter and the presentation in their book *The Siege: The Attack on the Taj* (2013). This book stands apart among many books written on 26/11.

It has an impressive layout with an index, an essential feature required of any book, but absent in many. Among the names in the index, there are the victims, survivors, staff, security personnel, the terrorists and even their masterminds. The authors have provided a brief profile of each of them with their photos in the opening pages of the book under the impressive and apt caption 'Dramatis Personae', as if it is a play; the reader cannot but remember Shakespeare's 'All the world is a stage….' The chapters give a thumbnail sketch of each of these persons.

As the reader sieves the chapters, especially for the victims, their backgrounds, the reasons for their presence in Taj on that fateful night, it dawns on the reader how death had snatched away and erased all their aspirations, goals, all that was them and theirs, at the most unguarded moment of their lives; s/he develops an invisible rapport with them, sharing their ordeal and suffering with them in great tension and anxiety. The escape of a few of these characters from the clutches of death brings a sigh of relief, though this bitter experience would be etched in their hearts, including

the readers, as deep scars forever. Among the 166 people massacred, thirty-three died at the Taj. The authors have assigned a RIP page for them with their names, designation and the places in the Taj where they were killed. The thirty-fourth name in this list is that of the sniffer dog, Lucy.

The titles given to each chapter deserve a mention for their unique coinage of words. For example, Chapter 4 is christened as 'A Goat, A Knife and A Matchbox' which induces the curiosity of the reader. But the reality hits the reader hard on his/her face when the chapter unravels the fact that it was the reward given to those budding terrorists who had completed the rigorous training successfully, unlike the others who had dropped out, to prepare their graduation meal.

Another important, unique aspect of this book is the representation of gender issues. The reader gets an insight into the sufferings of women caught inadvertently in this ordeal, be it the victims, victims' family members, the wives of the terrorist David Headley or the mothers of the boys who had turned terrorists. Though each life lost was precious, a few cases can be cited here to show the enormity of the loss.

Sabina Shegal Saikia, a prominent restaurant critic, a TV celebrity, a journalist and a foodie, was at the Taj for the review of a new outlet there and for attending a social wedding too. Her reviews about the restaurants were ruthlessly true, exact and hard-hitting; the public accepted and followed them with absolute trust in her words, which kept the restaurateurs on their toes. The restaurateurs were out to cosseting her to keep her in good humour in order to get a favourable review. But she was brutally frank and reviewed the restaurants in the public's interest. It was sad that such a person's life with a promising career was extinguished by the terrorists. She was found in the bedroom, kneeling behind the divan; she had died of asphyxiation because of the fire and

smoke around. She had left behind her husband Shantanu and two children, a son Aniruddha aged eleven and a daughter Arundhati aged fourteen. This family lost her for no fault of theirs.

Florence Martis joined the Taj Data Centre as a trainee computer operator a couple of months before the terrorist attack. Her father, Faustine Martis had been serving the Sea Lounge of the Taj as the head waiter for over two decades before the terrorists put his life out. He always wished for a memorable death. The Black Cats rescued her after thirty-six gruelling hours, with the help of a Good Samaritan, Roshan, who kept her alive by talking to her all along over the phone and gave the commandos the details of her whereabouts. Though she was in and out of consciousness, she kept asking about her father. Roshan reached the hospital where she was admitted to meet this unknown girl in person, but on seeing her agitated condition, he asked her to go to sleep, which she did immediately. After several days in deep sleep, she woke up and learnt about her father's demise. His body could be identified only by the ring he was wearing. She went to the hotel after a year but could not stand in the place where her father was killed. She is now employed at the Thane headquarters for the Tata Group's Ginger hotels. Her mother has taken up a job at the Taj Public Services Welfare Trust, rendering her services for other victims of the terrorist attacks.

The narrative goes back and forth from rescue operations at Taj to the territory of the terrorists and their personal lives. The terrorist David Headley, with the actual name Daood Saleem Gilani, was born in Washington D.C. to a famous Pakistani broadcaster and an American heiress. He made the best use of this American connection to his advantage; he joined Pakistan's Lashkar-e-Taiba and simultaneously served the US intelligence community, sending information about Lashkar-e-Taiba's plan for Mumbai attack.

He mooted the idea of the attack on Mumbai, did the reconnaissance for it, as he carried a deep-rooted hatred for India. Much can be said about him, but his personal life too has been as weird as the colours of his eyes, one blue and the other brown. He married three ladies. The first one was Shazia Ahmed, a conservative Pakistani lady who would have known nothing about her husband's shady character. He married Portia Peter, a Canadian makeup artist in the US without revealing to her his already married status, married to Shazia in Pakistan with two kids by her. He was back in Lahore with Shazia, eight months pregnant with their third child.

Meanwhile, he met Faiza Outalha, a pretty, young Moroccan medical student who was in Pakistan for training as a doctor. Faiza was impressed with his looks without realizing how deceptive it was. He married her within a week, revealing nothing about his marital status. He had the audacity to accommodate her in a rented apartment in the same area where his first wife was living with the two children. Unlike Shazia, Faiza grew suspicious of his movements, dug into his phone bills and found out the existence of his first wife. Headley calmed down both, though it took five days for Shazia and more for Faiza to come to terms with the reality..

When Headley came to India and stayed in the Taj for his reconnaissance work, Fazia accompanied him. She wondered, unaware of his dubious character, why he introduced her as his client, though it was supposed to be their 'honeymoon trip'. He used her as a cover and took many photos of her in different locations of the Taj which could have been used as surveillance material to plan the attack. Meanwhile, Shazia rang up to inform him about the birth of their son just then. Faiza started feeling strongly that he was a liar, and she flew back to Morocco, to her parents, instead of Lahore, though he had booked her ticket for Lahore. On their next meeting, he talked about their divorce. In the ensuing argument, he punched her. He went to Shazia, gave her a gun

to protect herself from Fazia, which had really upset Fazia. In order to take revenge, she went to the US embassy compound in Islamabad's Diplomatic Zone and complained about Headley, called him a jihadi, gave the officer all the details about his insidious movements, his visit to Mumbai and so on. All went to deaf ears; instead the news about her visit was promptly conveyed to Headley, who asked her furiously the reason for her visit.

His second wife in the US, Portia had time to witness his shady nature when he exposed himself through an expression of joy and rage watching 9/11 attack on the television. He was ecstatic about the attack and commented that the Americans deserved it. Portia passed on his comments to a friend who informed the police. But Headley knew how to wriggle out of a dire situation.

To cut a long story short, Headley was arrested, tried in the court in the US and was given the verdict of only thirty-five years in prison, not to be extradited to India as he had made one more deal with them. His first and second wives, Shazia and Portia, and his four children live in Chicago whereas his third wife, Faiza Outalha, returned to Morocco.

These women's stories prove that terrorism causes untold sufferings not only to the victims but also to the women concerned. They don't wallow in wealth or happiness, only sorrows and tensions. If we take the case of the mothers of the young boys turned terrorists, it is the perennial impoverished condition of the families that drives them to walk into the world of destruction and death. The boys choose death, hoping that the families would receive a lot of money from the masterminds after their sacrifice. Their bodies don't glow, nor do they emanate scent after their deaths as the masterminds had brainwashed them. The worst part is that the parents cannot even claim the bodies of their dead sons, not even identify them as their sons out of fear and shame.

Narratives on Naxalite Terror

Naxalite movement is a left-wing extremist movement that began in Naxalbari, a village in North Bengal as peasant uprising against poverty, exploitation and social discrimination. It then spread to the cities and gained support among the educated and unemployed youth, disillusioned with inefficient and corrupt government policies, and dreamt of establishing a socialist state through armed revolution. The Indian State passed a series of black acts empowering the police to arrest any persons on mere suspicion and resorted to torture and fake encounters. Even today Naxalites, who now call themselves as Maoists, enjoy popular support among the poor tribals, peasants, lower castes and landless labourers in about seven states in India. The Government of India has declared them as terrorists and views them as the biggest threat to the Indian State. (Bannerjee).

Arundhati Roy has been a champion of the Naxalite and Maoist movement, justifying the movement due to class oppression. Many of Mahasweta Devi's works discuss the gender oppression that the tribals had to face with landlords and zamindars, unchecked by the police, consequently giving rise to Naxalite terror.

Mahasweta Devi's activist writings are very effective in their presentation of Naxalite in an oppressive society that exploits the tribals and other marginalized communities. Her writings on Naxalite movement are *Mother of 1084*, *Draupadi* and *Titu Mir*.

Mahasweta Devi's novella Mother of 1084 is about a woman's gradual awakening to the social and political realities around her, with this deprived mother's stirring activated in the first place by the sudden death of her son, a Naxalite, in police encounter. A story told in media res

through a series of flashbacks and memory recalls, it is about a woman's coming to terms with the trauma of the horrific death of her son, in the milieu of the Naxalbari uprising in the state of West Bengal in India in the early 1970s.

Mahasweta Devi's long tale begins with Sujata's (the female protagonist) search for the truth behind her son's death. The search launches her on the path of her meeting and forming close affinities with two women linked to her son. This meeting with the two women, Sonu's mother, who has also lost her son in the same police encounter, and also Nandini, Brati's girl friend and comrade, transforms her as an individual. Sujata grows from a patient, sympathetic mother to a silent dissenter against the amoral and indifferent upper middle-class lifestyle of her family members, including the attitudes of her husband, Dibyanath, who considers the dead son only as an embarrassment.

More than the shock of the news that her son lies in the morgue as 'corpse 1084', what irks her more is the nexus between her husband and the police responsible for the son's death, and also Dibyanath's pseudo values that make him use his 'connections' to prevent the appearance of Brati's name as a Naxalite in the newspapers. Sujata's recognition that her son died for a social cause leads her also to the painful realization that his death meant nothing to a snobbishly conscious but indifferent society of onlookers.

Such acumen about the futility of dying for a faceless society helps a voiceless woman to regain her voice. Sonu's mother and Nandini, the two female voices that enlighten her on the struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed, act as catalysts in Sujatha's journey towards the female awareness. Sujata realizes Brati was the soul of her life and yet she knew neither him nor his struggle to uproot a system that impoverished the innocent and the poor. Hence, at the end

of the story, Sujata becomes a new revolutionary mother, proud to be 'the mother of the corpse number 1084.'

Mahasweta Devi creates three women characters belonging to three different cultures– Sujata (middle class), Somu's mother (lower class) and Nandini (upper class), who represent three different reactions to terror–Sujata's changing voice from ignorance through knowledge to awaken towards issues of terror and counter terror, Somu's mother's voice as helpless witness to terror and Nandini's voice as the insider of terror. All three voices represent woman in the marginalized position caught in the politics of terror. Mahasweta Devi takes a revolutionary stand supporting the Naxalite cause and also condemning the state's counter offensive measures. Nandini's description of the state apathy rings true here: 'Nothing's changed. Thousands of young men rot in the prisons without trials, they are denied the status of politicals… Torture continues with greater sophistication and more secrecy.' (Devi 36). Sujata's cry of protest against her family at the end of the story stages the awakened woman's reaction to terror and the awareness of the cause of terror of her Naxalite son and his companions.

North East India

North East India & Insurgency Narratives

North East is known for what Sanjib Baruah calls as 'ethnic insurgencies', 'cross border terrorism', or 'proxy wars'. (Beyond Counter-Insurgency 2). The region experiences a multiplicity of terror situations all complicated by what Baruah terms as 'national security–centric discourse' in relation to terrorism. It is a discourse shaped by former bureaucrats and retired army, police and intelligence personnel, and hence he says, quoting Dasgupta, the discourse is "heavily pro-state

and insensitive to the vulnerabilities of the common man and dismissive of the frequent transgression of rights of its own citizens by the state." (3). Hence narratives on insurgency too reflect this multiplicity of terror situations in the region. Sanjib Baruah discusses the multiplicity of narratives and voices that represent the 'tension between competing rebel agendas,' (5) that make multiple claims to territory. When referring to Manipur situation, Dhanajit Singh mentions the idea of 'violence as a political protest, while the Manipuri poet based in Shillong, Robin Ng. Singh poetizes the 'loss of tenuous humanity' because of exposure to continuous violence (155) in his poem "Native Land".

These narratives also comprise multiple memories, counter memories, and vision of the future. Similarly, Keisam Priyokumar, in the short story "Thaa Amasung Rahu" narrates the story of a woman passenger robbed along with a bus of passengers by insurgents. The story imprints the woman's anger and helplessness in her loss of money and her outburst that no wonder they are killed by the army. Very often terrorists are 'portraits of failed dream' (Rakhee Kalita 108). The recurrent themes of these narratives are fighting for political autonomy, economic justice, and cultural rights.

In North East India, women writers particularly are increasingly taking to writing in English as well as translating from the local languages / cultures of the region. Today there are many upcoming women writers writing in English and regional languages in the North East. The major women writers are Indira Goswami, Anuradha Sharma Pujari, Mitra Phukan, Temsula Ao, Mamang Dai and Anjum Hasan. There are many new writers too like Easterine Iralu, Arupa Patagia Kalita, Manorama Das Medhi, Jahnavi Baruah, Indrani Raimedhi, Daisy Hasan, Bimabati Thiyam Ongbi, Rita Choudhury Samudra Gogoi, and Nitoo Das.

There are several reasons for this upsurge in literary writings by women in the North East. First, their writings are the expression of an under-represented region. Remaining as a colonial construct for a long time, the North East was politically kept separated from the mainland, thus leading to its anonymity and its cultural stereotyping as an insurgent prone region. Second, in their search for a representation of their pre-colonial roots, these writers represent a multiplicity of ethnic and non-ethnic voices that reflect diverse cultures, languages, histories and heritages, with the term North East being only a geographic term uniting these writers.

Third, their writings also create what Mitra Phukan calls as a 'North-Eastern' diaspora, with many of these writers writing, from Bangalore and other Indian cities, their 'memories' of Assam, Shillong, etc. Fourthly their writings also represent a search for a solution to the political turmoil in their troubled zones. As Preeti Gill points out, 'telling their stories is a form of political intervention, a way to open up a little-known region and an alienated people.' (Gill). Then women's writing in the region also reveals itself as a piece of activism and terror memoir, as seen in Irom Sarmila's poems of peace activism (The Fragrance of Peace) and Samudra Gogoi's book on the confessions of an ex-ULFA Member. In each of these writers mentioned here, one finds what is described here below:

Women writers around the world use words just for the very reason this fabled storyteller did–to put off death for another day, a death which is not literal as in her case, but a death-in-life, resulting from the loss of her power of self-expression, fearing the silencing of her literary voice that not only speaks of her torment and elation but also of her angst and protest against any form of oppression, whether by an individual, societal mores or state authority. (Raimedhi).

An interesting perspective that arises about militancy in the northeast is the border crossing which these narratives engage in, as with Indira Goswami and many other Assamese narratives. For example, while portraying the terror situation in her short story "*Parasu Pator's Well*," Indira Goswami discusses how state apathy, corruption and easy money that could be made from insurgency become major causes for youth to be drawn into insurgency. Similarly, while portraying the terrorist outfit like ULFA, narratives portray the terrorists not as totally bad, but having the strong public support and sympathy, and hence describing the organization as that which tried to unite all ethnic communities through demand for sovereignty. These narratives are free from bias, since several faces of terror are recognized in them from state terror to media created terror, political terror, political stake holders of terror, and so on. These narratives also bring out "the dark underbelly of mass media practices and the real politics of terror behind the structures erected by the state" (Kalita 109). Thus North East Literatures stand for what Kalita explicates as "Literature as an honest response to the problem of insurgency plaguing the region and how it creates in its own way an alternative space for dialogue that we have aborted too long. (110).

Hare Krishna Deka's *Bandiayar* (The Captor) is a terror narrative, retelling the tale of a kidnapping from the captor's point of view. It reveals the captor's experience with the militants who are not powerful really as the state machinery. Hence the question arises: 'Whose terrorists are these anyway?' (Kalita 112). Is terrorism the product of the public or the state? Is it termed right as in Assam as euphemism for freedom struggle? Manoj Goswami's story "Samiran Boruah is on His Way" is a gendered narrative of terror in the sense that it reflects the former lover "caught in the divide between an apparently comfortable marriage and her aching memories of a passionate romance with Samiran," who is the dreaded militant." (Kalita 105). Second, it reflects the woes of

the militant's mother, like Mahasweta Devi's *The Mother of 1084*, and here the mother waits for the return of her militant's son.

Assam

North Eastern India, inhabited by several indigenous ethnic communities, has several ethnic insurgencies fighting either for autonomy within Indian Union or for independence from India. Lack of emotional integration with the mainland India, economic underdevelopment, demographic imbalance created by immigrants and political indifference of the state to the fears and concerns of the people of the region are cited as the causes for the rise of ethnic insurgencies in the region.

One of the most famous Assamese writers and Jnanpith awardee, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's novel *Love in the Time of Insurgency* (2005) is a translation of Yaruingam by the author himself, the meaning of which is 'people's rule and is set during the years that followed the outbreak of World War II, the China-Indo-Burma War to the years of India's Independence. Most importantly, this novel traces the birth of the Naga National Movement through the fictionalised character of Phizo Videsselie, whose proactive ideologies are contrasted to the moderate and somewhat conciliatory ideologies of Rishang, which the author also seems to espouse. Sharengla, Rishang's past lover becomes representative of a gendered kind of violence that is symptomatic of such a conflict zone as Nagaland.

The themes that permeate the novel include the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, the Indian state and a separate Naga state entity, military force and militancy. The Naga identity becomes the central question, but the text also seems to suggest that violence itself will

not help with the attainment of that identity and will only bring about more confusion to the ordinary man. It is in this context that the most human emotion, "love" (in its more complex form) becomes so crucial for the lives of the characters.

His novel *Blossoms in the Graveyard* (2016), set during the turbulent year of what is known as the Bangladesh Genocide, when East Pakistan was about to become Bangladesh, follows the struggle of young Mehr who has had to live through the atrocities of war that usually devoured its female victims in the worst way imaginable. The text is an announcement of the death of masculine protection and of male respect of the female body, as violence of the worst kind was meted out on the Bangladeshi women by the Pakistani soldiers.

The central issue of the text is violence engendered by gender inequality within the context of a political struggle. Hence the text examines the rape culture that is usually associated with such political conflicts. Related issues of shame, social tolerance, acceptance and support during such times are also dealt with in the text. Mehr's personal struggle to achieve a sense of pride and self-reliance despite her hardships is an analogy of the country's struggle for independence and identity. That Mehr is given a new space to blossom at the end of the novel also speaks of the hope that is associated with the new political entity of Bangladesh, despite the atrocities it had to go through.

Indira Goswami is a renowned Assamese writer, teacher and activist, noted for her novels and short stories on Assamese life and issues of insurgencies and terror. To understand the terror situation of Assam portrayed by Goswami, one needs to refurbish oneself with the roots of terror and militancy in India's northeastern states since the colonial times, as already discussed earlier.

Goswami's *The Shadow of Kamakhya* (2002) is a collection of eight short stories that are all set against the author's hometown, Assam. With an eye for detail and the language of poetry, Goswami brings to life the people and the landscape of Assam. The Brahmaputra and the Kamakhya temple become central to her fiction and can take a symbolic meaning as in the story's case of "*Under the Shadow of Kamakhya*".

Terror prompted by insurgency also figures in this anthology in the story "*The Journey*" where the smell of gunpowder and the memory of blood smeared roads merge with the landscape. The hostility between the two factions, the Indian army and the militants is represented in the antagonism between the brother and the sister. The stigmatisation of the girl because of her affiliation to an army man is the author's comment on the position of women in such situation of terror and conflict.

Goswami's short story "*Parasu Pator's Well*" revolves around the Assamese society, now in the hold of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies in the northeastern state of Assam, following the rise of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). The outfit was raised by a handful of dedicated youth who believed that the only solutions to people's problems in Assam lay in establishing a sovereign Assam. Initially, the outfit enjoyed the support of a large section of Assamese youth in the countryside. Then their popularity declined, partly because of their involvement in terrorist activities. The Indian State has banned this organization, labeling it as a terrorist outfit, though often there were attempts to negotiate with the outfit.

Indira Goswami acted as a mediator between the government and the militant outfit. The peace negotiations yielded no results, because of the obstinacy of both the parties. In the recent years, one faction of ULFA has come forward to negotiate with the government, while another

faction continues its underground struggle. Yet the author looks forward to the success of peace negotiations in Assam. Her two stories "*Parasu Pator's Well*" and "Journey" are written in the backdrop of ULFA insurgency in Assam.

"*Parasu Pator's Well*," a story based in Lakhimpur, Assam, is concerned with the struggle of an unemployed youth Parasu Pator, trying desperately for self-employment. Parasu endlessly struggles to apply for a contract in the Sericulture Department to dig a well in a village for clean water storage. Though he succeeds after great difficulty in obtaining the contract, his sorrows multiply as his continuous failure to find water even after digging wells of unfathomable depths in different places. He is deeply in debt, amidst the paucity of funds for the medical treatment of his sick brother suffering from cancer. The story of a young man's struggle for employment is told while intermittently expressing his constant temptation to join the ULFA militant outfit and abandon his hard labor. Though terrorism only forms the backdrop of the story, it looms large in the protagonist's mind and his external world of friends succumbing to terrorist ideology.

The Assamese youth's dilemma or his 'difficult choice' gives the complication to an otherwise simple tale: "In fact, he had half of a mind to join them [his friends]. He knew the deep jungles where they were being trained in using arms and in warfare." (Goswami, "Parasu" 117). However much Parasu struggles to make both ends meet, he fails miserably, and when that happens he is tempted to flee to the terrorist inhabited jungles: "The clods of earth scattered in the paddy fields seemed like the helmets of dead soldiers in a battlefield. It was as if everything, nature itself, was conspiring to drag Parasu into some unknown, dreaded cavern!" (133).

When finally he succeeds in his venture, he is left with no money for his brother's treatment and for retrieving his mother's gold earring, with his purse drained in satisfying the corrupt

officials and the well diggers. He is left wondering: "Had he done the right thing in borrowing all that money for the well, when his brother needed him so badly? Should he have joined his friends–Moina, Haibor, Jogesh–and gone to Charaipung? Maybe he should have. At least there would have been no dearth of money for Damodar's treatment. Their mother would have been saved a lot of trouble and heartache. Maybe…" (131). He discards his friends' invitation to join militancy and struggles and face the debts he had taken from the moneylender Pathan. Parasu would have succumbed to militancy but for the so called wicked Pathan, the immigrant moneylender turning kind enough to waive the debt, after visiting him and seeing Parasu's pathetic poverty–stricken conditions and the plight of his sinking brother.

The above story brings out the author's critical examination of terrorism as an economic option available to the Assamese youth in the corrupt social, economic and political milieu. An examination of Parasu's world also allows the author to touch upon the degeneration of the Assamese society, as seen in the portrayal of the corrupt government officials, and also the violence lurking in the army officials, who deliberately kill Parasu's friend Bhola and his girlfriend Bakul in an encounter, even though they knew Bakul was trying to bring Bhola back from the clutches of ULFA to the mainstream.

Jahnavi Barua, a doctor by profession, rather made a career with her passion for writing and gave up practicing medical profession. She has written a short story collection *Next Door* (2008) and a novel Rebirth (2011). This book is a collection of eleven short stories that are set in the backdrop of Assam and its insurgent problems. Barua gives a simple yet nuanced portrayal of Assamese life, its culture and its natural beauty and elevates the commonplace and the marginal to combat the peripheralization that has become a problematic issue with Northeast states.

The Brahmaputra becomes an important symbolic presence throughout the book, acting as a source of historical witness. Her two stories, "*Honeybees*" and "*The Patriot*" depict Assam as a conflict zone where it is usually the innocent youth who is cornered by larger social forces and seem to have no choice but to join the insurgency movement which in its turn seem to have hollowed out of its political meaning when all social and economic factors that press the ordinary man are taken into consideration.

In *Rebirth*. Baruah touches a theme centered on the female self rethinking violence within the society. Within the space of the self in society, violence can be experienced in more ways than one; for while politically induced violence has been a much talked about a topic for most writers from the Northeast, psychological violence within the domestic space has not been something that has been given much importance. The glimpse into the woman's interiority that Rebirth gives via the narrative of a mother talking to her unborn child about her own insecurities and her challenges in her marriage gives voice to the subterranean psychological violence that women around the world experience daily. The haven of the home can at many times be a site of gendered oppression and repression, as with Kaberi, and this unspoken angst makes her monologue so interesting.

Arupa Patangia Kalita's novel *The Story of Felanee* (2014) follows the life of Malati, who is mostly known by her nickname Felanee which means "thrown away", a name she received because she was thrown away in a swamp left to die by her dying mother. Falanee's story is that of survival as she experiences one loss after another (her family, her home) to ethnic violence and yet continues to move forward with her son and provide him protection despite the looming threat of another round of ethnic violence. The novel offers an in-depth analysis of the effect of violence on women, who see passed through the idealism of war to the reality of war being loss and death.

The author also offers a scathing commentary of the hypocrisy of the blazoning cause of such ethnic violence, which she points out, is politically driven to gain power and votes.

Written in Tears (2015) is a collection of Kalita's best novellas and short stories and the author's feminist concern is one revolving around violence, how violence of any form (political, domestic, social and cultural) affects women and by its extension to their families as with "*Arunima's Motherland*" and "*The Cursed Field of Golden Rice*" which also pitches the question of the worthiness of any underlying noble cause of ethnic and insurgent violence. Kalita's women are not the kind who would be bowed down by terror as with Mainao in "*The Girl with Long Hair*" or Surabhi in "*Surabhi Barua and the Rhythm of the Hooves*" and can be seen as figures of subversion amidst the burden of social constraints and conflict.

In another collection, *The Musk and Other Stories* (2017) Kalita once again gives voice to the ordinary people of Assam who have been marginalised and neglected despite the insurmountable effects of terror and violence following the reign of the ULFA, the Bodo Separatist Movement and the state sponsored violence through army intervention. "*Two Days from Phantom's Dairy*" and "*A Precarious Link*", for instance, look at the predicament of average person because of the ongoing conflict, the latter especially highlighting the economic effect of such conflict situations while the former looks at the psychological impact of violence. The story of "Aii" is the story of many women whose homes have been lost or torn apart by conflict as husbands and sons either die in the hands of militants or the army or join the movement, never to return home. Such stories reverberate with a sense of truthfulness because of the circumstances that drove the author to write.

Dhrubajyoti Borah's novel *Sleepwalker's Dream* (2016) follows the story of a group of insurgents after their camp has been raided by the army. The novel is told from the perspective of June, an orphaned girl who joins the insurgency out of reasons she herself cannot understand. The tone of the narrative can almost be categorised as pessimistic about the physically and mentally broken leader of the group and the youths who seem to question the worth of their commitment to the cause. Indeed, the vulnerability of this group in terms of not only state sponsored violence but the forces of Nature as well, but their escape to the forests of the Himalayas also seem to reflect on the fragility of ULFA as a terror outfit. The future of the movement is unarguably questioned through the fate of this group, which seems so uncertain. Even the nurturing presence of June does not seem to have a rejuvenating promise. Death seems to be their only surety.

Rita Choudhury's *Chinatown Days* (2017) is a novel considered as monumental achievement in the literature of the Northeast, dealing with a small town Makam, a settlement of the Chinese in Assam, during Indo-Sino war. It is a harrowing account of the atrocities perpetuated by the Indian government upon its Chinese residents in the wake of the war. The novel is narrated in a story-telling format with Leilin telling Arunab Bora about his ancestors, mostly through the eyes of Meilin his mother, who had settled in Assam after marrying an Assamese. The author follows the violent history of these Assamese Chinese who were suddenly looked upon as outsiders, facing sudden mass deportations, the homes raided and looted, their lives being treated as next to nothing in the camp in Deoli, Rajasthan only to be sent to a country that does not even recognize them as its own.

An in-depth analysis of the concept of biopower is engaged in the text through Choudhury's Chinese victims. Choudhury's portrayal of state-sponsored violence questions the

idea of democracy that Post-Independence India sought to achieve. Issues of identity, belonging and unbelonging are put at the forefront of the text. This text is especially noteworthy because the subject that the author choose to portray is one that is uncharted in the narratives of violence of the Northeast.

In the novel *Travelling with Dreams* (2001), the author Shrutimala Duara takes a head-on task of presenting the narrative from the point of view of an insurgent. This narrative technique allows the author to present an introspective account of the insurgent, which reveals much of the psychological makeup of such a person. On the one hand is the common perception of such extremist measures that are taken up by such insurgent groups as those of Jibon, but is the tarnished hope of the identity movements that such insurgent groups represent. The novel also aptly presents the sufferings and disillusionments of the insurgent movements in the face of larger forces of state coercion, lack of public support and the most basic of human desire, hunger.

As the title of Jibon Krishna Goswami's novel suggests, *Remains of Spring: A Naga Village in No Man's Land* (2016), explores existence in the space of 'no man's land.' The protagonist, Atanu, is brought to start a new school in Hayat, a "no man's land" between India and Burma. The politics of space is the central theme of the text as it explores the peripheral existence or rather the non-existence of a Naga village that is repeatedly destroyed by political strife but that which rebuilds itself repeatedly from the ashes of destruction.

The novel can capture the Naga's cultural attachment of identity to land, which ties this novel with the current of Naga Nationalism, which hinges on the ideology of freeing their land from any foreign domination. The enigma that shrouds Imli Apa becomes representative of the indefinable nature of Naga National movement but like Imli Apa who can unite the people of

Hayat despite the odds, Naga Nationalism is shown to continually unite its people despite its ramification. Yet the central idea the text seems to espouse hinges on the importance of genuine human efforts and emotions amidst the chaos, as is clear in the cycles of rebuilding of the village and the genuine relationships that Atanu encounters in this war-torn and forgotten village.

Sabita Goswami's *Along the Red River: A Memoir* (2010), as the subtitle suggests, is a novel written in the autobiographical mode and follows the life of Sabita Goswami, renowned journalist from Assam. The narrative of the female self is pitted against the turbulent and volatile atmosphere of Assam from 1979 to 2004. The author can weave her own personal account—her triumphs, her trials and tribulations, her sorrow, with an intimate account of Assam's social and political history and hence offers an insight into how the female self negotiates with the public domain that is still so phallo-centric in its outlook. It is her struggle to come to terms with her identity, which is an amalgamation of both her domestic and professional roles and hence the search for the modern woman that makes this novel so critical to the body of Assamese literature.

Uddipana Goswami's *No Ghosts in this City* (2014) is an anthology of twelve short stories that are in the geographical backdrop of a town, Barbari, which in the larger sense represents Assam as a whole. Although never really portraying the act of violence directly in her stories, the author delves deep into the emotional, psychological, social and cultural impact of violence on the characters and shows that her silence carries more meaning of the need of investigating.

The anthology offers a historical account of the socio-cultural and political events that shape up Assam but Goswami's stories are menacing as she reminds the readers that violence and terror have become so commonplace that they have become the new normal as in the story, "*This is How We Lived*". While the relationship of gender with violence is also dealt in stories like "*No*

Ghosts in this City", the story "*The Swing*" offers a psychological insight into the effects of militancy/militarization on children and shows how adversely trauma can affect a developing child. But this book is more than just about the brutality of life; it is the search for peace and the glimmers of hope, as with "Andolan", amid the darkness.

Mitra Phukan's *The Collector's Wife* (2005) is set in the turbulent backdrop of the Students' Agitations of 1970s and 1980s and the full-blown insurgency following soon after. The novel follows the personal life of the District Collector's wife, Rukmini, as she struggles with her childless and loveless marriage and her momentary joy when she meets Manoj and establishes intimacy with him. Phukan makes it clear in her novel that the personal/ private can never by completely divorced from the political/public, despite the territorial demarcation that sets Rukmini's world from the rest of the town.

Her alienation can be interpreted as aloofness but as clear from insights of her thoughts, she is eager for her students, her husband and her lover. This glimpse into the interiority of a woman caught in the maelstrom of domestic and political violence allows for a deeper gendered understanding of violence arising out of militancy. Be it the death of the SP in a public space or the deaths of her husband and lover, what becomes clear is the importance of public display of power through coercion. The ending seems to be the only inevitable one in such cases of violence, and a sense of hopelessness to resist such violence can be strongly felt.

In her story collection *A Full Night's Thievery* (2016), Phukan channelizes the musical side of her by using music as an important theme that ties up more than a few of her stories in the text. But committed to portraying the social realities of her community, the author also looks at aspects of life that are commonly experienced in everyday life within the local context. Violence arising

out of insurgency is a subject that the author cannot but portray. Her two stories, "*The Reckoning*" and "*The Long Drive*" deal with issues of violence in conflict prone areas like Assam. A strong sense of her feminist concern towards the plight of women in society even during our contemporary times is also highlighted in stories like, "*The Reckoning*" "*Jogeswari*," "*The Revenge of Annapurna*" where the author shows the intelligence, strength and courage of women who negotiate the space of marriage and home as their husbands cheat on them.

Manipur

Manipur has been under the grip of different insurgent groups fighting for independence from India or for autonomy / separate state status within the Indian Union. In the name of tackling insurgencies, the Indian state has enacted Draconian acts such as AFSPA, which gives enormous powers to the armed forces to arrest and even kill any person on mere suspicion. The face-off between the insurgent groups and the state armed forces has contributed to death of thousands of innocent people's lives in Manipur. The people experiencing encounters, tortures, kidnappings, arson and destruction had to live in perpetual fear. Irom Chanu Sharmila's fast for repeal of AFSPA is to be seen as a common man's urge for peace in Manipur. (Sharmila).

Irom Sharmila is known for her contribution to the culture of peace and freedom in Manipur. Being on fast unto death more than a decade, she has been fighting for the repeal of the Draconian AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) in Manipur.

Irom Sharmila's maiden poetry collection, *Fragrance of Peace* (2010) reveals that there are more dimensions to this female messenger of peace. The poems express a woman's anxiety over the land of 'Kanglei' (Manipur), and her visualization of her land as infested with death,

conflict and violence because of insurgency and counter-insurgency operations. At the same time they are also poems of strength, courage, determination never to cow down to pressure, patriotism, belief in god and trust in the land's honour of Manipur. Irom Sharmila's poems enrich the female perspective of violence through her role as the female messenger of peace.

Her title poem given below exemplifies the role of women in peace process and conflict resolution through the use of the body as a weapon to achieve peace and arouse patriotic fervor:

When life comes to an end

You, please transport

My lifeless body

Place it on the soil of Father Koubru

To reduce my dead body

To cinders amidst the flames.

Chopping it with axe and spade

Fills my mind with revulsion

The outer cover is sure to dry out

Let it rot under the ground

Let it be of use to future generations

Let it transform into ore in the mine

I'll spread the fragrance of peace

From Kanglei, my birthplace

In the ages to come

It will spread all over the world. (Sharmila "Fragrance of Peace" 25).

Her several other poems in this collection reveal the concern and determination of the female persona to transform Manipur into an abode of peace. Her poem "*Victorious worm*" brings out the ethical dimension of power and authority, where the rule of a state in the wrong hands would breed only torture, violence and disruption of peace. In such a land there can be only 'enemies who won by sinning against the almighty' and she prophesies that for such wicked people "darkness prevails everywhere in the end." (27).

Her yet another enthralling poem "*Mother will be ragged no more*" brings out a mother's woes for her son turned into a violent rebel. The poem sheathes the female persona's conflicting attitude to her son, whom she disapproves for his violence and deceit and loves him as her one and only child. Yet resolving this conflict is poignant when the unyielding female persona says,

but in sin you are encased

my hand for you, I will no more hold out

and my rags, worn for you

never again will I touch

don't be upset, my precious

mother will be ragged no more. (37).

Scenes of terror proliferate in her poem "Unbind me" which probably reflects the peacemaker's own struggle in the prison, whereas a 'caged bird' she reflects her memory of violence:

… the wailing of mothers

their children ripped from their breasts

women separated from their men

the widows' lament of despair

drawn by hands lads clad in olive green." ("Unbind Me" 43).

The above poem particularly can be read in relation to her sole struggle with the Indian government echoing the demand of the women of Manipur to remove the army from region.

The army atrocity as an issue is addressed in her poem "*That cane of the policemen*." The poem poignantly recounts the scene of an innocent rickshaw puller beaten up by a policeman, with a truckload of policemen grinning at him. Sharmila's persona is left to ponder,

I came back with a heavy heart that day

whose creation could have made it possible

the policeman's cane I saw that day.

("*That Cane of the Policemen*" 22).

Thus through her poems Sharmila can address the issues of ethnic conflict, armed forces atrocities and also female violence / rape / familial loss. Her poems highlight the fact that peace is the ultimate demand above all strives and that it is worth fighting for peace, rising above terror or violence.

Kishalay Bhattacharjee is a journalist, academician and a storyteller who focuses on conflict zones or the spaces of violence and terror. In his books *Che in Paona Bazaar: Tales of Exile and Belonging from Northeast Indi*a (2013), *Blood on My Hands: Confessions of Staged Encounters* (2015) and *An Unfinished Revolution: A Hostage Crisis, Adivasi Resistance and the Naxal Movement* (2017), he narrates tales of violence and terror from the northeast and the Bengal Naxalbari.

Che in Paona Bazaar: Tales of Exile and Belonging from Northeast India is one of the important journalistic publications that deal with Northeast India in terms of what it is trying to undo. Bhattacharjee skilfully weaves a narrative of Manipur's past and present through the character of Eshei. Employing the mode of the interview the author engages a multiplicity of experiences to tell the story of a people that had to undergo years of militant and state oppression and paint a picture of Manipur that even he, as a journalist, could not show in mainstream India.

This process of demystification that the book seeks to achieve becomes significant in undoing the stigma of violence associated with Northeast India and to show instead a region so rich in its cultures that there is always something new to learn. Violence is indeed indispensable

in the history's writing of the region, but what this book shows is that there are many versions of history and many ways of perceiving and writing it, depending on who engages in the observing and the telling. The stories of ordinary men and women trying to come to terms with life post-conflict are given voice by this text. The image of Chere sounds the revolutionary fervour that the people continue to exhibit every day by overcoming the odds of living in a war-torn, neglected society.

Blood on My Hands: Confessions of Staged Encounters is yet another journalistic writing which narrates the encounter of violence and terror of an unknown army officer, who opens up to Kishalay only because of his conscience woken up by the sight of his daughter to tell the truth of violence in the name of counterinsurgency. The tale narrated ends up weaving tales of state repression and unleashing of untold narrations of violence on innocent people.

Anubha Bhonsle's *Mother, Where's My Country?: Looking for Light in the Darkness of Manipur* (2016) is a journalistic account of the monumental acts of violence that has changed that course of history for Manipur. The Malom massacre, when the Army opened fire at Malom after their convoy was attacked leading to the death of ten innocent people including Chandramani who has received an award from Rajiv Gandhi for saving another four-year-old boy from drowning, begins the narrative of the book. What is poignantly captured is the indescribable loss Chandramani's death brings for his mother, who still receives a letter every year from the Child Welfare Department of the Government of India asking about his welfare and studies but the mother, however, not having the heart to inform them that her son is no longer alive.

A larger part of the narrative is on Irom Sharmila, whose hunger strike is a result of what had happened in Malom, offering a detailed account of her time in the hospital, the many ways

Sharmila's protest can be read and even her love story with Desmond Coutinho. The Kangla Fort incident, where the twelve elderly women used naked protest as a symbol of rebellion followed by the surrendering of the Fort by the Army, and the rallies by tribal women in Churachandpur after the passing of three land/identity-related bills in the Manipur Assembly, are all dealt with by the author. But interviews with ordinary people who are trying to make ends meet in this volatile state reveal how these larger political forces can so deeply affect ground level realities. The light that Bhonsle is looking for, in the darkness of Manipur, as the epilogue suggests, seems like an elusive construct; questions are left unanswered and problems continue with no resolutions.

Nandita Haksar's *The Exodus is Not Over* (2016) follows the narratives of four Tangkhul Naga migrants from Manipur and offers an intimate account of each of the experiences of the four migrants as they leave their homes in search of better means of living and livelihood. While also delineating the socio-economic deprivations, the abandoned development, the insurgencies and other related issues of Northeast as a conflict zone and hence explaining the exodus, Haskar is able to also offer personalised accounts of the experiences of the four migrants, reproducing the emotional and mental roller-coasters that each experience in an alien city when faced with discrimination, marginalisation, apathy, financial crunches and language barriers.

Such mass migration into the major cities has also produced the ghettoization phenomena, which the author sees as inevitable but also productive in terms of cultural crossovers within the larger framework of globalization. But despite the narratives of hardships that each migrant present, the text is laced with a strong sense of optimism and inspiration as Haskar presents their narratives not as those of victims but as those of survivors.

Teresa Rehman's *The Mothers of Manipur* (2017) is a heart-wrenching account of the Kangla incident when the twelve elderly Manipuri women stripped off their clothes as a sign of protest to the custodial rape and murder of thirty-two years old, Thangjam Manorama. It weaves the oral narrative of these twelve Meira Paibis to shed light on a larger contextual understanding of the protest by answering questions like who these twelve women were, why they did what they did, how they came about to do it and so on. A few of them also seem to understand the powerful tool of the body as a sight of protest and dissent serving as a tool of subversion in such circumstances of gendered violence.

Written by a female journalist about women who use their bodies to break the silence of military oppression as a reaction to Manorama's mutilated body that, in its turn, speaks volumes about phallic violence,the text truly becomes a manifesto of 'écriture féminine' at many levels. Each personal narrative of these twelve women also gives a glimpse of the socio-cultural makeup of Manipuri society. The cultural and religious significance of the phanek and the enaphi lends a sense of ritual in their act of stripping. Rehman juxtaposes the narrative of protest of Irom Sharmila, along with the Kangla protest, who also used her body as a sight of protest. Such juxtaposition forbids reading these incidents of body protests in isolation and gestures to a new framework of reading terror in this region.

Irom Sharmila's *Fragrance of Peace* (2014) is a collection of twelve poems written by the Iron Lady, Irom Sharmila, and translated into English from the Meitei language. It was published on the tenth anniversary of her hunger strike, demanding the removal of AFSPA from Manipur. This book is significant because it allows a glimpse of a public woman's interior space, as it delves into her psyche and explores the mental and emotional depths. Despite the formidable space that

she gains in the public realm of public, she is a woman who longs for the simple things in life, as simple as an act of drinking water. But what this collection underlines is her desire for her basic right of freedom, which she fights for not only for herself but for her community.

Meghalaya

Siddhartha Deb, *Surface / An Outline of the Republic* (2005/2006). A young reporter, Amrit Singh from The Sentinel, is sent on an assignment to an unnamed region in the northeast (referred to in the novel as "the region") to do a series of stories on the region. In the archives of The Sentinel, Amrit finds a picture of a girl involved in pornography, captured and paraded by an insurgent group in front of the media and then shot dead as an example of the consequences that follow moral laxity. This novel experiments with the idea of representation from many angles.

The representation of violence, public display of power, and the role of the media on such occasions are important issues that the novel deals with. Truth and objectivity are always on a thin balance, as Amrit uses his journalistic training to unravel the real story behind the picture. Gendered violence is in its most stark form in the photograph of the mutilated girl. Questions on morality and social ethics are crucial in such situations when moral policing becomes part of the larger picture that the novel present. Borders and boundaries, be it geographical, psychological or ethical, are blurred in his quest to disassemble meaning.

Nilanjan P Choudhury's novel *Shillong Times: A Story of Friendship and Fear* (2018) is a coming of age story of a teenager, Debu, who has had to live through the tumultuous times of the 1987 ethnic agitations (between Khasis and non-tribal residents), a period in Shillong history that was a culmination of the communal tensions beginning from 1979 and marking its history as one

of the most violent of ethnic violence. The xenophobia that exists to date is explained by the events that the novel relates. Told from the point of view of a non-tribal, the novel gives voice to the other side of the affected and allows for a critical engagement with the question of identity in terms of non-tribals who have made Shillong their homes but who are suddenly experiencing a sense of unbelonging and unwantedness.

In terms of questions of gender and problem of racial purity that is symptomatic of xenophobia is explored the relationship of Debu and Audrey Pariat, a Khasi, a threat that has to be contained for the safety of both individuals. The novel can also be seen as an eyewitness account of the 1987 agitation, as the author himself lived through those troubled times as a boy. Hints of autobiographical elements are sprinkled throughout the text. But what is so important for the author is to portray how such politically charged events make an impact more on the personal space than the public; it is within this context that the protagonist's friendship with Clint needs to be studied.

The To-Let House (2012) is Daisy Hasan's debut novel, but it is written in a tone that is very much matured and that conveys a deep understanding of the characters and their surroundings. Set in the capital of Meghalaya, Shillong, the novel follows the lives of four individuals, Di, Addy, Kulay and Clemmie from their childhood to their adolescence. Ethnicity and xenophobia which plague this region is seen in the relationship of the two families of Kulay and Clemmie, who are natives of the place and Di and Addy, the 'dkhar' that are lining in the to-let house of the former. The simple coming-of-age story of these four individuals is complicated by the backdrop of Shillong, which is depicted as a region experiencing its own identity crisis; the juxtaposition of these two strands of the narrative blurs the line between the personal and the political and is especially epitomised in the character of Kulay.

Janice Pariat's *Boats on Land* (2012) is her debut fiction that achieved immediate critical acclaim as a collection of fifteen stories mostly set in Shillong and parts in Assam where she spent her childhood. The time frame of this collection ranges from the colonial period to the author's contemporary times. Apart from the sprinkle of Khasi words and references throughout, the author also makes abundant use of the rich oral tradition of her tribe. The real is placed alongside the magical and the supernatural almost seamlessly reminiscent of the oral manner of story-telling. The latter half of the collection with stories like "*Laitlum*", "19/87", "*Embassy*", "*The Keeper of Souls*" gives a disenchanted picture of Shillong especially felt by its people post-statehood. The narrative of neglect and abandonment, questions on freedom and identity, ethnic and insurgent violence are subjects that are touched upon by the author in this collection.

Ankush Saikia's *The Girl from Nongrim Hills* (2013), set in the city of Shillong follows a Bok as he embarks on his adventure to find fifty lakhs for his brother who had lost the money during his trip to Nagaland which involved arms dealing for militants. His meeting with the femme fatale Christine throws him into the dark world of danger, corruption and bribery of the politics, militancy and local gangs and the power play that involves all of them.

The socio-political world of Shillong is thrown for open scrutiny in this text as the dangerous world that Bok enters is all too familiar in the state of Meghalaya. The role that Christine plays in the many chancy incidents that the novel portrays offers a glimpse of another side of women's relationship to violence; Christine is so much more than a victim of violence. Ethnicity that is so pertinent to understanding Shillong is not forgotten and is clear in the subtle references that Saikai makes throughout.

R. G. Lyngdoh's novella *Who the Cap Fits* (2016) offers a narrative of violence that is not unheard of in Meghalaya but that many authors shy away from. Told from the perspective of the father, the text follows that narrative of Khrawbor who joins the fictitious militant group, the Meghalaya People's Liberation Army (a backhanded reference to the Hynñiewtrep National Liberation Council).

The author's focus on the private space of the family and the effects of violence in such a space allows for a perspective that has not been made available in this community's history with violence. This text provides an important entry point into the literary debate of identity politics in this community, but problematizes it by laying bare the economic factors that would encourage youths to join such groups for reasons other than that of idealism. Being a former Home Minister of the State during this violent period of Meghalaya's history, the author endows authenticity to the narrative by providing an insider's point of view, especially from the side of the law and thus in a way the narrative also offers itself as an eyewitness account of the event.

Mizoram

Zorami: A Redemption Song (2015), Malsawmi Jacob's debut novel is also the first Mizo novel written in English to reach international acclaim; it deals with the forgotten Mizo history of the famine in the 1960s, followed by the Mizo National Movement soon after. The narrative of neglect in terms of provision by the Assam and Central Governments and to develop the infrastructure of Mizoram and even issues on language gave rise to the Mizo National Movement and its claim for separate statehood.

The intervention of the government through military coercion worsened the situation. In fact, the novelist uses the metaphor of rape (Zorami's rape by an Indian officer) to mirror the trauma following military occupation. The politics of body and space are cogently linked to emphasize the trauma of state sponsored violence. Amidst this state of terror, with insurgency on the one hand, and military occupation on the other, the singing of songs becomes an important means of subversion at many levels, a subversion that eventually leads to redemption not only for Zorami but for the community.

Nagaland

The Nagas were the first ethnic community in North East India to take to insurgency with the objective to establish a sovereign state of Nagalim. The movement was started by Naga National Council under the leadership of Phizo in the 1950s. The following quotation expresses the mood of the Nagas then:

> The Naga militants mobilized the Nagas against the Indian State with the avowed aim of establishing a sovereign Naga nation. They had such a faith in their ability to build their own independent state they viewed all those individuals–Nagas and Indians who expressed doubts about the desirability and possibility of a sovereign Nagaland as their enemies or traitors to their cause. (Srikanth & Thomas).

However, the state repression and the internal rivalries among the Nagas led to splits in the movement. Today there are four factions working toward the same cause. More than the armed repression by the Indian State, the internal factional fights among different Naga militant outfits

have taken a heavy toll on Naga' life. The writings by writers of Nagaland, especially those of Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire reflect the anxieties and dilemmas of the Naga movement.

Temsula Ao, poet, novelist, short story writer, university professor and Padmashree, has several collections of poetry and also short stories. Her short fiction has a breezy, fragrant style that walks her images of Nagaland through a narrative characterized by a genuine touch of simplicity and a female approach to life.

Temsula Ao's *These Hills Called Home* (2005) is a collection of short stories set in the turbulent times of Nagaland. It portrays the grim reality of a war-torn state, where human life is at most times, a suitable and acceptable sacrifice for the greater good of the community. Violence, including gendered violence, terror and the ever looming sense of threat are the backbone of the stories as they narrate Nagas trying to negotiate between issues of home, identity, nation, state, tradition and modernity, armed forces and militancy with the ordinary man caught in a cross-fire of all these situations. These stories make the reader question the accommodating claims of the Indian Nation-state and the distant possibility of real peace.

Another collection *Laburnum for My Head* (2009) brings alive the everyday life of the people of Nagaland. Stories like "*Laburnum for my Head*" and "*Flight*" and "*The Boy who Sold and Airfield*" portray simple everyday life that however acts only as a facade for a more complex metaphor of reality. The emotions evoked by these stories impinge a universal appeal on the simple folk life portrayed by Ao. Terror and violence, and their aftermath are the focus of stories like "*The Letter*", "*A Simple Question*" and "*Sonny*". The menacing nexus of gender and violence is especially felt in "*A Simple Question*," "*The Last Song*" and "*Sonny*".

These stories portray how ordinary people, especially women are the ones that are the most affected by the ensuing violence between the militants, the para-military and the state and they put to question even more complex issues for the Indian Nation-state in relation to Northeast India. Particularly in "*The Last Song*" is articulated the woman's point of view on the rape of a mother and daughter in a church by the rebels. Thus Ao brings out the vision of the gendered body as a space for literary articulation.

Ao's latest novel, *Aosenla's Story* (2018) follows the life of a Naga woman, Aosenla in her search for identity within a dominant patriarchal society. The female self within the Naga society is one that is marred by social restrictions of their traditions and customs, as with Aosenla's marriage. Within the sanctified space of her marriage Aosenla experiences the sacrilegious acts of violent spats, marital rape and infidelity, all of which she bears with patience in silence. But the effects of such kind of psychological violence are clear in Aosenla's psychological make-up. The threat of this kind of violence being repeated is the unwanted birth of her two daughters from the point of view of her husband and in-laws. However, Ao literally gives voice to the voiceless Aosenla in the second half of the novel, as she develops into a stronger individual who wants to have a say in her own family. The oppressive gender norms and expectations within the Naga society fall under detailed scrutiny in Ao's novel.

Temsula Ao's stories are not about the history of Nagaland, but about conflicts, where there are 'no winners, only victims' the results of which 'can be measured only in human terms' (Ao, Introduction to *These Hills Called Home*). Her short story "*The Last Song*" is about the rape of a mother and a daughter in a church by the rebels, making a signature statement of the gendered body as a space for literary articulation.

According to Easterine Kire, writer from Nagaland, it is her actual life experience of terror and insurgency that feeds her writings. The Naga Nationalist Movement, its social, cultural, economic and psychological effect on ordinary people continues to be the crux of Easterine Kire's novels - *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2007), *Mari* (2010), *Bitter Wormwood* (2011), *Life on Hold* (2011) and *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2018).

In the novel *A Terrible Matriarchy*, Kire views a newer dimension of the Naga society that has received as little attention as its politics, which implies its gender social set up. Kire uses the metaphor of food and feeding to explore the gender discrimination that plagues Naga society within the fabric of a narrative point of view of the young Dielieno who observes her grandmother's biased treatment towards her when she is fed along with her brothers. The matriarchy that the author refers to here is terrible because of its suffocating indoctrinating nature which imprisons Dieleino. The text offers another aspect of the idea of resistance that is completely disassociated with subversion that is closer to a sense of suppression. In this stronghold of the domestic, the outside world seems inaccessible if Naga politics that is so essential to its socio-cultural imagination is completely silenced. The violence associated with the public domain of politics is displaced by domestic violence meted out by the grandmother on the granddaughter. To an extent this denial to allow the outside seep into the inside world of the domestic space can also be seen as a coping mechanism for the womenfolk to resist the pain that would flow into the sanctity of the home if given the chance. What is most glaring in the text is the clear cut distinction of gendered spaces, be it physical or psychological.

The novella *Mari* (2010) is a reminder of the forgotten "*Tenniscourt Battle*" in Kohima during World War II when Japanese forces advanced into British dominated parts of Asia but were

slowed down by the Allied forces in the decisive battle in the Naga Hills. Based on a true story of her aunt Mari, who had kept a diary of those troubled times, Kire follows the plight of the Nagas as they battle through hunger, homelessness and flight from one place after another fearing for their lives.

Love becomes an important tool in examining moral codes and conduct during exceptional times of war but it also shows that such political events have more impact on the personal life rather than the public, as Mari parts from her lover no sooner than when their love is realised and later finds out he is dead leaving her alone and pregnant. Orphanhood and the marginal status of women and children are also explored in the text. Although the novel continues to follow Mari after the war, her life after the war only takes a small part of the novel, making it appear it is only the memories of the war that endured years later with everything else as a postscript.

The novel *Bitter Wormwood* (2011), following the life of a villager Moses, charts out the transformation of the Naga society alongside the villager's personal narrative of his joining the Naga Underground movement for a while, offering a much personalised account of the maelstrom of violence as the Nagas fought for their independence from army occupation since 1947. As the novel follows Moses' story from childhood to his present age, it also charts out the development of the Naga Nationalist Movement from its romantically conceived stage to the stage of factional divide within and hence the effects following such a development. As pointed out in the introduction, the novel is about "the ordinary people whose lives were completely overturned by the freedom struggle" (Kire Web) and gives voice to the unheard tales of suffering. The author seems to question the value put on human life in the name of political gains and media coverage

in her portrayal of the mass genocide, hunger and starvation, and even the defilement of traditional belief systems.

What brings this novel to a more intimate level is the manner in which Kire can capture the psychological nuances of the characters. The description of Naga culture, beliefs and rituals gives a sense of rootedness to the narrative and lends it an authenticity that can only be achieved by such a narrative. In her Introduction to Bitter Wormwood, Kire discusses the confused identity of the young Nagas trapped between the realities of the creation of Naga statehood in 1963, empowering them to become Indian citizens and imposing AFSPA and Disturbed Areas Act denying their rights as Indian citizens.

Similarly, her novel *Life on Hold* (2011) views the impact of the Naga movement at its much later phase during the 1980s-1990s. The private space is no longer separate from the public as the novel follows the story of two young lovers who are torn apart when the young boy commits himself to the cause of the Nationalist Movement leaving behind his beloved. The concepts of love and sacrifice take a deeper and more complex meaning, transcending their application within the private sphere into the public, within the context of such kind of violence.

In Kire's *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2018), the act of remembering becomes an important tool of subversion for most postcolonial communities whose course of history has changed because of the colonial encounter but have at the same time been forgotten within the larger discourse of mainstream colonial history. Through her novel, Kire also tries to reclaim parts of this colonial history of the Nagas that have been forgotten in the annals of Indian history. A historical novel, it offers a detailed portrayal of the Angami warriors of Khonoma during 1832-1880 as they resisted British forced recruitment of Nagas as bonded labourers. The novel is

also able to aptly capture the traditional agrarian society of the Nagas, its culture and social customs before foreign intrusion and the modernizing effect of British domination.

Laxmi Murthy & Mitu Varma's *Garrisoned Minds: Women and Armed Conflict in South Asia* (2016) is a collection of accounts of narratives of conflict ridden areas of South Asia, written by twelve journalists. The accounts are specific to the effects of terror and violence on women not only in terms of them being victims but bearing arms themselves. The significance of this text within the framework of gendered narratives of terror and violence in the Northeast is the fact that it puts the struggle of this region (particularly Nagaland and Manipur) with militancy and terror on a larger global platform and therefore allowing for a larger range of visibility for academic engagement.

The comparative framework set by this text is another noteworthy theoretical contribution in the scholarship of conflict studies of this region. Through her successful narrative of the violence and trauma of her displaced community effected during the colonial past, she can offer a counter-hegemonic narrative that displaces the colonial narrative of occupation and colonial victory through a female tribal perspective that challenges such a victory.

Bijoya Sawian's *Shadow Men* (2010) starting with a strong sense of a murder mystery, as the protagonist, Rasheel hears gunshots which is soon after revealed as a murder of a dhkar (an outsider) in the neighbourhood, the novel develops to be more than that. The violence that ensues as the mystery unravels becomes reflective of the larger political instability of the state, questions on ethnicity and xenophobia raised by the author gives a better understanding of the psychological make-up of a community who are themselves struggling with their own identity. Robert, for instance, cannot help but question his self within the matrilineal set up. The novel gives an overall

glimpse of the historical, social and cultural set up of Shillong and its unwanted and unplanned development which has left it in its present state.

From Temsula Ao to Mamang Dai to many other female writings, the North-east narratives on conflict and insurgency very often bring out a gendered narrative on two counts: woman's encounter with the experience of terror either as a relative to the militant or as a witness of terror and secondly woman's perspective of terror that arises from the writer's or character's preoccupation with terror. Although the focus of the research is on the English writings of terror in the northeast, however, seminal texts with a gendered perspective from the regional languages have also been discussed. Mamang Dai is an important writer from Arunachal Pradesh, bringing a female tribal perspective into her narratives on her homeland, though there is not much of a terror perspective in her writings, except a retelling of colonial histories of terror and violence resisted by the Arunachal tribes people. Her novel *The Black Hill* (2017) brings one such perspective of reconstruction of history.

Rashmi Saksena's *She Goes to War: Women Militants of India* (2018) is an unabashed non-judgemental account of women insurgents across India featuring sixteen women militants from five states in India. They are neither painted as victims of violence or forced recruitment, nor are they judged as the perpetrators. The first person narrative format that Saksena uses in her text allows for an almost testimonial approach of telling their stories, which also ensures the non-judgemental tone that the author maintains throughout the book.

While it lacked the historical frameworks of the militancy in context, the book gives a new insight into understanding what it takes to be a woman militant. The problems associated with the female self within this spectrum of militant involvement are blatantly discussed as with the Naga

women militants who trekked all the way to China for three months for their training with blood stained trousers as they get their menstruation. Saksena also attempts an examination of their rehabilitation into 'normal' life that puts to question the very idea of normalcy for such women and stretches the boundaries of social acceptance.

Parismita Singh's *Centrepiece: New Writing and Art from Northeast India* (2018) is a compiled anthology that explores the limits of story-telling beyond words to also include art, poetry, photography, essays, fiction, textiles. It includes the works of twenty-one artists and writers from across Northeast India who wrote around the theme of work within a gendered context. Such an engagement with new modes of telling can, as the book points out, redefine our idea of representation and hence identity formations. No work is too insignificant, be it hawking or mothering or collecting dung, for the dignity of labour and within the context of gender the relationship between work and domestic obligations is something the text also explores.

Esther Syiem, *Memoir in Water: Speaks the WahUmkhrah* (2017) is a memoir made up like a short-story cycle with the WahUmkhrah (the Imkhrah river) tying all the nine stories together. The stories are about ordinary people that are all too identifiable to anyone from Shillong and told emphatically from the perspective of the river. The author's personification of the river as a woman allows her to achieve an almost first-hand eyewitness account of the lives of the people she is narrating and provides a gendered reading of these narratives. The act of witnessing becomes a political, sociological and even ecological act as Nature acts as witness to the violence and atrocities of mankind. Hence the eco-feminist overtones of the text cannot be ignored. Syiem brings to life a river that has been neglected and even afflicted by the thoughtlessness of the inhabitants of Shillong, and gives voice to the muted in more ways than one through this text.

Talilula's *Raconteurs from the Hills* (2014) is an anthology of short stories of six diverse authors from Northeast India unfolding tales of their homelands on diverse subject matters that capture the ethos and the milieu of where they come from. They bring to light issues of violence and terror, substance abuse and gambling that plague their societies, but they also bring in stories of love, passion and laughter.

Analysis of Select Texts from India written in English on 9/11 Terror that present a gendered perspective

Indian narratives on terror and violence are not new to the Indian literary scenario. Indian novels like Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*, Khushwant Singh's *The Train to Pakistan*, Shashi Tharoor's *Riot: A Novel* are known socio-political narratives remembering the violence and trauma of their times of the Indian Partition. Indian drama dramatizes political violence emanating from tyrants or political conflicts as seen in the dramatization of violence in Vijay Tendulkar's *Khasiram Kotwal* and Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* or narration of insurgency in Ratan Thiyam's *Chakravyug* and representation of communal violence in Mahesh Dattani's *The Final Solutions*.

Several Indian women writers also narrate violence in their writings, such as Kamala Markandaya and Shashi Deshpande creating women as passive sexual victims taking an escape route, or Anita Desai's presentation of the horror of the violence of rape in *The Fire on the Mountain* or Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, focusing on the female protagonist as a victim of racial and sexual violence and her rise in arms to kill the defaulter. The Magsaysay awarded playwright

Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* dramatizes a woman's mother loss in the Naxalbari movement, just as B. Gauri's *Aur Kitne Tukde*, based on Urvashi Butalia's book on partition narratives by women, makes a powerful statement on woman's memory and trauma of the Partition. In Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi*, the rape victim Dopdi, gang raped by the police, expresses her anger through disrobing and remaining naked. In her novella *Rudali* dramatized by Usha Ganguli, the female protagonist moves one step ahead in her rebellion against the oppressor by exploiting the very system that created prostitutes now turned into rudalis. In Mahasweta Devi's writings violence of women encompasses even sex workers who were conventionally never treated as the victim of sexual violence.

Very often memory and trauma reflected by women writers do not trace the path of a political and cultural memory but a gendered personal or private or cultural memory as seen in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror*, Desai's *Fire on the Mountain*, Kamala Markhandhaya's *Nectar in the Sieve*, Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, Ambai's short story "*Black Square Horse*," Dina Mehta's *Getting Away with Murder*, Poile Sengupta's *Mangalam* and Manjula Padmanabhan's *Lights Out*. Very often, depiction of violence ranges from a victim perspective to a victimized rebel's struggle, and the themes generated by Indian writers very often exhibit gendered worldviews.

While discussing violence against women, Urvashi Butalia mentions three crucial phases of terror regarding systematized or armed violence: violation of the female body; violation of the female human dignity, whereby she undergoes physical / mental incarceration that culminates in her degeneration from the 'Sita to Draupadi' syndrome; and sexual enslavement of woman to bring

her down to confession and the brutality caused by women as an 'extension of ego or possession of the male considered as enemy' (2).

In Butalia's study of the violence on women during communal violence (Partition), three-tiered modes of violence have been studied: violence by religious fanatics to control / possess a woman because she belongs to a particular religion, leading to either abduction, rape and murder; self-inflicted violence or suicide; and violence by family member as honor killing, in order to save woman from rape, abduction or possession and also to prevent pollution of race.

In domestic violence or gang rapes or terror inflicted violence to the control of the female body, loss of female dignity and trauma caused by memory of violence become crucial consequences of these violent occurrences.

How Kashmiri women are represented in these Kashmiri narratives? When it comes to portrayal of Kashmiri women in these narratives, Rita Manchanda considers 'the grieving Mother' as the most obvious stereotype from the historical narrative, mentioning that there is 'no chronicle of women's experience of organized political violence' (9). Women are veiled as victims of human rights violation by pro-Azadi political groups, where women are showcased as symbols of victimhood. However, Rita Manchanda shows the various other roles women take in conflict ridden zones such as "citizens, combatants, heads of households, war munitions workers, prostitutes, producers of soldiers and war resisters and political leaders at the local and national level" (Manchanda quoted by Mridha 137).

Mridha further says that these narratives reveal "acute consciousness of women's Kashmiri identity as distinct to the larger Indian identity." (137) Basharat Peer, amongst the male

writers, represents women and their limited existence in his memoir. Mostly in male narratives, women are represented as victims of paramilitary forces, as 'grieving mothers' or as silent spectators of violence. However, in these male narratives the focus is more on attack of the Indian army rather than arriving at gender equality or gender justice.

Many women writers write on the political issues, including Anjum Zamarud Habib, Asiya Andrabi, Parveen Ahangar, etc.. Habib is the only woman to be arrested under POTA and she writes about her life in prison, commenting that there is a lack of respect for Kashmiri prisoners in the prison. 'The assertion of the collective self as a common political / authorial strategy for the pro-Azadi Kashmiri politicians and writers is seen in Habib too in her assertion of her Kashmiri Muslim identity. (Mridha 138). She also criticises the patriarchal mindset of the Hurriyat conference leaders and mentions their failure to support her during her arrest and imprisonment.

Among the narratives on Kashmir conflict by women writers, though only a handful, are the loudest voices that have been heard. Among the pro-Azadi women writers, there are Kashmiri Pandit and Muslim writers. The Kasmiri Pandit women writers mostly write about their exile from their land of Kashmir, which was once their homeland, about loss of their personal space called home, and also about their wretched survival in the refugee camps outside Kashmir. Nitasha Kaul, a Pandit woman writer, talks about how women in Kashmir are the worst sufferers, since they not only lost their family members but also were raped. Although women writers are less, women's support for Azadi is more and stronger. Few women are engaged in politics in Kashmir because of the conflict situation and patriarchal mindset plus military and militant domination.

Nitasha Kaul, in her essays, addresses the following issues: the need for historical engagement with Kashmir; Kashmir as unique in its identity and culture and its incomparability,

as a boundary space, with the countries of Pakistan, India and China; critiquing of both India and Pakistan, unlike the Kashmiri Azadi writers; different from Habib in her secular approach to Kashmiri nationalism; the politics of representing Kashmir. In her novel *Residue* (2014), while critiquing the Islamophobia and the right wing leanings of the Pandit community after their mass exodus from Kashmir, she establishes the idea of 'Kashmiriyat' through her portrayal of friendship and camaraderie between the Kashmiri Islam and Pandit communities.

Residue throws light on the lives of two Kashmiris, a Pandit and a Muslim raised in Delhi and living in England. The title reflects the residual instincts and feelings that one is left with and that which may grow across the borders in dislocation and diasporic spaces. Other Kashmiri Pandit writers like Sudha Koul, in her *The Tiger Ladies: A memoir from Kashmir* (2003) and Khema Kaul in her diary *Samay ke Baad* (Hindi) write about their double marginalized lives, by militants and by patriarchy. In her memoir Sudha Koul traces three generation of women – her grandmother, mother and herself and their confinement to domestic work. She also critiques the Pandit patriarchy for female oppression as much as she critiques Kashmiri nationalists for sexual violence on Kashmiri Pandit women and their imposition of the burqa on Kashmiri Muslim women. Khema Kaul traces the exile and homelessness of the Pandit community.

While Mahasweta Devi deals with the state–programmed terror vis-à-vis Naxalites, a banned left-wing militant group in India, Indira Goswami details the state of Assam, now in the grip of the struggle of different ethnic insurgent groups fighting against the Indian State. Temsula Ao gives a very matter-of-fact presentation of the conflict between the Naga militancy and the military that has destroyed the normal way of living. Irom Sharmila's activist poems reflect the history of the struggle against armed conflict and its impact on the life of rural communities.

Mahasweta Devi discusses the politics behind terror; while Goswami attempts to explore the humanitarian view of terror; Ao brings out the story of a "convoluted politics of the ravaged land…in the self-diminishing moves and counter-moves of a people living in limbo." (Ao "*Sonny*" 248); Sharmila views terror and peace process.

At the outset Goswami's perspective on terrorism is gendered in the sense that she views the young protagonist's strength as something because of the emotional support and understanding from the female member of the family, viz his mother. Secondly Goswami reveals how Parasu's faith in humanity is restored at the end, when he receives help from Pathan the 'foreign' moneylender, proving wrong the anti-immigrant stand of the Assam militants who hold that 'foreigners' handle their plight. Such an effort to view the kindness of the moneylender, an 'outsider' in the eyes of the Assamese society, reveals the writer's effort at 'border crossing', something typical of women's writing.

While *Parasu Pator's Well* makes a critical examination of a youth resisting terror in a terror-ridden society and his family cooperating in his struggle, the other story, Journey examines terror from the point of view of the family affected by a young family member joining militancy. In the beginning of the tale, the narrator, obviously the author here, listens to the discussions on terrorism between the driver and her colleague from Delhi University, on their way back from Kaziranga, one of the world famous national parks in India. She seeks to divert attention from terrorism's grave reality through remembrance of pleasant memories of Kaziranga: "I sat in the car, looking out of the window. Trying to imagine myself back on the verandah of the Kaziranga tourist lodge, listening to the wind making the thick clumps of bijuli bamboo rustle as if it were

muga silk. I remembered the moon spotlight a huge owl that sat on a chatyan tree, its head disproportionately large, like that of a newborn baby." (Goswami "*Journey*." 129).

However, the narrator is led gradually to face terrorism as a reality in due course, when she encounters an old couple owning a tea shop, where they stop by to wait until their broken car could be repaired. The narrator then gradually realizes the family's dire poverty and miserable conditions they live in from the following information: the escape of the son to join militancy, the daughter's affair with a CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) soldier, her pregnancy and the Assamese youth's scoffing her affair because of their hatred for the Indian Army. The narrator, pleased with the brief but beautiful respite in their humble environment, offers perks for the tea they offered. The narrator derives pleasure from the old couple's company and she takes pleasure in helping the needy. But her joy does not last long, since there is an intrusion from the militant son who pounces on the money 'like a vulture.' The militant's interference at one level reveals his hatred for the 'Indian soldier' and his intention to purchase an American second hand gun with the money he grabs.

What is interesting is the gendered perspective of the narration at this moment, when the narrator is left to sense the sudden disappearance of the rustic beauty of Assam and the simplicity of its people: "Mirajkar and I resumed our journey toward Guwahati. Neither of us spoke. It was as if we were travelling through a dark tunnel, endlessly. (139). The image of a dark endless tunnel contrasts the majestic beauty of Kaziranga, and it also reveals metaphorically, a sense of hopelessness for the future of Assam.

Goswami's eco sensitivity and ecological perspective of terror could be identified in her juxtaposition of the images of terror and images of Kaziranga's beauty. The aura of Kaziranga's

flora and fauna, Assamese folklore and music offer temporary relief from the reality of terror, which the narrator has to face, anyway. The author not only brings out an ecological awareness but also a sense of nostalgia for the fast perishing world of innocence and purity that terrorism threatens to vanquish forever.

In her choice for the first tale to centre a young man's struggle amidst the terrorist environment and also in her decision for the second tale to underline the victimization of the family in the wake of militancy, Goswami starts a new gendered discourse on terror. Here there is no attempt at 'writing the self', nor a passive feminist position of a female - centered sympathetic account of terror, but a female author viewing terror from a humanist angle.

A detailed critical analysis of a few of Ao's stories reveals the writer's gendered representation of terror. Her short story "Sonny" retells how the female protagonist's assiduously re-structured life' is troubled by 'the murky politics of a contested land'. It deals with the process of a woman's coping with the death of her ex-lover, Sonny, who is a Naga militant, killed because of internal rivalry. What is interesting about the story is the female insider's perception of the whole Naga movement for independent statehood This is perceived in the female narrator's description of the Naga movement when her militant lover was courting her:

> …those were also the exciting days of national fervor that caught the imagination of all and sundry both in the rural and urban populace. For the so-called educated elite of the towns, success of the movement meant setting up an independent country where the inequalities and injustices of the repressive 'occupation' forces would be eliminated. Not only that, many lent their support with an eye to personal gains in the new setup. But for the rural people, it was simply seen as an opportunity

> to return to the utopian state of self-rule before the alien rulers came and overturned their ancient way of life. (Ao "Sonny 244).

If the above description provides a 'background casually' unwinding of the woman's viewpoint of the Naga movement, the quotation below states the devastation it creates to ordinary citizens:

> The call to the armed rebellion was like heady wine at first. But the retaliatory measures of the government forces blazed through the land like a wildfire, turning villages into burnt-out heaps and people into creatures herded into concentration-camp-like grouping zones. Families were separated, women were raped and killed, and the men were forced to see the humiliation before they too were maimed for life or simply killed. The stories filtering through the urban grapevine only added fuel to the anger and hostility brewing in the minds of those pursuing higher education in various institutions in different cities. (241).

The above description has a journalistic style of retelling terror and violence and it also conveys an insider's view of a holocaust–like situation, as seen in how the rural Nagas are uprooted from their homes and how the public are wounded in the violent clashes between the army and the militants.

The narrator's attempt to trace her associations with her ex-lover Sonny, whom she believes, "would stand by his principles, come what may" (241), expresses two angles on terror - political and personal - relevant to understand the woman's point of view on Naga militancy. The

political viewing adopted by the author shows how she examines the weaknesses of the militant group torn by rivalry and selfish intention. Such a viewing by a female persona reveals the futility of factional fights on political grounds and the female understanding of the hostility that exists in the male dominated world. Hence the narration traces Sonny's recognition both inside and outside as a leader, as the root cause of rivalry against him, which consequently leads to his de-recognition from his seniors and also to his ultimate death:

During those years, when the world was avidly following the career of a revolutionary called Fidel Castro and his friend and advisor Che Guevara, some of his admirers went to the extent of comparing Sonny to the enigmatic Che claiming that he was the real brain of the entire movement. This certainly did not endear him to the powers within the movement, and from the moment he joined their ranks, he had to walk a tightrope in the multi-headed ideological minefield within. (241).

Further, her ironic examination of the militant conflict with an unknown enemy reveals an existential situation:

> … Sonny was entering into a twilight zone in the struggle for freedom where one could not identify the real enemy anymore, because the conflict was no longer only of armed resistance against an identifiable adversary; it had become an ideological battlefield within the resistance movement itself, posing new dangers from fellow national workers supposedly pursuing a common goal. And today Sonny had become a victim of his own convictions when the assassins pumped the bullets into a fellow fighter's bosom. (241).

When the narration switches from the political to the personal, one identifies the female narrator's awareness of their love failing to culminate in marriage because of Sonny's dream for an independent country and his ultimate death in the hands of his own fellow militants: "When he quietly slipped away from my life into another sphere of existence, I was plunged into an abyss of self-doubt and self-recrimination for my obsessive love for a man who regarded his own nationalistic passion more important than the love of a woman." (241).

Thus the female narrator's outlook reveals the woman's political and personal view of terror. The personal view centres the female dreams about love, marriage and happiness and portrays how female dreams are shattered to pieces by militancy and also expresses the female protagonist's regret about it. Such an outlook opens up an alternative viewing. The political view of the author reveals a woman's point of view of what went wrong with an idealistic movement, internally cracked from within. Such an outlook opens up an idiosyncratic perception on militancy, neither pro or anti militancy, but an insider-outsider perspective that is interestingly level-headed and humane, similar to what is experienced in Goswami's narratives on militancy.

From the above–mentioned women writers writing on insurgency, terror, violence and peace activism, one could come to following conclusions: First these writings set a model for a new genre of women's literature (can we call it women's activist literature?) that seeks to play a positive role to ease conflict and violence and to bring about harmony in the land of these writers. While politics could exclude women from the decision-making process, it is these writings that become vehicles of women's political viewpoints and concern for peace. Women's literature as seen in these writings becomes a symbol of a slow revolution that is taking place in the process of

woman's political interventions in peace process and reiterates the truth that woman no more remains 'her master's voice." (Nag 208).

The perspective one gets when one reads their works is that all the four writers view terror and violence as a threat to quotidian life. Their themes traverse from innocence to violence, trauma and militancy and even negative effects/affects of terror on innocent people and even genuine revolutionaries. They render an awareness of the social roots of terrorism and also occasionally empathy with the militants. They rightly view terrorism as an offshoot of economic, political and social contradictions inherent in the modern world.

While recording their tales of terror, they interrogate male centric views on terror. In a broader sense, these writers question the official interpretations of terror. Unlike the male writers who mostly reflect on terror in a more mechanistic and professional manner, these writings show that their reflections on terror are viewed in the background of family relations, yearning for love and marriage, fear of separation from the loved ones and importantly registering a female reaction to violence, rape and trauma. Border crossing, a metaphor of women's writing, is seen in all these works.

These women writers cross borders in all spheres–be it ethnic, class, regional, political. A money lender extending help to a man from an ethnic group that hates him as a foreigner, or the proscribed love as seen in an Assamese woman in love with the man from the Indian army, or I terms of a middle / upper class woman sympathizing with Naxalite movement, a woman trying to bring her boyfriend in ULFA to the national mainstream, and middle class and rich woman identifying and empathizing with movements of the lower classes and castes, a mother's lament but yet her unquenchable love for her militant son, Sharmila's poem that expresses that the persona

does not mind her dead body rotting, but wishes that it spreads fragrance of peace in her local and broader universe, or a mother's lament but yet unquenchable love for her militant son–these are all instances of border crossings. Further, images of their native land–seen in descriptions of native landscapes or customs and cultures or scenes of its dismembering through violence and disturbances–abound so much in these women writers' works that, one concludes these writers love their land and are pained by its mutilation through bloodshed. Their works reflect their love for home through their love for its landscape and its fertility.

Their approach to state and terrorism is intimately related to their concern for families and communities they live in. These women's texts and their choice of tales of terror told from the woman's point of view, show their gendered worldviews. Challenging the existence of military in the region is an issue crucially handled by women's organizations here. The works of these women writers naturally contain this issue of militarization of the region. Hence woman's role in conflict resolution, peace process, and mitigation of violence or rehabilitation measures expressed through culture and literature is a recurrent phenomenon in the region.

Similarly, the role of images in the aftermath of a terror attack can be observed in these narratives. In the aftermath of 9/11, images played a significant role. They were used to acting out the collective trauma, which according to the historian Dominick La Capra is "the tendency to relive or reenact the past through flashbacks, nightmares, and compulsively repeated words and images. Over time, these images also became a way to "work through" the trauma, a means to gain critical distance from the events" ("The Depiction of 9/11 in Literature: The Role of Images and Intermedial Reference").

Similarly, the image of the 'invisible prison' in which Nagas are living is described in the words of Kire whereby they are 'denied freedom of expression, freedom to nationhood and most painfully, freedom to life itself' (Kire). Also, the dichotomy between the state produced terror, and the militant produced terror is very often expressed effectively in the literary narratives. Nirupama Borgohain's short story "*The Crucifixion*" projects the metaphor of rape. Even in the jungle in which the protagonist narrator lives seems melancholic, "as if...[it] had been raped by monstrous human beings and the entire forest with its jetuka and henua leaves would start bleeding any moment." (158).

Innocent women, mostly related to terrorists, are tortured by police inhumanly and the images of such torture abound in this story, in memory of the witnesses or news reports. For example, the story says: "A couple of creamy lotuses had bloomed in Rohini's breasts too. But after the torturers sank their fangs into them, they are'nt lotuses any more...they had simply turned into lumps of gory flesh." (152). Images of torture abound as seen above and also as described by Borgohain thus:

> Shahajan Banu of Naya Bazaar in Bhagalpur, thirty years of age, lost everything. Her husband Shabir Raja, her brother Firoze, and her four children were killed in front of her eyes….and away from human habitation, the woman was tortured all night long. She was hit on her stomach, head and chest. Her hands were tied behind her back, and she was made to lie on her stomach and caned. Three wooden planks were placed across her legs, and three constables climbed up and down the planks, kneading her as though they were kneading flour. (154).

Thus these narratives focus on displacement, idealization of the lost space or land or life, idyllic approach to life, therefore making narration to achieve metaphorized reclamation, what is destroyed or lost cannot be reclaimed in the same manner. These narratives very often enact the psychological trauma because of violation of human rights. Primarily most terror narratives reveal women as the worst victims of terror, whether they partake in terror or do not partake in conflict situations. Hence we need to decipher terror narratives as constructed / reconstructed narratives from specific perspectives like the political point of view, terrorist angle, gendered point of view, etc.

The study above offers only a bird's-eye view of a powerful female literary landscape of the regions of Bengal and North East India that still needs to be meticulously explored, documented and researched. Women's writing in these regions can achieve the literary space, recognition and acclaim they deserve, only when more scholars are inspired to give room for scholarly discussion.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

When one explores the issues of terror, violence and terrorism from gendered worldviews, the multiple questions arise with the urge to explore answers too. Why violence? Are such acts of violence myth / belief generated? For too many beliefs and stereotypes of women remain alive even today, such as woman as the weaker sex or the other of man, woman as the patriarchal tool, woman as object / tool of violence, revenge, voyeurism and pornography, woman as the symbol of male targeted emotions of violence, vendetta politics, revenge and games.

There are myths partially contributing to the generation of prejudices against women. Further, why violence against women and why not violence against men as a subject? What is the vision of the author on the terror event? What are the changes / evolutions that take place when an author employs a literary medium in order to explore a contemporary terror strike or repercussions of that event? What is the author's stand regarding terror or violence? Is it an anti-terror or pro-terrorist statement or a neutral spectator's position? What is the language of terror and violence? All the above questions were explored and examined in relation to the select narratives of South

Asia on terror and gender and conclusions were arrived at based on these explorations. What was deciphered from these explorations are to be discussed in the rest of this chapter.

It is women and children who suffer the most from violence, whether it is epidemic outbreaks of communal or political conflicts or any type of gendered harassment in the domestic and workplace environments. Whether it is the Partition violence or communal riots like the Hindu-Muslim conflicts or the Godhra carnage, women were victimized in the worst form of violence including rape, honor killing, abduction leading to forced marriage, prostitution, pornography, acid throwing and horrific killing of pregnant women.

Though gender violence is something that affects even man, most of the gender violence is directed at women. According to social scientists - though gendered violence exists in both the male and female sexes, 'male violence far exceeds female violence'. (MaithreyiKrishnaraj 1). The proliferating cases of sexual violence in India today, particularly even after the widespread protests against the brutal rape of Nirbhaya in Delhi or the fatal end of Suzette Jordan, who demanded the justice and dignity because of a woman, are points in case.

When one tries to understand the gendered perspective of the terror narratives, one at the outset tries to look for the gendered angle in the discourse of terror. However, from my reading of the major works on terror, much to my disappointment, very few texts of the male writers deal with a gendered discourse. Hence an exploration into these texts and their worlds made one arrive at the truth that, when women have been marginalised from the discourse of nationalism, it is only obvious that they have never been part of the discourse of terrorism. This is true of the Partition of India in 1947 that unleashed not only displacement of millions but also triggered terror of women and children.

Suppose we assume that there had been a civil rights movement by women obstructing Partition that had expected the struggle of displacement, abduction, rapes, infanticide and genocide, perhaps the violence and terror of Partition might have been averted. Similarly, in the discourse on terrorism too women have been marginalised and the adverse influence of terrorism has taken a toll on families, particularly affecting women and children. This is true with Kashmir, where Kashmir nationalism and the counter-terrorism measures by the government had an adverse influence on Kashmiri women, children and families comprising senior citizens. The Kashmiri writings on terror certainly reflect this political negligence, the havoc on women, children and families in general.

Some narratives of women trapped in terror conflict zones bring out this adverse effect, spelling out the following, as causing such an adverse effect: the double oppression women go through in conflict zones, being oppressed in patriarchal societies and further succumbing to violence and terror as soft targets of terror; the fear and panic of being amid the presence of the army and its presence and incidents of oppression, and being victims of gendered violence when not being partisan to political decisions or insurgent attacks. Further, the struggle by the Muslim women or hijras in the background is noteworthy, since they face double discrimination, as seen in Roy's hijra character Anjum in *The Ministry* or Abdullah's 9/11 Muslim widow Arissa.

The discourse of terror traced in several works revealed the following characteristics, particularly those of 9/11 terror texts: first person collectives or trauma narratives or eyewitness accounts on terror that describe the initial shock that the terror act generated; the aftermath of 9/11 and the cultural stigma of brandishing certain communities as terrorists and stereotyping them or

Islamophobia; terror from the fundamentalist perspective; understanding subject of terror along with its historical/political/economic/social implications.

Other than writings on 9/11 terror, there are many narratives emanating from terror situations in South Asia. To understand these narratives, first a study of select South Asian narratives in English was undertaken and the terror situations were carefully examined as mentioned earlier. From these one could successfully arrive at a proper critique of these narratives and provide a fuller critical conclusion to these narratives.

The examined women writers' narratives represent multifarious layers of terror situations faced by women. They question sometimes the achievement of a nationalist agenda at the cost of female autonomy. A few at least view terrorism with an intention to find a solution to the conflict, as we see in activist leaders like Irom Sharmila's hunger strike for years to remove AFSPA. Very often these narratives written by women writers challenge the notion of gendered identity trapped between the state agenda and the terrorist manifesto.

From the issues so far highlighted and discussed on gendered narratives on 9/11 terror, one could arrive at the following findings:

First, the writers, especially women writers, view terror as a threat to the ordinary citizens' lives. Their themes traverse from the terrorist victimization of the innocents to the negative effects of terror post 9/11 on genuine revolutionaries and create an awareness of the social roots of terrorism that encourage empathizing with the so-called terrorists and also of the sociopolitical repercussions of terror, trauma and violence.

Second, they interrogate male centric views on terrorism as reflected in post-9/11 declarations of the fight against terrorism by US and its allies. In a broader sense, these writers question the official interpretations of terrorism. They come out against certain notions of terrorism, like the civilizational perspective of terrorism, which identifies terrorism within certain communities. They rightly view terrorism as an offshoot of economic, political and social contradictions inherent in the modern world.

Thirdly border crossing, a metaphor of women's writing, is seen in several narrators. Most of the writers cross borders in all spheres–be it ethnic, class, regional, political. A middle class Black American author like Danticat identifying and empathizing with Haitian refugees, and also Oates' interrogation of the American sense of home as a haven, Arundhati Roy's empathizing with the Naxalite cause or Mahasweta Devi's seeking roots of Santhal or Adivasi insurgent cause as an offshoot of state repression and Roy's vituperative on politically motivated communal clashes as the offshoot of vile politicians privileging vote bank politics over communal harmony–are all instances of border crossings.

Hosseini in fact proves that border crossing need not be done only by women authors through his expression of dissatisfaction towards religious violence and terror stimulated by sentencing of social stigmas like adultery. The discarding of the veil by Arissa, which is initially a gendered act to protect herself from Islamophobia transcends the borders of Muslim identity in the novelist ascribing larger virtues of "tolerance, peace and bridge-building" as the "concept of Islam" (120), rather than the superficially physical identities of Islam such as bearded Mullah or the veiled Islamic woman, in Abdullah's *Saffron Dreams*. The gendered reading of this novel

reveals a woman's lone fight against xenophobia; the book's positive approach to a negative idea of terrorism and terror attacks proves her as an author with feminist zeal.

These writings show that their reflections on terror are viewed in the background of family relations, yearnings for love, marriage, fear of separation from the loved ones, victimization of women and children, lopsided punishments for the so called sexual crimes and also stereotyping of the terrorist particularly belonging to Muslim communities. Their approach to state and terrorism is intimately related to their concern for families and communities they live in. While the women's texts studied here and their choice of tales of terror told from the woman's point of view, indicate their gendered worldviews, the male written texts studied here are also not devoid of their gender perceptions.

In fact, in the narrator's exasperation of the sexual abuse and destruction of the Afghan orphans and also of the tale of the protagonist's rescue of the abused nephew from the clutches of the Taliban leader, Hosseini's narrative hails him as a champion of the gendered cause. Similarly, Shyam Selvadurai creates gender awareness through assertion of particular gender identities that only get subsumed by racial identity, conflict and diasporic escaping from such spaces of oppression.

Conclusions of the Research Project:

Terror narratives, whether based on 9/11 from America or terror texts from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Srilanka and India reveal multifarious approaches to the subject of terror and terrorism. Some of these approaches are explored below: Why terror? Why communal riots? What is the root cause? Is it because of the hatred or mistrust that has spread and ingrained in us? Is there a need to examine

and reexamine in order to understand the primitivity of our thoughts in relation to communities other than our own? What forms do this 'othering' give rise to? Does this 'othering' of culture lead to the privileging of one's own as the most superior? Is it leading humanities to 'righting' one's own culture and ''wronging' others? Is terror rooted on such harping on cultural differences rather than the similarities or oneness, supporting disharmony rather than harmony? Is this cultural 'othering' that gradually poisons the cultural fabric? These were some of the rhetorical questions raised while examining the findings.

While the American terror narratives explore the impact of 9/11 on the national consciousness as an American, Pakistani writers like Naqvi and Hanif revealing the psychological impact of 9/11 on the Pakistani-American psyche and on the ordinary Muslim citizen assumed to be and targeted as a terrorist, with writers like Aslam exploring the terrorist worldview and Zak discussing the chilling world of extremism. American 9/11 representations of woman's reaction to terror strikes and its aftermath experiences provide a gendered perspective to the event where, one senses woman's strength in facing the emergency and her decision not to quit, as has already been discussed regarding Benjamin Luft's non-fiction.

The texts studied, mostly written by women all over the world, both American texts on the 9/11 and South Asian narrations of terror and violence get to the root cause of these mishaps of terror and violence. Accordingly it can deciphered that the terror situation is because of the inability of cultures to mingle, coordinate, or at least officiate oneness in celebration and coliving in oneness. In such a situation, riots are bound to happen and terrorists are bound to strike with vile politicians to take advantage of the vulnerable cultural situations. This situation has been witnessed in many narratives, particularly Abdullah's novel or Hosseni's novel or a film like *My*

Name is Khan, where the autistic protagonist has to take up the Herculean task of a journey to reach the President of America carrying the cultural message that though his name is Khan, he is NOT a terrorist.

Hence the emphasis on these writings are not merely on the terror event or the responses it evoked, as seen in Ground Zero writings of 9/11, but also represent a sense of apprehension of cultural phobias it creates, giving rise to also what Kamila Shamsie called as 'war on terror' dimensions and its further devastating impact on ordinary lives.

The most direct perspective that comes out of many narratives is on how women become the worst victims of any riot or act of terror, as they become soft targets as the surrogate of man to be appropriated and destroyed, opening up the discourse of why woman becomes the effigy of the fanatic rioters unleashing terror. In some writings, women are portrayed as being doubly marginalised by the nationalists and also within the familial patriarchy, as observed in the double loss of a Muslim woman in the post 9/11 American society. Therefore, in these gendered narratives, there is a reiteration of the individual's freedom, as in Malala's book, to lead a free and fair life, free from the terrorists and free from their cultural policing of ordinary people, with emphasis on child abuse and female harassment as human rights issues; such an ethnophobic environment, of viewing Muslims as the terrorist other or Islam terrorists viewing the west as the Muslim betrayer, makes the western life an alienated one for the former and the same western life, despite its Islamophobic atmosphere, as offering freedom and right to live a free life away from terror.

The gendered stories of terror and trauma as narrated in these narratives seem to belong to what Urvashi Butalia terms 'the history of silence.' Very often in these narratives, the female body

as a victim of terror attacks is socially controlled and constructed. Therefore, woman's body becomes the space for traumatic recollection. These gendered stories prove that terrorism causes untold sufferings not only to the victims but also to the ladies in the families of the terrorists. They don't wallow in wealth or happiness but only in sorrows and tensions.

These female articulated narratives have an ulterior motive, with their storytelling being a great help to heal wounds of violence / trauma / repression and help in empowering the self, as observed in Pakistani novelist Shaila Abdullah or American writers like Joyce Carol Oates. Such viewings of a woman's reaction to terror strikes and its aftermath experiences provide a positively gendered perspective to the event where one senses woman's strength in facing the emergency situations and her decision not to quit. Overall, women's creative energies seem to be used to restore the identity and dignity of the woman one encounters on a daily basis.

Very often trauma in literature creates what is called the psychic trauma literature, but many of the writings both on 9/11 and other terror situations, especially those of Waldman, Mahasweta Devi and Ao view not only psychic trauma but the cultural and political dimensions of trauma, exposing the myth of 'woman as victim' theory in these narratives of terror. Hence it opens up these terror narratives and their spectrum of approaches to terror events and trauma.

In some other narratives women's demand for a gendered justice is staged with women seen in the strongest perspective of the gender atrocities that happened to them demanding gendered justice, fierce in their valor, as seen in some of the Kashmiri women's narratives. Such narratives perspectivise women not merely as victims of terror and not also as avenging angels, but more than balanced thinking individuals, demanding a long-term fight against injustice and creating awareness about positivity even in negative situations. Such are the activist writings of

Mahasweta Devi and Arundhati Roy, who can perspectivise the gendered injustice through political, historical and gendered narrative interventions and analyses. Sometime the demand for gender justice takes the shape of the woman's act of using her body as a sight of protest as seen with some North-East women's narratives.

The female collective through female bonding is also a typical feminist situation that arises in several terror writings, including Khaled Hosseini, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Mahasweta Devi.

From Temsula Ao to Mamang Dai to many other female writings, the North-east narratives on conflict and insurgency very often bring out a gendered narrative on two counts: woman's encounter with the experience of terror either as a relative to the militant or as a witness of terror and secondly woman's perspective of terror that arises from the writer's or character's preoccupation with terror.

Very often the act of witnessing becomes a political, sociological and even ecological act as Nature acts as the witness to the violence and atrocities of mankind. Hence the eco-feminist overtones of dome of these gendered texts cannot be ignored. Syiem brings to life a river that has been neglected and even afflicted by the thoughtlessness of the inhabitants of Shillong, and gives voice to the muted in more ways than one through her poems. They also reveal how larger political forces can so deeply affect ground level realities.

However, the denial to allow the outside to seep into the inside world of the domestic space can also be seen as a coping mechanism for the womenfolk to resist the pain that would flow into

the sanctity of the home if given the chance. What is the most glaring in these narratives is the clear cut distinction of gendered spaces, be it physical or psychological.

These narratives also show the powers of healing that take place even in such negative, sinister situations of terror. For example, some narratives discuss the role that art or music or learning or positive way of coping up with terror and lores can play in the healing process, as seen in several narratives like *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* or *Saffron Dreams*.

Sometimes they stage an understanding of what it takes to be a woman militant, the problems associated with the female self within this spectrum of militant involvement.

These narratives are mostly about the strength and weakness of women and their unconventional choices in their lives, as seen in Shaila Abdullah's character Arissa or Roy's Anjum.

The understanding that emerges here about these narratives is: violence and terror against women shows the control of the female body through its violation. Why this control of the female body? It is related to the discussion of metaphors of violence, trauma as a crucial issue of violence, and the possible approach or solution to violence once it has occurred.

The metaphors of violence and cultural constructs of violence help us understand the culturing of violence, particularly on woman. They refer to the Indian social environment of woman as a man's possession, seen particularly in the marital rituals, with the control of the female body symbolized in the ritual of handing over the strings of control from the father to the groom. Further, the roots of violation of the female body can also be traced to woman battering or woman beating, which is taken for granted in many Indian communities.

Hence C.S.Lakshmi (Ambai) considers controlling the female body as "so deeply ingrained that certain forms of violence such as beating are considered a natural part of a woman's life" (vii). She also mentions about the woman's self-infliction on her body, particularly the 'cutting of breasts' as clear in Nachiar Thirumozhi's poem 'Andal Thirupavai', where the woman overcome by her love and desire for lord Krishna feels the first sight of him might make her cut off her breast and throw on him to overcome the fire of desire).

The self same infliction as metaphor of revenge occurs, she says, in Kannagi in Silappadhikaram who cuts off her breasts in her rage against the king who gives punishment of death to her innocent husband Kovalan. Here violence has a purpose, the purpose of honor through violence. Further, woman in her original youthful form poses danger and hence very often, protection comes as female transgression into a male attire (as one finds in Rosalind in *As You Like It*) or into an old woman's body (as the Tamil poet Avvaiyar does) or through self-abnegation by which the female body changes shape into an undesirable form that averts violence on her body.

Very often memory and trauma leading to silence is the characteristic behavior of woman who has experienced physical violation. Hence most of the texts dealing with terror and violence voice this silence in order to heal the trauma. "Not looking at it, pretending it is not there, will not make it go away." (Butalia, 269).

Hence voicing the memory of violence and trauma through auto-writings, diaries, interviews and literary writings becomes indispensable, in order to spell out and come to terms with the violence experienced by these women. Women's narratives today make a strong engagement with voicing the voiceless and the trauma of the physically battered women. Literary

narratives today from Dalit or tribal oppression express a voiceless - voiced out female narratives from memory and trauma, making them a unique exercise in 'counter-memory' (Hirsch), enabling these writings to become 'counter histories' (Hirsch). Thus these narratives of terror, some with the sense of mourning the victims, become symbols of mourning, memory and memorialization, where the act of mourning or memory becomes an act of resistance and condemning the violence. Hence these gendered writings exhibit the palimpsest experience of terror, with the superimposed experience of terror presenting a subtextual understanding of the erased/voiceless experiences of terror in these writings, an identity that makes female narratives of terror unique in comparison to male narratives on terror.

In fact, an interesting conclusion to the comparison between the above two narratives is that, there are marked differences in the treatment of violence/ terror on women between the male writers and the female. Very often in the male writings of violence on women, the narrative takes two forms: voyeuristic presentation of the rape of the female body, very often leading to the female body being reduced to an object of 'gaze' and also the 'deus ex machina' situation, where the female body facing threat of rape, is saved by the intervention of a male rescuer.

Both the forms of male presentation lead to stereotyping violence and rape, with the memory narrative from the point of the view of the victim being absent or completely ignored. Very often, male discourse of terrorism can be seen as a narrative debunking or suppression of gendered voices, as observed in the autobiography of the Afghan writer Abdul Salam Zaeef. The most interesting about the depiction of violence and terror in women's narratives is their ever changing and ever-growing perceptions of violence and memory–from a victim perspective to a victimized rebel's struggle, as seen in Arasanayagam's works.

Among many writers writing on terror and violence there is a preoccupation with the subject of police or terrorist inflicted violence on women, where there is an attempt at naming it as the worst kind of violence on the woman's body, attempts to end such a systematized sexual violence, as seen in several North-East writers - Indira Goswami, Nirupama Borgohain, TemsulaAo, and many other women writers from the North East, including the activist writer Irom Sharmila from Manipur, a state that witnessed women of Manipur fighting against the rape of Manorama committed by army men. Irom Sharmila's only poetic work The Flower of Blood abounds with metaphors of violence. Nirupama Borgohain's short story "The Crucifixion" abounds with metaphors of sexual violence. Even the jungle in which the protagonist narrator lives seems melancholic "as if…[it] had been raped by monstrous human beings and the entire forest with its jetuka and henua leaves would start bleeding any moment" (58).

Domestic violence is a subject that got the least critical attention among the several terror and violence on women, since unlike the other systematized offences against women which have faced collective opposition and documentation, most reporting and action against domestic violence requires efforts from individuals to divulge information. Like the tea stall owner's daughter considered as the betrayer and faced with violence by her insurgent brother for her affair with an army man in Goswami's story "Journey", writers like Goswami touch upon the ugly side of insurgency that targeted women.

Particularly in middle class societies and in child victims, where the offences are made by their own relatives, reporting of crime never takes place and if reported it is too late because of inhibition of the victim or the suppression of information out of fear of publicity. Navsharan Singh and Urvashi Butalia discuss how "women at the receiving end of sexual violence often received

no support from their communities and families, and were equally seen to be stigmatised and tainted, while the perpetrators of such violence were often seen as being "true" to manhood, or true to their nation or community (60).

Similarly, the role of images in the aftermath of a terror attack can be observed in these narratives. Thisis particularly true of the 9/11 narratives and reveal the fact about how in the aftermath of 9/11, images played a significant role. Images became the sole emblems of the visual acting out of the collective trauma. This fact has been accentuated by the historian Dominick La Capra whose comments on "the tendency to relive or reenact the past through flashbacks, nightmares, and compulsively repeated words and images." He further adds that, over time, these images also became a way to "work through" the trauma, a means to gain critical distance from the events" ("The Depiction of 9/11 in Literature: The Role of Images and Intermedial Reference"). Similarly, the image of the 'invisible prison' in which Nagas are living is described in the words of Kire whereby they are 'denied freedom of expression, freedom to nationhood and most painfully, freedom to life itself' (Kire). Also, the dichotomy between the state produced terror, and the militant produced terror is very often expressed effectively in the literary narratives through images.

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too. But after the torturers sank their fangs into them, they arent lotuses any more...they had simply turned into lumps of gory flesh." (152). Images of torture abound as seen above and also as described by Borgohain thus:

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Thus these narratives focus on displacement, idealization of the lost space or land or life, idyllic approach to life, therefore making narration to achieve metaphorized reclamation, what is destroyed cannot be reclaimed in the same manner. These narratives very often enact the psychological trauma because of violation of the human body, in other words, contributing to violation of human rights. Primarily most terror narratives reveal women as the worst victims of terror, whether they partake in terror or do not partake in conflict situations. Hence we need to decipher terror narratives as constructed / reconstructed narratives from specific perspectives like the political point of view, terrorist angle and gendered point of view.

Extremely interesting are the aesthetic and technical devices, other than images, used by these writers, signifying their writings as intrinsically modern, uniquely styled and technically innovative. Multiple viewing as seen in Arundhati Roy, making a communal strife or terror attacks perceived in a new light, autobiographical or the memoir mode of writing, use of a metaphor of

food and feeding (Kire) as a commentary on terror or metaphors of violence and peace as seen in Irom Sharmila and Shaila Abdullah's metaphor of peace associated with the act of sleeping in the pillows filled with saffron. Using the metaphor of rape to mirror trauma, use of a diary as metaphor of those troubled times of terror to bring in the notion that the 'personal is political', the vision of the gendered body as a space for literary articulation, remembering as an important tool of subversion for most postcolonial writings and the unique aspect of voicing the male violence on female bodies through a successful articulation of a female point of view.

These narratives enact what can be called as a revival of the cultural memory of sexual abuse and violence. They enact what feminist studies term as 'counter memory', replaying forgotten histories of women through 'memory.' They also reflect female characters engaged in memory of violence and trauma, creating a complex energy confusingly hovering between the past and present, expectation and disappointment, strength and weakness, stability and instability, absence and presence. They further emphasize that such hovering between binaries need to be voiced, so that the silenced could voice the memory that has so far remained voiceless, leading to the memorialization of the anguish and trauma that the event of violence created.

Such memorialization of a cultural memory helps the victim or witness of terror to come to terms with the abuse and helps initiate the process of neutralization of the shock and trauma the female victim has gone through so far. This is a strategy of representation of counter-imaginary spaces and times of ethnic harmony in the texts of Arasanayagam and Sivanandan in their revisiting memories of places in their former atmosphere of harmony as a solace to trauma and dislocation.

What is interesting about these terror narratives is that the emphasis here is not merely on violence but also on memory, counter memory and counter history, notions that help the subject of sexual violence on women to be sifted through a three-way process of articulation, reconstruction and subversion (of the traditional notion of silencing abuse). It can be confidently reiterated that voicing violence and abuse by female writers in the narratives of terror/violence contributes to the building of bridges that might avert and alert readers to the possibilities of violence in the future.

Some very remarkable conclusions arrived at are the following. First, the gendered narratives of terror discussed so far are counter-hegemonic narratives that bring out an alternative dimension of terror and also make the male critical terrain of terrorist narratives to accommodate the female perspective of terror. And the female perspective need not always be a victim perspective, but can also fulfil the role of deconstructing dominant narratives through construction or reconstruction of new narratives of terror.

Second, one of the most interesting conclusions that the project engages with is related to the interesting fact that these writings, despite their preoccupation with terror and violence, emphasis on healing and peace. For the women writers often write intending to collectivize trauma and assert their coming to terms with the collective histories and traumatic experiences and also finding a way out for survival through reconciliation, healing and peace. Hence the celebration of a self that strips off layers of superfluous identity with grace and abandon, only to discover that it has not diminished, but grown larger, generous and more inclusive as witnessed in Imtiaz Dharker's poems. Thus, this is the strong positive message that arises in their writings: it is worth fighting for peace, rising above terror or violence as seen in Irom Sharmila and Shaila Abdullah.

Some of the research contentions that were hypothesized earlier were found true in the reading of these gendered narratives. First, one finds authentic reproduction rather than a stereotypical erasure of history in these narratives, especially in Mahasweta Devi's stories of Naxalite terror, Temsula Ao's stories, Shyam Selvadurai, Arasanayagam, etc. The well-distributed narration through multiple narrations are attempted by a few American writers who help in the occurrence of narrative shift, providing a distancing from the subject of terror and Brechtian alienation effect of narrative voices.

Some rhetorical questions too arise as a logical continuation of the previous contentions. How does one describe the violent versus non-violent conflict discourse in women's writings on terror? How does women's discourse of exclusion and inclusion of gender operate in these narratives? Although gender issues are very much tackled by these narratives, where the reader gets an insight into the sufferings of women caught inadvertently in this ordeal, be it the victims, victims' family members, the wives of the terrorist, these narratives do not stop with that. They go beyond gender, and walk the humanist perspective in their narratives, as we read in Sivanandan and Arasanayagam.

Very often, the juxtaposition of the historical and the mythical, the factual and the fictional, the documentary and the emotional, terror and gender, the realistic and the imaginary, the humane and the inhuman cannot be missed out in these gendered terror narratives. As an example can be cited the crux of racism in Sivanandan's narrative of terror '*When Memory dies*..' especially the title, which means, when memory dies, a person dies.

Several of the gendered narratives on terror, particularly adopt a counter–terror approach as a positive method of voicing the voiceless multitudes, which are oppressed rigorously through

cultural policing or terroristic oppressive practices of religion, etc. The narrative becomes the tool of the narrator or the writer as a harbinger of the truth of the oppression of terrorism and as an activist to pressurize the end of terror for the sake of peace or safety of the innocents and the public. The writers' attempts to rethink gender categories as categorised by the patriarchy are seen in their narrative experience of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation as seen in Arundhati Roy's hijra protagonist Anjum.

Analyzing the resistance to terror and oppression seen in most of the writings of terror, one could cite the three types of resistance to oppression mentioned by Ann Cudd in Analyzing Oppression: indirect resistance, voluntary group resistance, and non-violent group resistance. The first is obvious as individual resistance to situations of oppression, the second being a planned or intentional act by a group, while the third shows resistance by many members of an oppressed voluntary group without prior planning or intentions, with such resistance sometimes turning volatile.

Inspired by Maryse Jayasurya's discussion of Judith Butler's idea of "possibility of community based on violence and loss" (Butler *Precarious Life* 20, quoted by Jayasurya 32), the research also identifies the community of belongingness in several gendered narratives through the common loss experienced through violence and terror. This also reveals that gendered narratives of terror also deal with a sisterhood of loss and mourning, as seen in the poetic works of Jean Arasanayagam and Kamala Wijeratne, Temsula Ao's stories, Khaled Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Sun*. This clearly reveals that terror narratives, despite dealing with negative dimensions of life, convey a positive message out of mourning, grief and trauma.

This research began with the contention that terror experience through literature/arts in the modern world has a special purpose to divulge the inexpressible, transcending the sensational violence to go beyond terror to find a solution to the problems of terror. This is true with the violent deaths of Richard de Souza or Ranjani Ranathilagama, because of their objections to Sri Lankan army and LTTE respectively on grounds of their human rights violation. Sri Lankan writers' resurrections of Ranathilagama and de Souza in their arts has started a movement against violence and terror, and their acts of memorializing their violent deaths have created a tribute to the thousands lost in ethnic killings. The spirit of activism and positive movement springing from desperate situations seen as the terror narratives symbolise these writers' coming to terms with the adversity of violence and trauma of terror.

The research also began with gender - related questions on the position and viewpoint of the writers regarding terror conflicts between state forces and the militants / insurgents and portrayals of women caught in the eye of the terror storm and also the presence of or erasure of accountability in their terror narratives. These narratives mostly shun the stereotyping of woman as merely a victim of terror, as seen in Shaila Abdullah and others in their narratives as emblems of resistance as seen in many Kashmir women writers. Importantly, these narratives stand for reclamation of the past through collective memory of culture or tradition. For example, memory of home and reclamation through memory of lost spaces is seen in Temsula Ao's and Eastern Kire's writings. Therefore, these gendered narratives of terror create a new discourse that arises from the way women cope with terror, as seen Mahasweta Devi's protagonists or the way Arasanayagam copes with the terror experiences.

This new gendered discourse on terror can be viewed particularly in how the female witnesses or the author characterizes stories, examining how these stories perceive violence, as seen through its repercussions on its victims and perceiving how they negotiate with history or resist any simplified explanation of armed conflict and how they depict the psychological impact of violence or what narrative strategies they employ to express the trauma of sufferers. Some writers describe the fights for sub nationalism through insurgency in Assam or Nagaland and how it affects women's private spaces. For example, whether it is Ao or Phukan or Kalita, these writers discuss how terror and violence in the public domain repress the private spaces of women.

The research also began with the contention that the terror narratives in South Asia post 9/11 subsume the global dimensions of terror as a phenomenon. Adeeper reading of these South Asian narratives of terror would eiterate how 9/11 as a terror happening leaped to a larger phenomenon of spectacle, so much so that individual terror incidents in individual countries in South Asia did not assume the importance they deserved, despite the equally devastating terror incidents faced by some of the South Asian countries, including Sri Lanka in 2001.

Hence the project started from 9/11 terror narratives and moved on to terror narratives of South Asia post 9/11 with a focus on gender narratives in English. Because of their uniqueness of subject and emphasized specificity on locale, culture specific problems and also solutions to terror, these narratives have displaced the background of 9/11 terror and have made their terror situations unique to readers.

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