

**Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema**  
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**Lecture - 55**  
**Refuge Women and Patriarchal Society - IV**

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema. We are talking about Refugee Woman and Patriarchal Society, and in this regard we are going to talk about two stories by Saadat Hasan Manto today. One is Thanda Gosht or Colder than Ice, it is also translated as Cold Meat in English. The other story is the Dutiful Daughter by Manto.

So, in these stories we see the nuanced human characters being sketched and being named so successfully and with such profound details by Manto. We see not only the plight of the female, of course, the females Manto describes - the female's plight, the female's helplessness in great details through his different artworks; but, in addition, we also see how the man is rendered a helpless status, sometimes the man becomes a victim of this man-made violence.

It is so unnerving, it is so gruesome, ugly that it leaves no one, it leaves no one unscathed. It is the partition, like you know, [resulting in the humanity] falling in an abysmal pit from which there is no redemption, from which there is no recovery further, either for the man or for the woman. (Refer Slide Time: 02:07)

**Thanda Gosht ("Colder than Ice")**



- Sudha Tiwari- "S H Manto's short stories on Partition scathingly highlight the physical and psychological impact of violence, abduction, migration and resettlement and most openly narrate the issues of masculinity and vulnerability of sexuality during the phases of "man"-made violence. He does not seem to judge the event or the behaviour of the mob/a particular individual" ( 51).
- Set against the period of partition, *Thanda Gosht (Colder Than Ice/ Cold Meat)* refers to the loot, marauding, rapes and communal strifes.
- Deals with Ishwar Singh looting the Muslim families and abducting a woman, only to find her already dead. The truth comes to light when due to the trauma of the incident he fails to make love to his wife, Kulwant Kaur.

**IIT ROORKEE**

So, Sudha Tiwari states that Manto's short stories on partition scathingly highlight the physical and psychological impact of violence, abduction, migration and resettlement, and most openly narrate the issues of masculinity and vulnerability of sexuality during the phases of manmade violence.

He does not seem to judge the event or the behavior of the mob or particular individual. In this regard, we have to note, we should note that Manto basically does not explain his characters or his plot, he merely describes. It seems that there is a sensitive eye behind the lens that is trying to capture the violence in all its length and breadth, without having a voice of its own. So, Manto just narrates without really judging, without intervening the series of events that are depicted in his short stories.

So, we see that set against the partition Thanda Gosht refers to the loot, marauding, rapes and communal strifes. It deals with the protagonist named Ishwar Singh and we have also have his wife Kalwant Kaur in the story. And, Ishwar Singh is seen as looting and, you know, massacring the rival community. Ishwar Singh is massacring the Muslims and looting their property.

He is in the process of... in the process of indulging in such heinous acts, [involving] in such heinous crimes, he abducts a Muslim woman, a very beautiful Muslim woman, and he rapes her. But, by the time he indulges in/ he engages in such act, he realizes that the woman has.. the woman is already dead; probably she died out of fear.

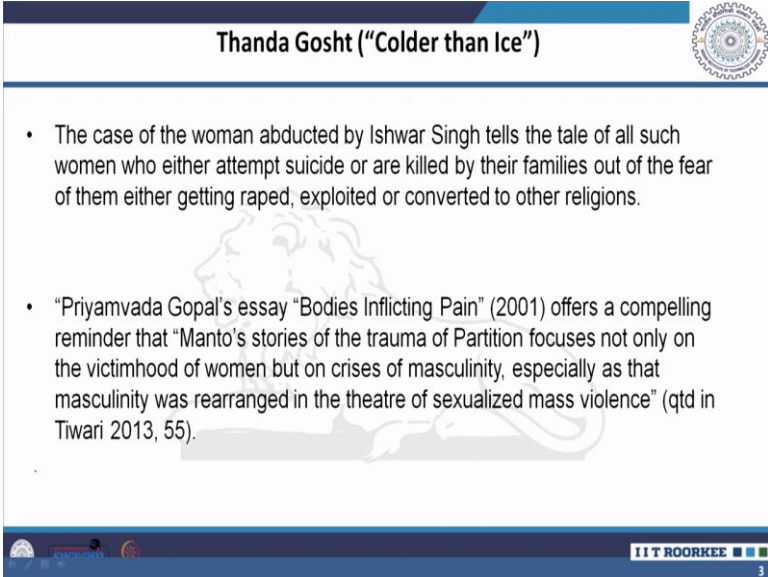
He abducted her, took her away to a lonely place, he took her away to a lonely place where he wanted to rape her and then he realizes that she was already dead. So, the story goes like this - by the time Ishwar Singh is about to... when Ishwar Singh indulges in sexual relationship with this woman, he realizes that she is already dead, she perhaps died out of fear.

And, then later when he comes back home, the entire incident has unnerved him, has disturbed him and unsettled him in such a way that he fails to make love with his wife Kulwant Kaur. So, this situation actually.. this entire story gives us pictures of two different kinds of women. One that has been you know victimized, the helpless woman, the woman that died. And then, we also get the picture of Kulwant Kaur, who is an agent in her own right, who ultimately kills her husband with his own kirpan.

So, we have pictures of two types of women, so one that is a victim, the other that is an agent - the perpetrator's wife herself, right. So, we also see how crime unmans or unmakes a man, after a necrophilic act having conjugal relationship with a corpse, a dead body actually, the man as a result (Ishwar Singh) becomes impotent. He fails to consummate his relation or he fails to make relation with his own wife.

So, it has unmanned him, the entire incident of necrophilia has unmanned him. The case of the woman being abducted by Ishwar Singh tells the tale of all the women, the different women that had gone through the same experience, similar experience. And, who had either committed suicide or was killed by their families. It is called honor killing.

And, families especially the patriarch indulged in killing their own female folk out of fear that they would be violated by the rival communities, they would be exploited or they would be converted to other religions; fearing this the women were killed. So, the case of this dead woman that Ishwar Singh had raped is symbolic of the fate of thousands and thousands of uncountable such women, who had suffered, you know, similar mishap during partition. (Refer Slide Time: 07:30)



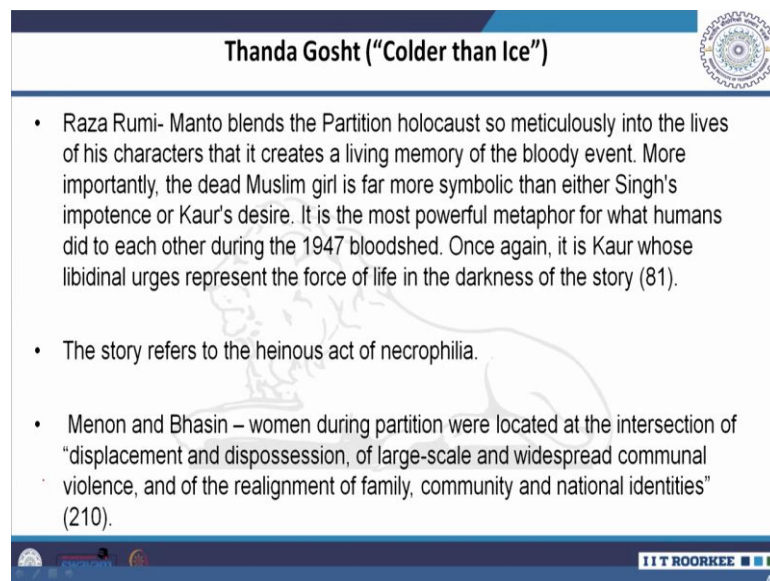
**Thanda Gosht ("Colder than Ice")**

- The case of the woman abducted by Ishwar Singh tells the tale of all such women who either attempt suicide or are killed by their families out of the fear of them either getting raped, exploited or converted to other religions.
- "Priyamvada Gopal's essay "Bodies Inflicting Pain" (2001) offers a compelling reminder that "Manto's stories of the trauma of Partition focuses not only on the victimhood of women but on crises of masculinity, especially as that masculinity was rearranged in the theatre of sexualized mass violence" (qtd in Tiwari 2013, 55).

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Now, Priyamvada Gopal's essay Bodies Inflicting Pain tells us, it gives us a compelling reminder that Manto's stories of the trauma of partition focuses not only on the victimhood of women, but also on the crisis that masculinity itself faced as in the case of Ishwar Singh, who has after the incident failed to you know present himself as a sexually

active man anymore. So, masculinity was rearranged in the theatre of sexualized mass violence. (Refer Slide Time: 08:21)



**Thanda Gosht ("Colder than Ice")**

- Raza Rumi- Manto blends the Partition holocaust so meticulously into the lives of his characters that it creates a living memory of the bloody event. More importantly, the dead Muslim girl is far more symbolic than either Singh's impotence or Kaur's desire. It is the most powerful metaphor for what humans did to each other during the 1947 bloodshed. Once again, it is Kaur whose libidinal urges represent the force of life in the darkness of the story (81).
- The story refers to the heinous act of necrophilia.
- Menon and Bhasin – women during partition were located at the intersection of "displacement and dispossession, of large-scale and widespread communal violence, and of the realignment of family, community and national identities" (210).

IIIT ROORKEE 4

The title *Colder than Ice* or *Cold Meat*, *Thanda Gosht* could be interpreted in multiple ways. It could refer to the necrophilic act, the act of raping an already dead woman who was colder than ice. It could refer to the relationship between Kulwant Kaur and Ishwar Singh that had turned cold because the sexual relationship, the conjugal relationship could not be heightened after that incident.

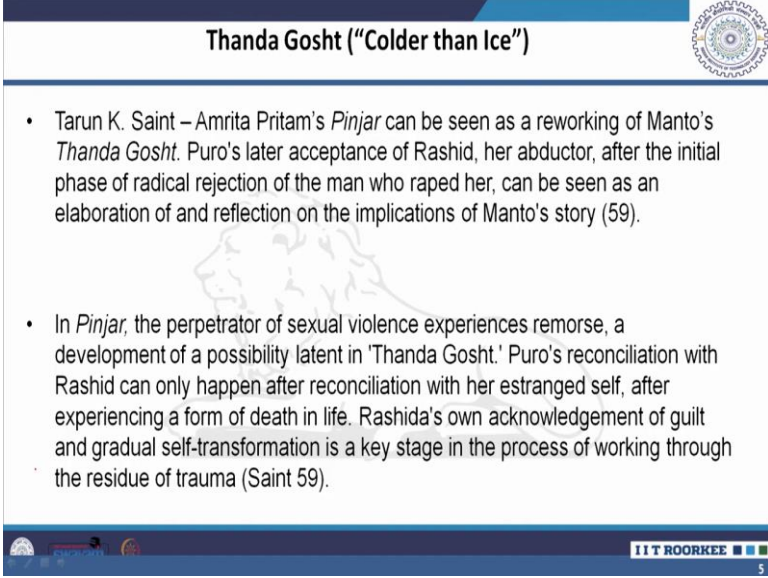
The man failed to please his wife and so, we could understand Ishwar Singh had become colder than ice, he had become a cold meat. So, this story can be [read as] the relationship had gone cold, it had become colder than ice. So, the story, the title of the story can be interpreted in various ways and to a larger extent this could be extended, the title this could be extended to note that basically human beings had lost their human quotient during the partition.

The inhumanity that prevailed in the society made people colder than ice. So, people were carrying out such surprisingly debased acts, surprisingly grisly acts. They were indulging in violence that the humanity itself had become... a civilization itself had become colder than ice. People were actually carrying [out], you know, they were carrying out cold-blooded murders and incendiary.

Raza Rumi states that Manto blends the partition holocaust so meticulously into the lives of his characters that it creates a living memory of the bloody event. More importantly,

the dead Muslim girl is far more symbolic than either Singh's impotence or Kaur's desire. It is the most powerful metaphor for what humans did to each other during the 1947 bloodshed. Once again, it is Kaur whose libidinal urges represent the force of life in the darkness of the story.

And in fact, Kaur's libidinous desires, Kaur's desire for sexual union with her husband is completely contrastive with her husband's inability to fulfil that desire; the husband has become cold after committing a crime. We see Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin studying that women during the partition... they note that women during the partition were located at the intersection of displacement and disposition of large-scale and widespread communal violence and of the realignment of family, community and national identities. (Refer Slide Time: 11:15)



**Thanda Gosht ("Colder than Ice")**

- Tarun K. Saint – Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* can be seen as a reworking of Manto's *Thanda Gosht*. Puro's later acceptance of Rashid, her abductor, after the initial phase of radical rejection of the man who raped her, can be seen as an elaboration of and reflection on the implications of Manto's story (59).
- In *Pinjar*, the perpetrator of sexual violence experiences remorse, a development of a possibility latent in 'Thanda Gosht.' Puro's reconciliation with Rashid can only happen after reconciliation with her estranged self, after experiencing a form of death in life. Rashida's own acknowledgement of guilt and gradual self-transformation is a key stage in the process of working through the residue of trauma (Saint 59).

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So, women became rich grounds for taking revenge against ... for taking out one's vengeance on the rival community. So, Tarun Saint in this regard compares the story *Colder than Ice* with Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*. Saint states that *Pinjar* can be seen as a reworking of Manto's *Thanda Gosht*. We see that Puro... in the case of *Pinjar* Puro accepts Rashid afterwards, Rashid who is an abductor, after the initial phase of a radical rejection of this man who had raped and abducted her.

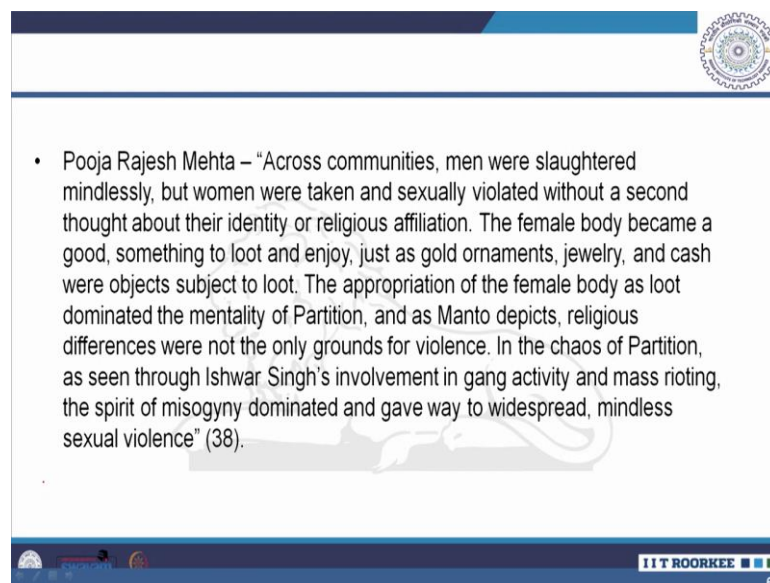
So, in *Pinjar* the perpetrator also goes through a certain journey. There is an experience of remorse. The man is squarely guilty towards the end. And then, there is forgiveness also and reconciliation, and a kind of understanding that Puro and Rashid arrives. So,

Puro's reconciliation with Rashid is only possible through reconciliation with her estranged self.

So, she was a fragmented self after she had been converted and renamed as Hamida; she was tattooed as Hamida. She comes in terms with a broken identity, she kind of picks up the shards of her identity and moves on. So, we see Rashid's own acknowledgement of guilt towards the end and the fact that Rashid also transforms as a human being; he becomes more compassionate and he assists Puro in all her you know work; so, in all her endeavours.

So, this is actually a process of working through the residue of trauma, according to Saint. And, this is something that we cannot discover or we do not have the scope to discover within the short span of narration in *Colder than Ice*. Perhaps, because of the different genres. *Pinjar* is a novel where we can delve further into the characters, whereas in *Thanda Gosht*, *Thanda Gosht* being a short story, the scope is little, the scope is not you know too large to expand it.

And so, we see that such kind of reconciliation, such kind of understanding is not arrived at by Kulwant Kaur. And so, such standing is not realized in the case of Kulwant Kaur and Ishwar Singh. There is a suddenness, sudden decision that Kulwant takes to kill her husband with his own kirpan, right. (Refer Slide Time: 14:27)



- Pooja Rajesh Mehta – “Across communities, men were slaughtered mindlessly, but women were taken and sexually violated without a second thought about their identity or religious affiliation. The female body became a good, something to loot and enjoy, just as gold ornaments, jewelry, and cash were objects subject to loot. The appropriation of the female body as loot dominated the mentality of Partition, and as Manto depicts, religious differences were not the only grounds for violence. In the chaos of Partition, as seen through Ishwar Singh's involvement in gang activity and mass rioting, the spirit of misogyny dominated and gave way to widespread, mindless sexual violence” (38).


So, Pooja Rajesh Mehta notes that across communities, men were slaughtered mindlessly, but in this regard she notes that women were actually being taken as a spoil

of partition. Actually, they were seen as a loot, looted property just as gold ornaments, jewellery and cash objects that were subjected to loot. So, appropriation of the female body dominated the mentality of partition, and religious grounds were just the façade.


The Hindu, Muslim dyadic relation was just a facade what came out through the chaos of partition. What churned out of the chaos of partition was the gang activity of the men, the act of mass rioting and the spirit of misogyny that dominated these rioters, these mobs and these gangs. So, here we need to understand the group behavior, especially the group behavior of an all-male mob.

So, we need to understand the all-male mob behavior, where a less violent man may be provoked to behave in a certain way, to carry out a misogynist act which is otherwise in normal times unthinkable for him. So, just being part of a group, a lot of men would take advantage of the chaotic situation and the crimes such as murder and rape would be treated as, you know, something playful, something casually done for the sake of group fun.

So, hatred and expression of hatred through serious crimes like murder and rape had become a joke, had become a commonplace act. And, a lot of less violent, less you know hypermasculine or less aggressive men would also follow these codes of behaviour as dictated by the mob or the group. Because they were just... merely because they were part of the group and so, they were part of the fun basically. (Refer Slide Time: 17:05)



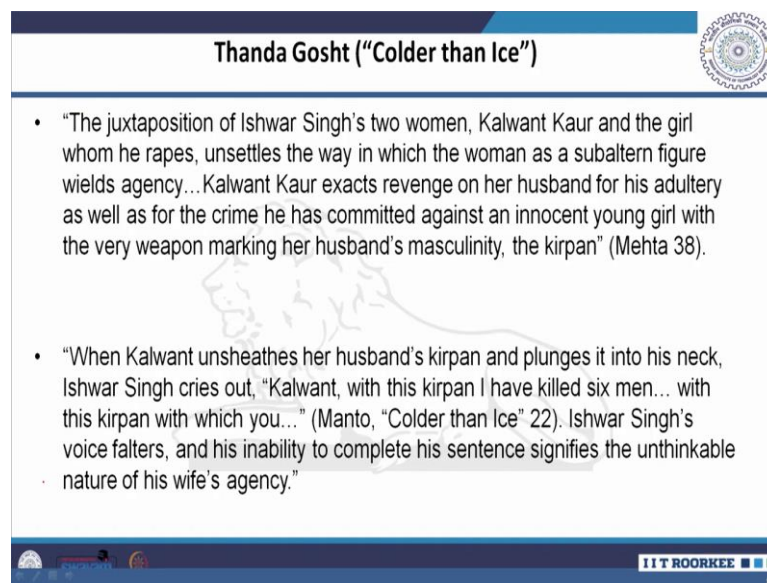
- Urvashi Butalia – “In addition thousands on both sides of the newly formed borders...were abducted, raped, forced to convert, forced into marriage, forced back into what the two States defined as ‘their proper homes’, torn apart from their families once to ‘protect’ them from being converted; perhaps an equivalent number killed themselves. There are accounts of innumerable rapes, of women being stripped naked and paraded down streets, of their breasts being cut off, of their bodies being carved with the religious symbols of the other community” (183).



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So, Urvarshi Butalia tells us that in addition, thousands on both sides of the newly formed borders were abducted, raped, forced to convert, forced into marriage, forced back into what the two states defined as their proper homes. They were torn apart from their families; [the families] wanted to protect them from being converted. So, perhaps an equivalent number killed themselves or they were goaded to kill themselves.

There are accounts of innumerable rapes, of women being stripped naked and paraded down streets, of their breasts being cut off, their bodies being carved with the religious symbols of the other community. (Refer Slide Time: 17:48)



**Thanda Gosht ("Colder than Ice")**

- "The juxtaposition of Ishwar Singh's two women, Kalwant Kaur and the girl whom he rapes, unsettles the way in which the woman as a subaltern figure wields agency... Kalwant Kaur exacts revenge on her husband for his adultery as well as for the crime he has committed against an innocent young girl with the very weapon marking her husband's masculinity, the kirpan" (Mehta 38).
- "When Kalwant unsheathes her husband's kirpan and plunges it into his neck, Ishwar Singh cries out, "Kalwant, with this kirpan I have killed six men... with this kirpan with which you..." (Manto, "Colder than Ice" 22). Ishwar Singh's voice falters, and his inability to complete his sentence signifies the unthinkable nature of his wife's agency."

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So, we have already talked about these atrocities being meted out and the woman's body becoming a rich site that records the communal violence, the communal hatred, the tattooing of the woman's body, the amputating of women's body parts, private parts.

Mehta would state that the juxtaposition of Ishwar Singh's two women, Kalwant Kaur and the dead girl that you know Ishwar Singh rapes - this juxtaposition, this contrastive projection unsettles the way in which woman as a subaltern figure, as a marginal figure wields her agency. So, we have only seen, I mean Manto is actually successful in showing the range of possibilities that can be attached to womanhood at the time of partition.

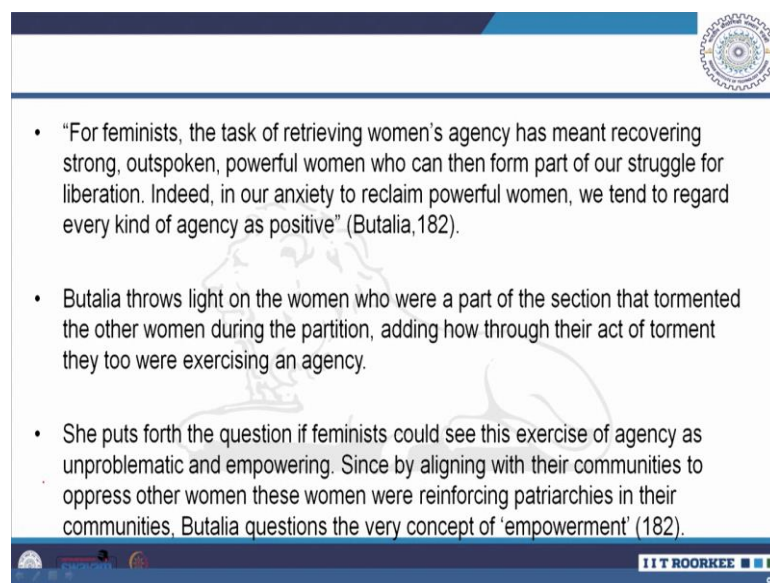
So, if a woman.. if there is one case of a woman being a victim, there is another where a woman stands up against her husband's wrong deed and in fact, chooses to kill him. So, Kalwant Kaur is revenging on her husband for his adultery as well as for the crime that



he has committed on an innocent young girl. And so, this very symbolic act of killing Ishwar Singh with the same kirpan he had used for, you know, murdering Muslims earlier is very significant.

It is actually, I mean using the kirpan to kill Ishwar Singh is symbolic of you know hitting him with the same "[tool of] masculinity" which he had abused earlier, which he had misused earlier. And so, Kalwant does not kill him with any other weapon, but with his own kirpan. So, when Kalwant killing her husband with the same kirpan that he had earlier used for massacring Muslims, the same kirpan which is a symbol of masculinity is very significant. It points to how she is you know neutralizing Ishwar Singh's masculinity, using his own weapon.

So, when Kalwant unsheaths her husband's kirpan and plunges it into his neck, Ishwar Singh cries out - "Kalwant, with with this kirpan I have killed six men, with this kirpan with which you..." and then he dies basically. Ishwar Singh's voice falters and his inability to complete his sentence signifies the unthinkable nature of his wife's agency. (Refer Slide Time: 20:47)



- "For feminists, the task of retrieving women's agency has meant recovering strong, outspoken, powerful women who can then form part of our struggle for liberation. Indeed, in our anxiety to reclaim powerful women, we tend to regard every kind of agency as positive" (Butalia, 182).
- Butalia throws light on the women who were a part of the section that tormented the other women during the partition, adding how through their act of torment they too were exercising an agency.
- She puts forth the question if feminists could see this exercise of agency as unproblematic and empowering. Since by aligning with their communities to oppress other women these women were reinforcing patriarchies in their communities, Butalia questions the very concept of 'empowerment' (182).

So, this is where we see the figure of a strong woman. So, the task of retrieving women's agency is possible through recovering the strong outspoken powerful women's voices that can form a part of the struggle for liberation, the struggle that revisits what has been meted out to women during partition. So, we also see Butalia talking about... Butalia and other feminist critics talking about women that were part of the section which tormented

other women during the partition, and added how through their act of torment they were also exercising their agency, but in a very questioning, you know, in a questionable manner. In other words, I mean when a woman is playing party to her own community and participating in an act of violence against another woman from the opposite community, is she actually exercising her agency in the right direction or is it a questionable agency that we are looking at?

So, when a woman aligns with her community and extremist stance of her community to oppress other women and thereby reinforce, reinstate the patriarchal assumptions or the patriarchal values, such concept of empowerment needs to be problematized, needs to be questioned because different groups, when they bring women within their fold, they are actually pitting one woman against the other; the Hindu woman against the Muslim woman or the Muslim woman against the Sikh woman.

Does a woman even belong to such factions, such political factions, such value systems, such worldviews, where I mean patriarchal ideas are actually celebrated, undermining even the rights of the woman that take part in such a faction. So, Butalia questions the very concept of such kind of empowerment. So, agency and activism do not always go hand in hand.

When a woman is activist and working from within a faction which endorses masculinist values, one can never be sure if such a woman is indeed powerful and an agent. So, according to Pooja Rajesh Mehta, in the story as Kalwant Kaur's voice and actions are being juxtaposed to the lack of agency of the girl that Ishwar Singh kidnaps and rapes, this juxtaposition of two female characters provokes the reader to challenge the modes of female representation in partition fiction. (Refer Slide Time: 24:07)

## Thanda Gosht ("Colder than Ice")



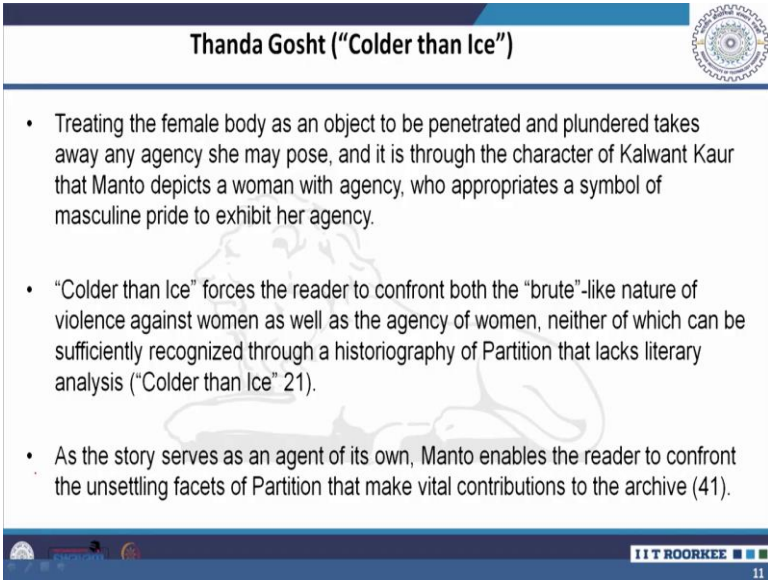
- Pooja Rajesh Mehta – “Kalwant Kaur’s voice and actions juxtapose the lack of agency of the girl who Ishwar Singh kidnaps and rapes. The juxtaposition of these two female characters provokes the reader to challenge modes of female representation in Partition fiction. The death of the unnamed girl counters the passionate act of violence committed by Kalwant Kaur. The young girl’s literal death, which occurred some time before Ishwar Singh encounters her body, mirrors the moral, emotional death of Kalwant Kaur. The immobile, unconscious, soundless body of the unnamed girl epitomizes the appropriation of women’s bodies as loot and objects of sexual pleasure. Her lack of agency, as represented through her death and postmortem rape, unsettles the way in which women were considered vessels of honor by society” (39).



So, the death of the unnamed girl, unnamed Muslim girl counters the passionate act of violence committed by Kalwant Kaur. So, the young girl's death.. we see that at the beginning of the story the young girl literally dies, maybe she was already dead or she died out of fear when she was abducted and you know carried away by Ishwar Sigh. And, this literal death, physical death of this girl can be, you know, associated with the moral emotional death of Kalwant Kaur, who is betrayed by her husband.

Because he is not only indulging in rape, but he is also indulging in extramarital you know relationship. So, it is also the death of moral, emotional aspects, it also mirrors the moral and emotional death, death of Ishwar Singh's wife. So, her body being... the dead girl's body being a passive object of loot, the [senseless] body epitomizes the appropriation of women's bodies as objects of sexual pleasure.

And so, her representation through death and through the "postmortem rape," the rape committed on her body beyond life, unsettles the way in which women have been considered during partition by the patriarchal society at large and especially during the partition. Their bodies were vessels of honour and this honour was disrupted during these disturbing times. The bodies were subjected to violence during these unusual times. (Refer Slide Time: 26:08)



**Thanda Gosht ("Colder than Ice")**

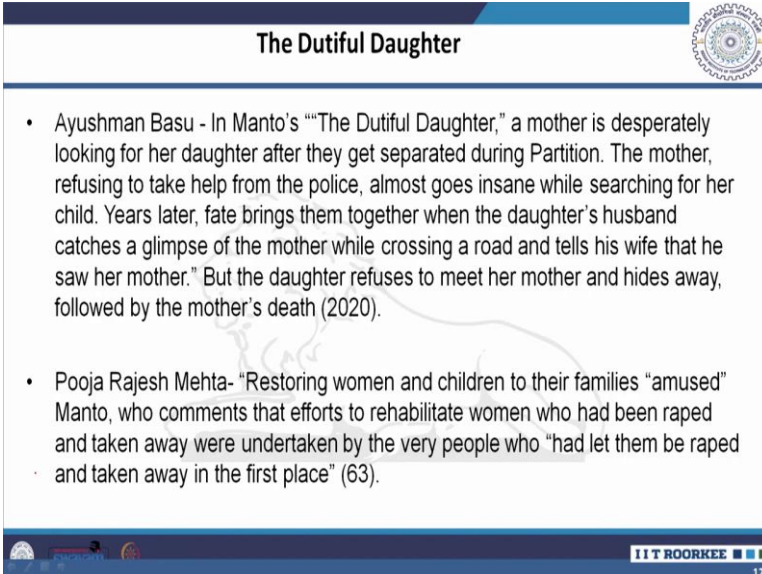
- Treating the female body as an object to be penetrated and plundered takes away any agency she may pose, and it is through the character of Kalwant Kaur that Manto depicts a woman with agency, who appropriates a symbol of masculine pride to exhibit her agency.
- "Colder than Ice" forces the reader to confront both the "brute"-like nature of violence against women as well as the agency of women, neither of which can be sufficiently recognized through a historiography of Partition that lacks literary analysis ("Colder than Ice" 21).
- As the story serves as an agent of its own, Manto enables the reader to confront the unsettling facets of Partition that make vital contributions to the archive (41).

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So, treating the female body as an object to be penetrated, to be plundered takes away any agency that she may pose. And so, it is only through the character of Kalwant Kaur that Manto depicts the woman with agency. So, the story actually confronts the reader

with the brute-like nature of violence against the women as well as the agency posed by the woman. Neither of these two facets have been explored successfully and sufficiently through a historiography of partition, which lacks any kind of literary analysis or literary intervention.

So, only literature is capable of portraying such uncommon cases of women, right, that are basically silenced in formal historiography. So, the story serves as an agent of its own, and Manto enables the reader to confront the unsettling facets of partition, which can make a vital contribution to the archive. (Refer Slide Time: 27:15)



The slide is titled "The Dutiful Daughter" and features a circular logo in the top right corner. It contains two bullet points. The first bullet point discusses Ayushman Basu's analysis of Manto's story, mentioning the mother's search for her daughter and the daughter's refusal to meet her mother. The second bullet point discusses Pooja Rajesh Mehta's analysis, focusing on the irony of women being restored to their families by the same people who caused their suffering. A watermark "www.vedantu.com" is visible in the background of the slide.

**The Dutiful Daughter**

- Ayushman Basu - In Manto's "The Dutiful Daughter," a mother is desperately looking for her daughter after they get separated during Partition. The mother, refusing to take help from the police, almost goes insane while searching for her child. Years later, fate brings them together when the daughter's husband catches a glimpse of the mother while crossing a road and tells his wife that he saw her mother. But the daughter refuses to meet her mother and hides away, followed by the mother's death (2020).
- Pooja Rajesh Mehta- "Restoring women and children to their families "amused" Manto, who comments that efforts to rehabilitate women who had been raped and taken away were undertaken by the very people who "had let them be raped and taken away in the first place" (63).

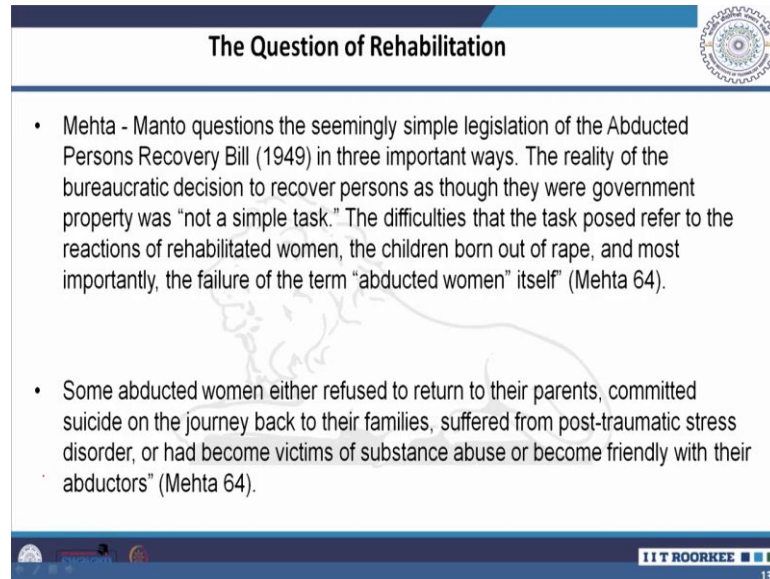
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Now, moving on to the next story, The Dutiful Daughter; the story is about a mother that is desperately roaming around the border looking for her daughter, after the the mother and the daughter gets separated during the partition chaos.

So, the mother refused to take any help from the police and she actually goes insane while searching for her child. And, later.. years later, actually while the mother is wandering, the fate brings the daughter and the mother together. In fact, the daughter's husband is able to identify her mother while crossing the road and tells his wife that he saw her mother, but ironically the daughter refuses to recognize the mother, right. She hides away and mother actually falls dead. That is the story.

So, Pooja Rajesh Mehta says that restoring women and children to their families is a question, is a a topic that amused Manto. He was extremely sceptical about this idea of rehabilitation, efforts to rehabilitate women that had been raped and taken away. And,

Manto would say that this is a farce because the same men that had allowed these incidents of rapes to happen were later taking initiatives to bring the women back. So, the entire process was found as farcical by Manto. (Refer Slide Time: 29:03)



**The Question of Rehabilitation**

- Mehta - Manto questions the seemingly simple legislation of the Abducted Persons Recovery Bill (1949) in three important ways. The reality of the bureaucratic decision to recover persons as though they were government property was "not a simple task." The difficulties that the task posed refer to the reactions of rehabilitated women, the children born out of rape, and most importantly, the failure of the term "abducted women" itself (Mehta 64).
- Some abducted women either refused to return to their parents, committed suicide on the journey back to their families, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, or had become victims of substance abuse or become friendly with their abductors" (Mehta 64).

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Manto questions simple legislation of the.. legislation of the Abducted Persons Recovery Bill passed in 1949 in three important ways. So, he says that there are I mean... this is not a simple task to repatriate, bring back a woman within the original fold to which she belonged. The difficulties pertain to the reaction of the woman, the rehabilitated woman herself.

Then the child, in many cases a child was born out of rape, what happens to the future of such a child? Would the child be taken back? We have discussed Ramapada Choudhury's story Angpali, where the woman comes back with the child. As well, we have discussed Jaiba, we have discussed Jaibo a story by Narendranath Mitra. In all these stories, we see that the women struggle with the child born with rape and the acceptance of these children.

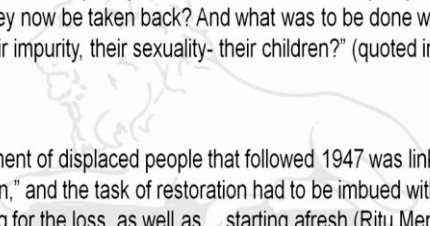
And, then most importantly, Manto questions the term 'abducted woman;' he says that it is... the term itself is a failure. So, a lot of women actually did not want to return to their parents, lest they be rejected or treated like untouchables. They committed suicide on their journey back to home, back to their families. Some of them suffered from post-traumatic stress disorders, they would take to substance abuse. And sometimes, they

would even accept their abductors, then go back to their original homes, to their natal homes. (Refer Slide Time: 30:34)

### The Question of Rehabilitation



- Anis Kidwai: "But now a different problem arose. The majority of the girls did not want to go back." The dilemma for their families was a different one. Some of the women were now 'soiled', they had lived with, married, borne children to the men of the 'other' community, they had therefore 'diluted' the 'purity' of the community, how could they now be taken back? And what was to be done with the visible results of their impurity, their sexuality- their children?" (quoted in Butalia, 193)
- The resettlement of displaced people that followed 1947 was linked with "national reconstruction," and the task of restoration had to be imbued with a sense of compensating for the loss, as well as... starting afresh (Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin 177, quoted in Mehta 69).



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So, Anis Kidwai also adds, I mean Anis Kidwai agrees with this problem. Now, a different problem arose, the majority of the girls did not want to go back. The dilemma for their families was a different one. So, some of the women were now soiled, they had lived with, married, [birthed] children of the men from the other community; they had therefore diluted the purity of the community. How could they now be taken back?

And, what was to be done with the visible results of their impurity, their sexuality -- their children? So, this is something Anis Kidwai observes. So, resettlement of displaced people that followed 1947 was linked with national reconstruction. So, in this process of starting afresh, the woman was [affected]. On the one hand, she had to be brought back, you know, within... she had to be restored to normalcy and yet, this would be only possible in many cases when the mother and the so-called 'illegitimate child' were separated.

So, the child was sent back to the abductor, whereas the mother was taken back to the fold of the original family. They belonged to two different nations. In a bid to reconstruct and resettle things, bring back the normalcy, the woman had to pay the price basically. So, another thing that Manto questions is that why these women are being, you know, termed as 'abducted' women, because abduction is a word, as Manto argues, it was used by police forces also to describe elopement of a man and a woman.

When two people consensually eloped, in full consciousness two adults eloped, even that was seen as abduction by the police forces. (Refer Slide Time: 32:34)

### The Question of Rehabilitation



- "A significant problem of rehabilitation that Manto poses is the concept of terminology: "Why were they being described as abducted women?" ("The Dutiful Daughter" 97).
- Manto argues that the term "abduction" was used by police forces to also describe the elopement of a woman and man – the agency of the woman in such instances was unseen and unacknowledged, as the man was perceived as abducting a property that did not belong to him.
- In the case of Partition, however, Manto argues that "women had been taken against their will and violated" (98). Women were unable to exercise agency over their fate, and the term abduction therefore became an equivocation for two very different acts, elopement and violation" (Mehta 65).

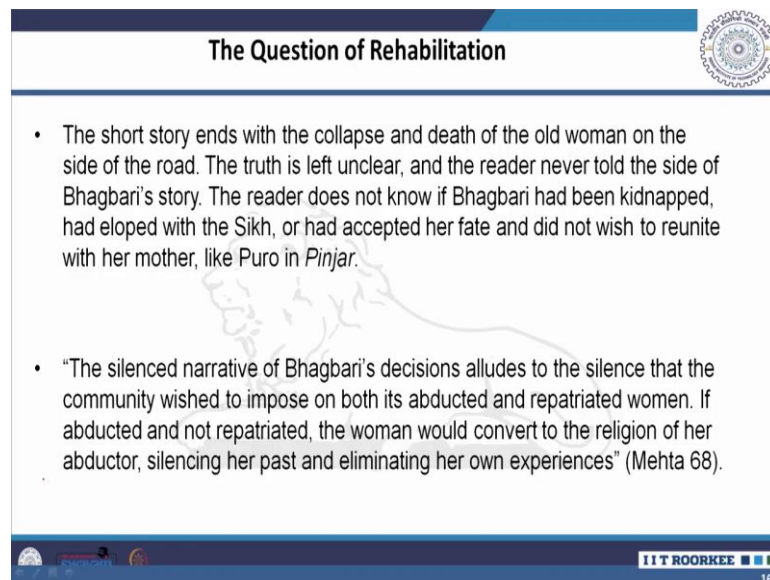
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And, in these particular cases where the woman willingly ran away, her agency, her choice was unseen and unacknowledged. The man was perceived as abducting a property that did not belong to him. Although it was basically a reciprocal relationship, it was a love relationship where two people chose to live together.

So, Manto argues that women had been taken away against their will and violated in the case of partition. It is true that in many instances during the partition, women were abducted against their will and they were unable to exercise their agency and their choice over their fate. However, it is very equivocating and very confusing, when the act of elopement and the act of abduction are treated as one and the same, and they are in a way conflated.

So, one does not know the will of the woman in such cases. So, the short story ends with the death of the old woman on the side of the road. The mother falls and dies and the truth is always left unclear because the story is not being told from the side of Bhagbari, the daughter right. The reader does not know whether Bhagbari had been kidnapped by the Sikh man, whether she had willingly eloped with the Sikh man or she had accepted her fate. And, she now chose to live with her abductor, she did not wish to... she did not wish to reunite with her mother, just like Puro in Pinjar. (Refer Slide Time: 34:20)



**The Question of Rehabilitation**

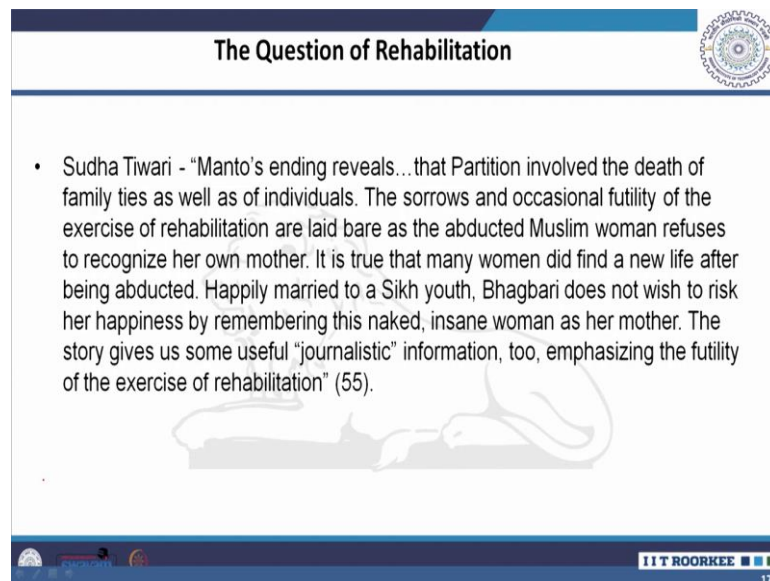
- The short story ends with the collapse and death of the old woman on the side of the road. The truth is left unclear, and the reader never told the side of Bhagbari's story. The reader does not know if Bhagbari had been kidnapped, had eloped with the Sikh, or had accepted her fate and did not wish to reunite with her mother, like Puro in *Pinjar*.
- "The silenced narrative of Bhagbari's decisions alludes to the silence that the community wished to impose on both its abducted and repatriated women. If abducted and not repatriated, the woman would convert to the religion of her abductor, silencing her past and eliminating her own experiences" (Mehta 68).

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We never get the version of the story from ah Bhagbari's side. So, the silenced narrative of Bhagbari's decisions alludes to the silence of the community. Both communities had imposed on their women, on the abducted and repatriated women what the men wanted.

If abducted and not repatriated, the woman would convert to the religion of her abductor, silencing her past and eliminating her own experience.

So, in many cases, women would actually silence their own desires, their own choice. In the case of Lajwanti, we see that Lajo is not even allowed to recount what happened to her when she was taken by abductor to Pakistan. So, the woman's experience and thereby her own decision is categorically silenced and swept under the carpet. No one is interested to know her side of the story, what she wants, what she wanted then and what she wants now. (Refer Slide Time: 35:27)



**The Question of Rehabilitation**

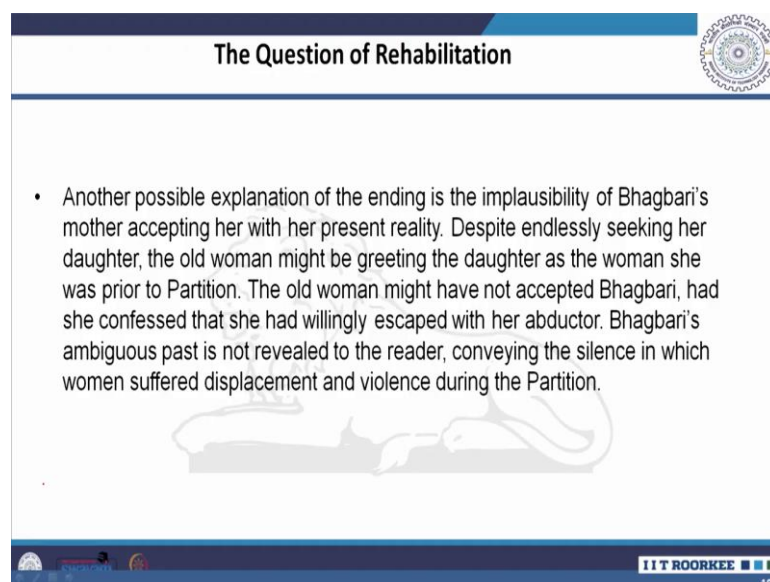
- Sudha Tiwari - "Manto's ending reveals...that Partition involved the death of family ties as well as of individuals. The sorrows and occasional futility of the exercise of rehabilitation are laid bare as the abducted Muslim woman refuses to recognize her own mother. It is true that many women did find a new life after being abducted. Happily married to a Sikh youth, Bhagbari does not wish to risk her happiness by remembering this naked, insane woman as her mother. The story gives us some useful "journalistic" information, too, emphasizing the futility of the exercise of rehabilitation" (55).

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So, Sudha Tiwari states that Manto's reveals that partition involves the death of family ties as well as of individuals. So, the sorrows and occasional futility of the exercise of rehabilitation are laid bare as the abducted Muslim woman refuses to recognize her own mother. It is true that many women did not find a new life, many women did find new life after being abducted.

Happily married to a Sikh youth, Bhagbari does not wish to risk her happiness by remembering this naked, insane woman as her mother. The story gives us some useful journalistic information too, emphasizing the futility of the exercise of rehabilitation. So, there could be many things going inside Bhagbari's mind. How is she a dutiful daughter? The mother could be seen as a symbol, a symbol of all her past relations, with the mother falling dead it is all her past relations that fall dead.

And, a lot of women cannot reconcile with their past anymore, they have to be...for many abducted women they had to be happy and settled with their current conditions. They had to come to some kind of agreement with their abductor. So, maybe the daughter Bhagbari is being dutiful through ignoring the past aspects of her identity, her relationship with her mother. Because she cannot identify herself, she cannot associate herself with that aspect anymore, she has become a different Bhagbari altogether. (Refer Slide Time: 37:11)



**The Question of Rehabilitation**

- Another possible explanation of the ending is the implausibility of Bhagbari's mother accepting her with her present reality. Despite endlessly seeking her daughter, the old woman might be greeting the daughter as the woman she was prior to Partition. The old woman might have not accepted Bhagbari, had she confessed that she had willingly escaped with her abductor. Bhagbari's ambiguous past is not revealed to the reader, conveying the silence in which women suffered displacement and violence during the Partition.

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So, in this regard, we have the possible explanation that...you know another possible explanation of the ending is that Bhagbari's mother might not accept her current reality,

the fact that now she has been converted to a Sikh. Although, the mother was desperately and insanely searching for the daughter, the mother might be prepared... the mother might be preparing herself to greet the same old daughter which she had lost; in the meantime, you know, a lot of time has elapsed and circumstances have changed.

So, the daughter that the woman had lost is not the same Bhagbari after many years have passed. The old woman might not have accepted the current Bhagbari had she confessed, for example, that she had willingly escaped, she had willingly eloped with with her abductor or not even abductor, may be her suitor. So, there are different possibilities of stories that we could have from Bhagbari's side, which are actually kind of not delved in details or which are not actually explored in details.

So, Bhagbari's ambiguous past is not revealed to the reader. This points to the silence that women suffered during the partition, during the displacement and violence initiated by the cataclysm, the cataclysmic events centering partition right. So, basically we see that a lot of women have to agree with the changed circumstances, with the change fate, and they have to espouse the new life and it is only possible by not going back to their past.

She is being, Bhagbari is being dutiful daughter by not you know further tormenting her mother with the changes that have already taken place as the time elapsed and many years passed by. So, the death of the mother is the death of Bhagbari's past. So, with this we are going to stop today's lecture. We will meet again for another round of discussions. Thank you.