CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis has primarily been to examine the way in which diasporic authors respond to the trauma of violence post 2001. A close study of the seven novels taken up for study suggests that the authors of all the novels verbalize about violence in its diverse manifestations-public violence, private violence, collective violence, individual violence, religious violence, political violence, gendered violence and the like. Post 2001 the world has become a more violent place. The experience of violent acts in this period for instance the bombing of the Twin Towers in New York city on 11 September 2001 finds expression in the authors' changing the focus of their writing. The earlier concerns of “dislocation, relocation and questions of identity” already weakened by the influence and impulse of thinking globally in an interconnected and interdependent world gets replaced by apprehension about the repercussions of vicious actions that have taken place post 2001 like the civil war in Afghanistan and Sri lanka, the Gujarat riots, atrocities against women and other violent events in the home countries of the authors. This is borne out in the works under scrutiny.

The subject considered for interrogation is the motivation of the writers in depicting violence. Walter Raleigh in On writing and Writers (1927) opines: “The real question to be considered first is, not how shall you write, but why should you write at all” (9). In accordance with this view, there is a common intention, a specificity of purpose in the narrativization of violence by the novelists. The imperative to amend the way in which readers view their own role as passive onlookers provides the impetus to the writers. In their depiction of the continuous acts of violence, the authors’ aim is the sensitization of the minds of the readers to the senselessness of violence. Walter Raleigh continues: “We are to write not to display our talents, or to tickle the sense with sounds, but to persuade, or convince, to inform, to commend our views or proposals to particular persons-in short, to influence the behaviour of our fellows” (19, 1927). The effort of the writers in this direction is perceived in the narratives. The storylines illustrated the process in which an act of violence resulted in retaliation from the injured party,
this necessitates a reprisal from the one at the receiving end of the latest act of violence and the endlessness of violence is perpetuated. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* is one example of this. In the narrative, Sikhs practice divisive policies and adopt a militant and anti-nation position. This makes Operation Bluestar necessary. The army was sent into the Golden Temple. V. S. Naipaul articulates the cycles of violence let loose: “The damage was done. Stage by stage, then the tragedy unfolded. To avenge the desecration, Mrs Gandhi was murdered by some of her Sikh bodyguards. And, again, it is as though the men who planned the murder didn't sufficiently understand that their action would have consequences, that by doing what they did they would be putting their community at risk: Sikhs were settled all over India. There were riots after the murder. The most dreadful were in Delhi, where hundreds died.” (424, 1998). This unambiguously exposes that violent events appear in sequences. Another instance is the riots in *The Assassin’s Song*. The demolition of the Babri Masjid leads to the burning of the Sabarmati Express at Godhra, this in turn brings about a reprisal in the form of riots in the state of Gujarat. The depiction of such cycles helps the readers as social beings to recognize the danger inherent in the prevailing situation where violence by one faction gets a response in the form of more violence from the opposite side. The focus on violence confirms to the reader that violence creates violence and that there is a need for the discontinuation of the cycle. These cycles can be severed when the natural impulse to counter violence with more violence is replaced by another, more suitable action. An alteration in the existing pattern portends hope of a cessation of violent actions.

It can be said that the humanitarianism of the writers’ approach allows the grouping of their writing together. In his book, *The Imam and the Indian* (2008) Amitav Ghosh referring to the violence seen by him in Delhi during the anti-Sikh riots in 1984, articulates, “what I saw...was not the horror of violence but the affirmation of humanity: in each case, I witnessed the risks that perfectly ordinary people are willing to take for one another” (60). The authors create characters who undergo tremendous tribulations but remain unvanquished in the actions of their everyday lives. This acts as an assertion of their views that violence need not be overpowering. Ghosh continues, “The truth is that the commonest response to
violence is one of repugnance and that a significant number of people everywhere try to oppose it in whatever ways they can” (60, 2008). Although the subject matter of the novels is serious, even grim and tragic, the final impression is one of hope and optimism. Some ordinary individuals who inhabit the narratives do resist the impulse for violent actions while there are others who succumb. Ghosh discusses his thoughts when he reads descriptions of troubled parts of the world, in which violence appears primordial and inevitable: “I find myself asking, Is that all there was to it? Or is it possible that the authors of these descriptions failed to find a form — or a style or a voice or a plot—that could accommodate both violence and the civilized willed response to it?” (60, 2008). The intentional self-control of an enlightened response in the face of violence is the purpose of the writing.

The method used to send across the message is largely common too. Although part of the diasporic world, post 2001, the seven authors write about violence in their respective homelands. There are some differences, a few like Anita Rau Badami, Monica Ali and Nadeem Aslam also write about how the violence gets transported to the diasporic location as well. The purpose of this seems to be to draw the minds of readers to the existing situation so that the need for change is seen by them. To this end, the fictional accounts provide information about the vicious atmosphere of the world at large; this brings about an appreciation of the dangers inherent in a violent course of action. However the accounts are not just a collection of facts and information about the circumstances in the homelands or host lands but also an effort to direct people's thoughts in the way the situations could be countered and life lived fearlessly. This also leads to a recognition of the environment around. The novels deal with the major concerns that have been identified as important events in the history of the country. This draws the minds of readers to the existing situation so that the need for change is seen by them. The authors not only intend to make the reader better informed about these issues and concerns but also lead them towards positive action to improve the situations. In Mosquito, Roma Tearne gives graphic descriptions of the violents incidents that both – the official forces of the army and the opposing faction, the Tamil Tigers perpetrate. This brings about a powerful awareness in her readers and fellow countrymen of the atrocities practiced by both sides. Along
side this, she also describes the beauty of the Sri lankan landscape so that readers can see the damage and destruction that violence brings about. Aslam too portrays the the appalling practices of certain interpretations of his religion in conjunction with other more liberal interpretations of the system of belief in an effort to apprise readers to the alternative of adopting a reasonable outlook.

It can be surmised that following 2001 the hold and power of fundamentalism has become stronger. Fundamentalism can be construed as a stricter way of living and identifying oneself which leads to the adoption of a singular identity. Chapter Two, ‘Fundamentalism and Religion in The Assassin's Song, Family Matters and Maps For Lost Lovers' discusses this issue and observes how the authors depict characters who take on a single description of themselves, especially as followers of a particular religion, this singular classification puts them in opposition to others, similar to themselves, but owing allegiance to a dissimilar religion. This solitary difference in religious denomination leads to antagonism and consequently becomes the basis for violence. In The Assassin's Song, Vassanji examines the option of neutrality and respect for all faiths adopted by the narrator’s family against the prevailing prejudice and intolerance. His description of the possibility of duality offers an alternative to the acceptance of a single, separate, fundamentalist identity. Rohinton Mistry delineates the fissiparous tendencies of the orthodox cause, the internecine squabbles and wrangles demonstrating the dangers of being ensnared into the void of a fundamentalist attitude. This also proves his feelings for his religion and his genuine interest in the improvement of the religious cause, religious thinking and practice indicating an attitude of anticipation and belief for the future. Nadeem Aslam shows both sides of Islam. This is evidence for his hopeful standpoint. His objective does not seem to be to depict the harshness of the customs and traditions followed and the atrocities committed but rather that Islam has a benevolent and moderate side too. Insistently and provocatively Aslam depicts the violence due to religion but his criticism is not of Islam per se but rather of the extremist interpretation that some characters take up. The final communication from Aslam then is that certain practices of the religion are inexcusable but the religion itself is not in the wrong.
The three writers examined in Chapter Two reveal the underlying ambiguity and contradiction of the issue of interpretations. The complexities of moral questions faced by the characters become for them a simple matter of subsistence in a genuine manner. Prejudiced elucidations like that of traditionalists are emphasized at the same time as other moderate interpretations are underlined as well. This reveals that belief in a severe form of religion creates an environment of intolerance and divisiveness. Also, attention is called to the positive aspects of the same doctrine. This enriches the readers’ concept of the complexities and challenges inherent in such a heredity and stresses the requirement of understanding, appreciation and adoption of the codes of affirmative alternatives. In this way, the writing of the three authors affords readers contemplation of their role as members of social groups. The writing presents the methods that highlight the means that try tolerance and counter intolerance.

Since 2001, political activities too have intensified, leading to an escalation in violent action in the political sphere. This was represented in Chapter Three, 'An Analysis of Political Violence in Can You Hear the Nightbird Call? and Mosquito'. The geographical location of the adopted country did not prevent the written portrayal of violence inherited from their native culture by the authors. As represented in the fictional works, the politics of a country leads to more violence among the denizens of the same nation, the works examined depicted this form of hostility which takes place mainly due to a refusal to share with others the common resources and assets of the nation. The demand for a separate space, a distinct geographical entity developed into extreme animosity and enmity between former friends and resulted in cycles of violence once again. Anita Rau Badami’s narrative focussed on both the home and host countries and religious matters in the homeland that cause the violence and change personal relationships and identities in the diaporic location. In Roma Tearne’s account language and ethnicity emerged as the source of distrust and the sequences of violent activities that are unleashed in the home country.
Both authorial voices communicated the violent political actions in their respective countries and the effect these had on the lives of ordinary citizens. Both also presented positive developments in the denouement of their works which implied confidence for future progress. The portrayal of the actual historical events in their novels indicated the disquiet of both for their lands of birth. The development of the action in both novels stressed the episodic nature of violent confrontations. The characters in both narratives divulged an awareness of this fact. The construction of this consciousness by the authors is significant as it indicated their message of hopefulness and educated readers in the manner in which this expectation can become reality – violence should not be countered with more violence but rather with consideration and care.

In a modern world, the plight of the disadvantaged sections cannot remain concealed for long. Concerns that were previously voiced only by women are now within the domain of male writers as well. The last chapter, Chapter Four, entitled 'Examining Gendered Violence in Brick Lane and A Thousand Splendid Suns' looked at this kind of violence. In this, the women, the weaker gender, suffered extreme deprivations and discriminations but came together to ameliorate their condition, and find their own unknown strength. The events in the lives of the women characters in Brick Lane and A Thousand Splendid Suns proposed that women have a strong ability to find strength and support in one another to improve their dreadful lives. The formation of a combined identity sustained them in the face of great adversity and conferred them with courage that helped them to live. The main theme in Brick Lane was the role of fate in shaping destiny and of women altering the course of fate. Monica Ali developed the idea of self-empowerment within all the major storylines in Brick Lane. Khaled Hosseini, on his part stressed the bonds of sisterhood in the relationships between women characters in A Thousand Splendid Suns. In the final analysis, in both fictional narratives, the female characters develop into self-empowered women by coming together and refusing to accept their destiny unreservedly. The anger, aggression and antagonism that was part of their lives was rejected and tuned into passive resistance and non-cooperation to the actions of men. The women in the novels took charge of their lives. They helped each other out and showed
sympathy and empathy for their sisters which were reciprocated. Thus, the women authorized themselves to be the masters of their lives; they simply found the power within them. Leadership and a dedicated sense of solidarity was displayed by the women with wrenching stories equally in the novels of the two authors. This made them symbols of hope and indicated that times are changing and that women are fighting back helped by their own unity. In this way, in Brick Lane and A Thousand Splendid Suns the authors suggested the policy of self-empowerment of women through confluence and convergence.

In conclusion, it can be said that the novels taken up for examination depicted the violence in all its gross coarseness. Amitav Ghosh elucidates his response to the violence in Delhi, after the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi: “My experience of the violence was overwhelmingly and memorably of the resistance to it” (60, 2008). The authors studied too shared this sensibility about the violence around them and therefore wrote about it. This attempt on the part of the novelists achieved its purpose of awakening public conscience with their writing. The graphic descriptions are the chosen means to realize the end sought. In an interview with Jason Boog, novelist Vikram Chandra made an interesting point on the subject of writing about violence. He said: “The emotional impact [of violence] for your character is what matters. If you can get that, then you are a long way towards helping the reader experience it”. The predicaments of the characters caught in the centre of the trouble galvanized the readers' attention and obliged them to think about the situation and ways of improving it. This leads to the conclusion that the writers also effectively made their moral disapproval of certain courses of action felt. In all this, ultimately their endeavour was to influence conduct and strengthen the resolve to eschew violence. The methods of persuasion were personal and creative and their articulation was the means employed. The victims of violence exhibited stoicism, courage and fortitude against great suffering but survived the dangers accentuating optimism in the future. This is a testimony to the truth that the writing aimed at a civil and peaceful humanity and the hope that tribulations can be surmounted.