CHAPTER 4

QUEST ACROSS BORDERS

Kartar Singh Duggal’s *Twice Born Twice Dead* is the third partition novel taken up for study by this research work. It shares, apart from the general backdrop of partition holocaust, several common features with the other two novels. The main strands of this fictional-historical narrative involve the nobleness, humanism and sacrifice of ordinary human beings pitted against the terrible forces of communal violence which engulf and destroy their peaceful lives. The partition backdrop is the same as in the other novels. As in *Train to Pakistan* and *The Rape*, fictional narrative blends into history and historical narrative provides the location and impetus to fictional action. History and fiction fuse together, creating a blend that possesses both the actuality of history and the imagined vibrancy of fiction. It is said that historical events, like time, are irrevocably lost and history captures it from the factual angle whereas fiction recaptures, reinvents and recreates history. Experiences of the past become perpetuated in words. As Barry (1995, 175) points out, “*As it were, the word of the past replaces the world of the past.*” *Twice Born Twice Dead* powerfully mixes history and fiction to recreate and re-present the turbulent period of partition.

Kartar Singh Duggal was born in 1917 at Dhamyal in Rawalpindi district, the dialect of which area he has often used in his short stories to provide local colour and also as a means of individualizing his fictional characters. In the annals of Punjabi literature, short story as a genre came into being only in the twentieth century. It grew into its present developed form in the works of Kartar Singh Duggal. He made his debut with a collection of
short stories under the caption *Saver Sarin* 1941. So far he has written twentyfour collections of short stories in addition to a few novels and plays. The thematic range of Kartar Singh Duggal is wider than that of many other contemporary Punjabi writers. Uninhibited by any dogma-determined choice, he has touched upon almost all the problems of contemporary life sex-taboos, hollowness of feudal values, the degenerating effects of foreign rule, the partition bloodshed, five-year plans, and so on. *He passed away on 27 January 2012. “(Source: http://www.dnaindia.com)”*

To Kartar Singh Duggal's credit it must be said that his fictional recreation of partition holocaust is more human centric rather than history centric. A history centric narrative even in fiction, would focus on kings, rulers, the existing power structures, major events and happenings, whereas a human centric fictional narrative shifts the focus on to ordinary men and women, their lives and experiences, their joys and sufferings and their quests and answers. As Pande (1994, 214) points out,

the historian needs to struggle to recover 'marginal' voices and memories, forgotten dreams and signs of resistance, if history is to be anything more than a celebratory account of the march of certain victorious concepts and power like the nation-state, bureaucratic rationalism, capitalism, science and progress.

Born and brought up in a predominantly Muslim region, Kartar Singh Duggal knows his neighbours as much as his own community. He knows that his people would not eat what was touched by a Muslim. He is aware that a Muslim must not go near a Hindu well. There was Hindu water and there was Muslim water. Muslims in that part were in a majority. They owned property which was more often than not mortgaged to the Hindu and the Sikh money lenders. They styled themselves as Rajahs and the entire economy of the region was in the hands of the non-Muslims. They lived
together for centuries, co-existed with each other and yet the economic realities tended to tear them apart.

Married in a well known Muslim family, he has scores of friends and relatives across the border in Pakistan and every word that he writes on the partition of the Punjab is soaked in tears and blood. Written originally in Punjabi the novel has already been translated and published into several languages like Hindi, Urdu, Sindhi and Malayalam. Kartar Singh Duggal’s *Twice Born Twice Dead* (1979) a meaningfully entitled Punjabi novel was translated into English by Jamal Ara is a gripping saga of the partition of India that resulted in the insensate communal riots around the pre and post independence days. Throughout the novel, many chapters of which are based on authentic records, (as noted in the translator's note) runs the grim contrast of religion divided humanity pitted into opposing camps, the Hindus versus the Muslims and also the Sikhs versus the Muslims. None suffered more than the then Punjab where from and to which millions of the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs migrated on account of the flare up of the racial frenzy the like of which is not known in the history of Indian sub-continent.

The tragic tale is staged into action in the form of a love-hate drama through the lacerating trials, travails and tribulations of a peasant of Dhamyal village in the Punjab during the communal holocaust wrought in the partition period. Allahditta the Muslim friend of a Sikh village head man named Sohne Shah, lays down his precious life to save the Hindu and Sikh brethren of his village seared in the turmoil of riots. Sohne Shah, the principal character loses his dear daughter RajKarni kidnapped by the frenzied rioters, wanders from one refugee camp to another with Satbharai the dear daughter of his bosom friend Allahditta, until he crosses the burning border and reaches India. The rioters the Muslims, Sikhs and the Hindus are forced to take part in events over which they have little control and are thirsty for each other's blood. The
efforts of a microscopic minority to restore peace and sanity prove ineffective in the riot torn situation. When at the end the dust of riots settles down the governments of India and Pakistan decide to exchange the riot stricken refugees in order to allow them to settle in their homelands.

No wonder these events seared the soul of many sensitive people of all communities. Many books were written on this theme. Of these, Duggal’s *Nahuntey Mas* originally written in Punjab has been talked about a great deal. Through the experiences of a peasant of Dhamyal village, to which he belongs, he has tried to portray the whole panorama of the convulsion that overtook the Punjab as faithfully as he could. He has tried to rise above the communal bias. He has tried to show how even at the height of the holocaust, good neighbourliness did not desert all the members of the warring communities.

As young Duggal was witness to the happenings of partition happenings, his account of good relations between opposed religious groups has quite good authenticity about it. Talbot in his article, *Literature and the human dram of the 1947 partition* talks about the importance of describing the lives and aspirations of ordinary people in any narrative that is centred on actual historical occurrences like the partition. The historical novel by definition would focus more on history, a political novel on causes, effects and ideologies, whereas the purely artistic narrative would focus on people. Talbot (2007, 38) says that, as for as partition novels are concerned, "*novelist, unlike historians have fully addressed the human agonies which accompanied partition.*" There is also another construct related to this which lays emphasis on describing the personal experience of ordinary people in literary narratives. The personal or individual experience of the people who occupy the partition landscape are rooted in existential experience, everyday occurrences, triumphs and tragedies, exaltation and emotional despair.
Moreover, human experience and emotions are universal to a great extent going beyond the boundaries of language, culture, borders, and even history. Looked at purely from this angle Kartar Singh Duggal's *Twice Born Twice Dead* captures basic human emotions and feeling in a powerful manner.

The story of the novel is set in a Pakistani village near Rawalpindi and the action shifts from Pakistan to India and terminates in a tragedy. Allahditta, the Muslim dies to save the Hindus and the Sikhs of his village. Sohne Shah and Allahditta are so close and their friendship has lasted for full fifty years. Within three months of the death of Allahditta's wife, Sohne Shah’s wife also passed away. The novel describes the harmony of the two families,

Within the four walls of that tomb Raj Karni and her bosom friend Satbharai had pledged their friendship. Here, tooSohne Shah and Satbharai’s father, Allahditta, had exchanged turbans. Their friendship had lasted full fifty years now. Within three months of the death of Allahditta’s wife, Sohne Shah’s wife also passed away. People say, shewas under the shadow of her friend Allahditta’s wife (TBTD, 4)

And not only these two families but most of the people of both the communities lived in unity.

on the anniversary of Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom the Muslim pooled their sugar rations and arranged for a supply of sherbet to the Sikh neighbours in every lane and by-lane. The Hindus and the Sikhs cleaned their streets on the occasion of *Eid* and sent sweets to their Muslim neighbours. (TBTD, 17)

This village is gripped with fear of the rumour that the rioters would enter the village and loot as retaliation to what has happened in Navohkali and Bihar. The atrocities that the Hindus faced in Bihar is described,
The Hindus of Bihar complained that the Muslims were like thorns in the road of India’s march to freedom. They looted the crops of their neighbors, snatched away their women and outraged their modesty before the very eyes of their men folk. Rifles were fired, hoodlums in insensate massacre. The bullets came to an end, not the Muslims. (TBTD, 8)

The next day the flames of communalism were going to be lit in Pothoar. Their plan was that every Hindu and Sikh was to be killed, their properties destroyed, cows to be slaughtered in their Gurudwaras and temples and their wives and daughter to be raped. When Sohne Shah is worried about that, the Muslim youths of Dhamyal assure that, “as long as there is blood in our veins no one can harm a hair on your head” (TBTD, 14). The opinion of the Muslims in the village is,

if the rioters were bent upon looting or setting fire to the village, let them do so but they would not be allowed to lay a finger on the non Muslims of the village (TBTD, 19)

But the anticipated attack of the Muslims was round the corner and this makes the villagers to become alert. The situation seems quite unpredictable, hence the youth in the village start to prepare themselves for the retaliation and mainly for their self-defense from the Muslim rioters. Their preparedness is described thus,

One thought, one would jump into the well; another decided to dive off the roof. Some secreted a packet of opium, others a doze of arsenic; while quite a few implored their brothers or fathers to strangle them to death. Some kept kerosene ready, others resolved that before dying they would send a few to their death, and sharpened three-foot kirpans to a razor’s edge. Young boys collected stacks of stones on their roofs; the sharp and steel-hard stones of Pothoar. Gun owners laid in stocks of ammunition, swords were polished and knives sharpened. (TBTD, 14-15)
In the meeting of all the Muslim Choudhries of the area at Chauntra, leading Pirs had instructed them how the Hindus and the Sikhs in the village are to be wiped out without leaving a trace. Allahditta listens to all, then gets up and starts upbraiding them. While he is speaking thus some goondas catch him up and shut him inside a room. Allahditta manages to escape from there and reaches the village. He tells the villagers that no one can lay a finger on Dhamyal.

if someone tried to turn out Sohne Shah from the village he would have to advance over Allahditta's dead body. (TBTD, 22)

Allahditta has decided that he will not allow any rioting in his village. Slogans of 'God is Great' and 'Long Live Pakistan' ring out from the Muslim locality. Every slogan is tearing the Hindus and the Muslims who have lived together for centuries.'Pakistan Zindabad’, the slogan, which the Hindu, Muslim and the Sikh children shouted together once, is today a bullet aimed at the heart of the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Muslims are inflamed with shouts of 'God is Great'. The Hindus and the Sikhs quake with fear. At last from sheer irritation some youths decide to match slogans with slogans. But Sohne Shah calms them saying, "if they have gone mad, you at least should remain in your senses". (TBTD, 30)

For many days the rioters have approached and repeated their threat, but one day they are right there in front. They set fire to the Sikh community school outside the village. The rioters challenged Allahditta saying,
Are you not ashamed? Being a Muslim you are helping the Sikh and the Hindu rabble. But Allahditta wondered how were the Muslims of Bihar related to the Muslims of Pohtar and how had the neighbours with whom they laughed and played together suddenly become alien. How could anyone be killed for the crimes of someone else? (TBTD, 32)

Allahditta reasons with them but to no avail. He finally says, "This tyranny will not be perpetrated in my village" (TBTD, 33). His last words are lost in the din of the crowd like a wave in the ocean. Like a straw in the wind Allahditta’s turban is lost in the flood of lances. The village is set on fire; the bullets rattle like raindrops and the lanes and courtyards are choked with corpses. Children are transfixed with spears; women cut up with axes, old men dragged by their beards and hairs and youths massacred with bullets. Every Sikh and Hindu dies after striking a blow.

As in other partition novels this novel also depicts the prevalence of very good communal harmony and brotherhood existing before the partition on both sides of the border. Damayal, a village near Rawalpindi is almost the model village for communal harmony as depicted by Kartar Singh Duggal. This village was actually near Rawalpindi, "a site of one of the most tragic incidents connected with partition." (Didur, 1997) That such terrible things could happen in a peaceful village is the main motif of Kartar Singh Duggal's description.

The rioters after killing and setting everything on fire go away leaving one Kamal Khan to dispose of the loot. While Kamal Khan is pondering how to shift the loot to the mosque in the neighbouring village, a bunch of boys enter a lane and capture a Sikh youth. He is Amrika the son of Gurdas. He is a lunatic. Kamal rescues Amrika from the boys. Amrika is of a great help to the rioters. He takes them to various places in the village where the treasures are hidden. Some rioters say that they would convert Amrika to
Islam. A barber among the rioters shaves off Amrika’s beard and trims his long hair of a Sikh. One Syed amongst them gets Amrika to recite the Kalma;

Amrika who had been a Sikh lunatic for seven years now became a Muslim lunatic. While the rioters were embracing him Amrika was surreptitiously wiping his nose on their clothes (TBTD, 42)

The story of Amrika is perhaps one of the most tragically poignant aspects in the novel. It has the qualities of both the comic and the tragic fused together to constitute a morbid example of dark comedy. A mad lunatic and mentally challenged Sikh young man would have been under normal circumstances an object of pity and mockery. But in the surcharged atmosphere of communal violence, the ordinary figure of Amrika is converted into a symbolic figure representing all that is barbaric and bestial connected with communal violence of the worst kind. Using Amrika as a model clay, the rioters resort to forced religious identity, defilement of religious sanctity and instant change of religious and national identity which may not be possible to do with a normal human being.

When the holocaust bursts, as the rioters massacre Allahditta, and separate Raj Karni from him, two men, their faces muffled, come and take away Sohne Shah and Satbharai across the fields to the stream. Far in a ravine Satbharai and Sohne Shah lie unconscious for two days. On the third day they stumble on to the road. Seeing an aged Sikh and a young girl the soldiers pick them up. The military lorry brings them to a refugee camp.

A large area of fallow land adjoined the Rawalpindi airfield and a portion of that had been converted into a refugee camp. People from Ravaat, Sargi, Dobheran, and Kirpa are brought into the camp. Terror has left indelible marks on all. Their faces have aged watching houses and properties
looted and their hearts are sick of the red rain of blood. The author brings out the pathetic condition of the refugees in the following lines:

If a brother had arrived he had lost his sister. If a sister came she had seen her brother riddled with bullets. If a father came, he had offered up all his family to the flames. Nowhere could a young man be seen. In an attempt to save their sisters, mothers and temples, almost all young men of Pothoar had been slaughtered. (TBTD, 50)

In a tent in the camp, recitations of a Sikh scripture start, in another temple, deities are installed. But no one has the heart to go there.

They had got tired of praying with folded hands but no God came to their help. No prayers of hers could save a widow from watching her children being speared, one by one. The old man whose seven sons were all killed still bore the marks on his forehead of continuous prostration. Those who had watched their near and dear ones thrown alive into fire with holy texts clasped close to their bosom, to them God appeared to be a stranger. (TBTD, 51)

Sohne Shah has been sick ever since he came to the camp. He became seriously ill. Satbharai remained by his side. One day when she woke up in the morning, Sohne Shah was not found in the tent. She searches everywhere in the camp but cannot find him. She keeps on weeping. One day Kuldip, a Sikh youth who is serving the distressed brethren comes to Satbharai’s tent. Satbharai bursts into tears and tells him about the missing Sohne Shah. She does not know where to go and she has no one left. Kuldip tries to console her but in vain. After some days Sohne Shah is brought to the tent in a Tonga. He is no longer sick. Since leaving camp Sohne Shah had set out on a search for Raj Karni from village to village but could not find any trace of her. Satbharai the daughter of his lost friend Allahditta is now everything to him. He wants to go away from Rawalpindi and buy some
lands. He discloses to Satbharai that they should leave the refugee camp. Satbharai resolves to forget Kuldip and decides to go with him.

The train that starts from Rawalpindi runs normally up to Jhelum stopping at a few stations. The train has been detained so many times and mobbed. They have been forced to get down at Lahore. When the curfew is lifted they leave for Lyallpur. As they get down from the train at Lyallpur, they find Kuldip waiting for them. She is dazed on seeing him.

As days pass Kuldip draws nearer to Satbharai. Occasionally, he imagines that Satbharai is drifting away. Then Kuldip feels like running away from Patiala. Perhaps serving the refugees at Patiala, he might forget himself. But Satbharai holds him back. The bond of her love becomes strong.

Again on August 6, 1947 disturbances start. When the rioting is at its height the son of the new Deputy Commissioner Rashid comes to the residence of Kulwanth in a police vehicle. Kulwanth and Rashid are old friends. On the way they pick up Sohne Shah and Satbharai and drop them at the refugee camp in the Khalsa College. The activities of Rashid rescuing the people with humanitarian approach braving the bullets thrill Kuldip and Sohne Shah. In Kuldip’s eyes,

neither Hindustan existed nor Pakistan. His vision was far above the narrow minded quarrels of the Hindus and the Muslims. (TBTD, 126)

August 15, 1947 dawns. The Pakistanis have got their Pakistan and the Hindustan of the Hindus is free. The dawn of freedom ushered in new euphoria in which the violence of communal killing fields was temporarily forgotten for a brief period. But the euphoria lasted only a few days as the government and the people realised the dangers of communalism. As Chandra (2008, 73) observes,
Communalism threatens the prolonged historical process of India becoming a strong, integrated nation. While before 1947, encouraged by the colonial authorities, communalism divided the Indian people, weakened the anti-imperialist struggle and led to the partition of the country, it is no less dangerous today.

The new governments faced the onerous responsibility of rehabilitation after the carnage. On August 15, celebratory mood was high in spite of the sufferings which were confined mostly to Punjab and to a lesser extent to Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan. The radio was kept tuned the whole day. The stations of both India and Pakistan played gay music in honour of independence. Then refugees’ messages began to be broadcast by both the countries. Planes set out from India start arriving in all the cities. Seats were reserved and announcements broadcast asking particular persons to report at a particular airfield at a particular time. The seats of some passengers who fail to turn up are sold to the other people. Rashid is able to get two seats on a plane. It is decided that Sohne Shah and Satbharai should go. Satbharai feels like declaring that she would not go even to Paradise without Kuldip. At last Sohne Shah and Satbharai leave.

They reach Amritsar. There is no one to receive them. The airport employees take them to the refugee camp in a truck. As all the camps in Amritsar are full, they are sent to Jullundur, Gandhinagar refugee camp. There is no news about Kuldip. Satbharai misses him so much that she feels like a dried up river bed. She suffers the sweet pains of love locked up in her breast. Sohne Shah does odd jobs for the ashram inmates. He is everyone's Baba. Satbharai also helps him in all his activities.

Sohne Shah and Satbharai leave for Amritsar, Kuldip has joined rehabilitation organisation responsible for the restoration of abducted women.
He has been to Pakistan several times and at the risk of his life, he rescues Hindus and Muslims from the remotest village. Kuldip throws himself heart and soul into the rescue. From the days he entered the organisation he had respected no one. The one he respected is his religion. In one of his missions he arrives at the camp where Sohne Shah and Satbharai are.

One day a truckload of girls come in to the camp. All of them are shedding tears in a flood. The soldiers tell Sohne Shah that,

‘They were all Muslim girls being sent to Pakistan. After having been here so long they did not want to go. They also did not know if anyone would accept them there. Living with strangers so long, how could they face kith and kin.’ and the soldier added, ‘they are all pregnant’. (TBTD, 158)

Those words blanche Sohne Shah. He thinks,’May be Raj Karni too had to come here”. (TBTD, 159) The earth slips underneath his eyes, he asks no more. Then he consoles himself that whether they like or not, every Muslim girl left behind was to go to Pakistan, just as every Hindu and Sikh girl had to be brought back. That was the law.

One day a senior police officer comes and enquires whether her name is Satbharai and asks her to get ready. Satbharai clasps the Quran tighter and she says, "I am ready, and all my belongings are with me". (TBTD, 168) Sohne Shah cannot bear this. "A part and parcel of my life is being taken away from me. Why should I live? No! I will not.” (TBTD, 167)

Sohne Shah feels giddy. Darkness envelopes him. He feels choked and he collapses upon his Charpoy. On seeing that Kuldip totally breaks down and burns his palm over the flame of the earthen lamp in the niche of the house where Kuldip and Sohne Shah collapse. Thus, the novelist ends the story presenting the dehumanised society of those terrible times.
The novel comprises four sections and the story gradually develops from page to page encompassing thereby the rise, growth, climax and denouement of the plot. The story has political, social, communal, and personal levels of reference with an undercurrent of humanism in the midst of the barbaric incendiariarism presented in the novel. The journey, which starts from Rawalpindi, covers in between several halts and moments in the form of scenes of refugee camps. The brutal massacre done by the Hindus, Sikhs and the Muslims as acts of retaliation and revenge in several parts of the border area is repeatedly depicted with ruthless realism.

Passages like the following are scattered all over the novel. The following quote from the novel clearly indicates that the violence and brutality were well planned and executed.

Every Hindu and Sikh was to be killed their properties to be destroyed, cows were to be slaughtered in the Gurudwaras and temples, and their wives and daughters were to be raped. (TBTD, 12)

Some of the descriptions are too horrific to believe and could give goose bumps to the readers. The highly morbid and unbelievably brutal happenings appear at times to be straight from horror novels that nevertheless appeared to have happened in reality.

Those who were brave enough were to keep ready canisters of kerosene to set fire to houses as soon as they had been looted and cleared. Butchers were to keep cauldrons on the boil to fry children, to burn old men and to suspend women upside down. (TBTD, 13)

To mention a few more lacerating scenes, the author tries to foreground the fact that women, children and the elderly were the most affected and bore the brunt of the holocaust. Genocide and rabid violence always affects the weak first and partition violence appears to have been no exception.
They tied Shamoo and his wife to the trunk of the tree and in front of them raped and murdered Prito and her five sisters. (TBTD, 34)

Violence has its own sadistic and inexplicable penchant for scheming up unimaginable horrors in the name of religion, wherein rape and murder blend with religious malevolence of the worst order.

Young girls were forcibly carried to Gurudwaras and temples and raped before the images of their duties. Mother’s watch daughters lose their chastity and daughters saw their mothers being molested before their eyes (TBTD, 121)

The first part of the novel shows the early and the age-long cordiality among the neighbours belonging to different communities. It depicts the serious change in the atmosphere and the role of the religious priest in inciting violence. The Britishers and the political leaders like Master Tara Singh too shared the blame. The Bihar and Navohkali incidents could not be forgotten.

The riots leading to a complete chaos and the absolute failure of the government have been realistically delineated. Amidst communal fire stand Allahditta, Sohne Shah, Raj Karni and Satbharai who are so noble that they are absolutely free from religious hatred and distinction. They are the voices of sanity in a world engulfed in the drama of fanaticism and violence. The brutal acts fully expose the folly of the people and the novelist misses no opportunity to show these dire offences against humanity in their true color. These four characters are indeed heroic and humane in a brutal world of mass murder and chaos. They seem to signify the true spirit of secularism about which Sardar Patel spoke eloquently in one of his famous speeches,
Nature does not recognize any differences on the basis of caste or religion; nor would you ever find themselves in the same economic trouble. All of us, while following our own religions, will forget differences of caste or religion, will settle our communal disputes and would engage in the work of economic, social and political progress of the country. (Singh, 2009, 41)

Regarding the refugee camps the author gives a realistic detail. The soldiers engage in rescuing acts are strangers speaking different and unintelligible language. Ironically, they save people while their very close neighbors have turned against them. The horrid happenings of the pre-partition days have made Shone Shah a refugee. The scenes of lorries carrying the haggard refugees from the neighboring villages are heart rending. The deities are installed and the holy Sikh scriptures are recited in the refugee camps. Yet, the terribly tortured people could not dare to go these places. The horrid tortures weighed heavily on the mind of the victims and make them act strangely and unpredictably. The refugees narrate the harrowing tales of the atrocities inflicted on the fellow sufferers. Everyone has a tale of woe to tell. The forced migration process was complete and real. Prof. Sondhi describes his own personal experience of partition, thus:

Czechoslovakia has separated very peacefully- the Czechs and Slovaks had a Velvet Revolution, and they had a velvet divorce, but Hindus and Muslims had to separate at the time of Partition through a blood bath, which I think was quite unnecessary. I lived in Lahore at the time, and we thought we had come to Delhi for a holiday, and would get back to Lahore. But there was no going back. (Singh, 2008, 66)

The story of Haram Das from the village Moghul Parhi is as tragic as any. The rioters have cut off his arms and plucked out one of his eyes. Besides, his
younger daughter was stripped naked, made to dance, then taken in procession through the village. Finally the words, Long Live Pakistan were tattooed on her breast and a crescent and a star on her forehead. (TBTD, 56)

Haram Das had to watch all these cruelties with one remaining eye. He faints while narrating these events. He sighs helplessly and says, “When the seventh goonda was raping her, I fainted.” (TBTD, 56)

In spite of their woeful tales the people, feel that the separation of brother from brother cannot exist permanently. They asked, “How can the nail be separated from the flesh.” (TBTD, 59)

As the action of the novel unfolds, the readers confront a pattern of communal amity where the three communities the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs are still at least in peace with one another. In fact, the roots of communal amity in rural Punjab go so deep that the members of the two communities are even ready to sacrifice their lives for protecting each other. One gets the impression the rural Punjab is an oasis of communal fraternity in the desert of communal hatred that is ever expanding to spread its tentacles to engulf the two communities in the cities. At this stage of Indian history the pattern of communal relations between the two rural communities despite buffetings from outside was still that of harmony and concord.

The notion of secularism and communal amity appears to have been culturally engrained in the psyche of the vast majority of common people. This possibly explains why India chose to become a secular democratic republic. For several hundred years people have lived in amity transcending the differences of religion and culture and this trend is still strongly prevalent with people in general. As Chandra (2008, 87) points out this thinking in rooted in the belief that,
The state must be neutral towards all religious faiths or, as religious persons put it, the state must show equal regard for all faiths including atheism; the state must not discriminate in favor of or against any citizen on grounds of his or her religion; and communalism of every variety must be clearly and firmly opposed. Above all, religion must be separated from politics, economy and education and treated as a private or personal affair.

Kartar Singh Duggal’s novel *Twice Born Twice Dead* powerfully communicates the trauma caused by the partition. It portrays the whole panorama of convulsion that gripped the Punjab during those fateful days through the experiences of Sohne Shah, who stands for perfect religious harmony and has his best friend in Allahditta, a powerful and affluent Muslim. The Muslim suffered from no sectarian ill will. He loses his wife in a valiant attempt to save the Hindus and Sikhs of his village. Sohne Shah loses his daughter Raj Karni in communal violence; she is kidnapped. The brave Sikh villager escapes with Satbharai the daughter of his dear Muslim friend Allahditta. With her he suffers great ordeals, wanders from one refugee camp to another, flies to India and suffer miserably, always longing to see his lost daughter.

The experience of these two characters of those traumatic days, the good work done by a Sikh youth Kuldip who wins the heart of Satbharai, the sight of suffering humanity observed by these people and sad story of love between a Sikh boy and a Muslim girl Kuldip and Satbharai, form the core of the novel. Their experiences present the gruesome and grave tragedy of the partition.

Like Khushwant Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal delineates the historical truth that the disturbances in the east led to more serious and unprecedented violent acts in the Punjab. He explains how the cries of ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ and ‘Long Live Pakistan’ that were uttered in sheer
amusement soon assumed alarming meaning threatening the unity of the country.

The novel gives in detail, a horrible account of what is to follow the partition, how the Hindu women are to be disgraced, how their places of worship are to be defiled and how the cows which they worshipped and respected are to be slaughtered.

The Muslim landlords of Dhamyal, however, remain kind and helpful even in the midst of hatred and violence. In fact Dhamyal has a remarkable record of communal harmony and understanding. The rioters in great triumph enter the village from outside. The government remains surprisingly inactive. Allahditta informs Sohne Shah that the Muslims have planned to wipe out the Hindus. He assures his friend Sohne Shah to go away to the city with his young daughter Raj Karni. But it is too late, the goondas have surrounded the village and there is no escape possible. The village harmony is completely ruptured. The Muslims who have assured Sohne Shah of all protection became enemies and looked for blood.

The novelist analyses the cause of the dire events. He through Sohne Shah expresses the folly of the entire drama of pain and horror. The writer fully shows how fanaticism caused terrible destruction to the people living in perfect harmony and peace in the west Punjab.

The condition of the villagers deteriorates immeasurably. The Muslims cry for revenge and feel that the events in Bihar should be retaliated. The rioters are warmly welcomed by the Muslims of the village with sweets. The Hindu and Sikhs of the village are destroyed one by one. Kamal Khan the man entrusted to dispose of the loot is angry with Allahditta for his siding with the Hindus in the hour of crisis. The rioters take away Raj Karni while Sohne Shah and Satbharai lie unconscious in a distant ravine. On the third day
they get out and are escorted by a military lorry to a refugee camp. On the way they see the village in utter ruin. Satbharai feels the pangs of separation and she witnesses the great bloodshed helplessly.

In short the first part of the novel shows the early and age-long cordiality among the neighbors belonging to different communities. It surveys the serious changes in the atmosphere and the hand of religious priests in inciting the violence.

The novelist describes in detail the miserable conditions that prevailed in the refugee camps that came into existence as a result of the partition. The sinking of human values, the reign of Goondaism, the anarchy let loose upon the people, the horrible experience of the suffering humanity, the hypocrisy of the Muslim leaders and the unhygienic and inadequate arrangements at the camps are all vividly portrayed in the second part of the novel.

The third part of the novel shows the violence at its worst. Duggal vividly describes the horrible sight of a caravan of the Muslims evacuees to Pakistan. The cruelties of the Muslims in Pakistan are matched by those of the Hindus and Sikhs in India. The mischievous elements hold sway and take control of the situation. Violence is returned for violence. The terrors of East-Punjab find retaliation in the West of the province. The cycle of revenge is put in motion. Duggal shows the madness of the people and exposes their narrow communal attitude – the reason for the partition of the country. The novel makes a strong appeal for harmonious and peaceful living.

The novelist holds both the communities responsible for the shameful deeds. The violence preceding and succeeding the partition finds heart-rending expression in the novel. Also it powerfully depicts the plight of
the refugees and evacuees, people abandoning their homes and living in refugee camps and of the haunted psyche of the tortured men and women.

Amidst the gloom of the unfortunate tragedy the writer suggests that the violent bloodshed was the creation of a handful of mischievous elements. Duggal’s suggestive stress on a peaceful co-existence is both relevant and commendable.

The novelist has been very successful in making the political and communal drama a piece of literary merit never allowing it to be a documentary chronicle. Born and brought up in a predominantly Muslim region the novelist scans the Muslim and his own community very minutely. He has lent immediacy and authenticity to the presentation of the story. He has very meticulously maintained the rare quality of aesthetic distance and detachment in spite of his deep involvement in the cataclysmic happening soaked in tears and blood. The unprecedented trauma that the people everyday suffered on account of the ill-fated partition of India is narrated with unmistakable authenticity without any iota of prejudice and bitterness. Humanism and animalistic attitudes are very skillfully counter balanced.

The original Punjabi novel, one can easily guess, might be a very dramatic epic and the English rendering is also equally effective in reflecting the spirit and soul of the original.

The glimpses of rural life imagery and sensibility are the novelist’s forte. Similes like, “Prito’s breathing rattled like a milestone....” (TBTD, 62) is aptly used. Certain Indianisms or Punjabisms like “no one could harm a hair on your head...” (TBTD, 14) are freely employed. The language is flawless and racy. The novel is undoubtedly a notable addition to the chronicles of the tragedy of partition of the Indian subcontinent.
Throughout the novel many chapters of which are based on authentic records, runs the contrast between the barbarity of the general humanity divided on religious lines into opposing camps thirsty for each other’s blood and the efforts of the tiny minority to restore sanity. The tender romance of a Muslim girl and Sikh youth runs like a silver thread through an otherwise somber picture.

Kartar Singh Duggal’s handling of sex is in tune with his non-conformist spirit of the age. He does the same by humanizing it, that is, by presenting sex as a factor in human motivation on different levels of consciousness. Strictly speaking his is not a Freudian treatment of sex; unlike Freud he does not reduce all human motivation to sex impulse. In fact he is too non-conformist to allow his individuality to be subsumed under a Freud or a Marx.

Kartar Singh Duggal’s humanistic metaphysic, which becomes the focal point in men, helped him in endowing his fictional characters with existential individualities of their own. The man being the focal point of reference, his nature, temperament, personality – dialectic and motivating forces- all these things came to be looked upon as possessive of the utmost significance for Duggal. So he was led to delve deep into the inner recess of the minds of his characters to work out the dynamics of their behavior pattern which Duggal ushered in psychological realism for the first time in the annals of Punjabi literature.

It would be worthwhile to record Kartar Singh Duggal's novel *Twice Born Twice Dead* does not end in pessimism. Even though partition violence, genocide and trauma are in all their gory detail depicted, hope is never lost. The journey of the displaced characters to India and the unsure agony of the refugee camps and the intermittent mix of suffering and hope, the willingness of people to help each other, the genuine humanism of
characters like Kuldeep point to a future of hope, revival and resurrection. Most of the partition novels seem to share this optimism and in the words of Nayak, et.al (2018, 140)

All have characterization of humanism and affirmative vision of life. In this respect the novels celebrating human values can be placed in the tradition of humanistic novels. All the novelists suggest that suffering, pain and death are only prelude to a new life full of affirmation and hope. They knew that life is for living and for that one must leave behind past. No brooding over the past will bring it back. Good must always triumph over bad.