

S. H. Manto's legendary contribution to partition of India

Dr. Brahmananda Padra¹, Sanjay Suman²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of English, GDM University, Odissa, India

²CAS/SIS/ JNU. Research Scholar, JNU Delhi, New Delhi, India

Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received: 01 Mar 2024; Received in revised form: 15 Apr 2024; Accepted: 21 Apr 2024; Available online: 30 Apr 2024 ©2024 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). Keywords – Political Partition, History, Physic Trauma.</p>	<p><i>The brutality and anguish of the Indian partition drastically altered the social and political development of the Indian subcontinent, and its effects can still be felt today. Along with the deaths and damage, the incident also left a lasting psychological scar on the minds of millions of individuals, particularly the minds of women and children. No writer of the time and its aftermath could escape the age of foolishness, the season of darkness and the time of despair. It is difficult to sweep beneath the rug actual acts of kidnapping, uprooting, train raids, trauma, insanity, suicide, murder, and the acts of destruction. Both Hindus and Muslims on either side of the Borders, which were once porous and shared by the community, were impacted by the violent riots and massacres that followed. Many more people were displaced, endured poverty, were raped, were subjected to brutality, suffered bodily and mental anguish, and millions of people lost their lives. The bloody mayhem that occurred both during and after the partition drowned out the victims' cries. Several writers, authors, and poets, including Saadat Hasan Manto, let these stifled voices be heard. Manto, an Indian-born Pakistani writer who immigrated to Pakistan after the country's independence, brought the horrific facts of Partition to light clearly and uncomfortable. Indeed, the cataclysmic event of India's partition had a profound effect on the society, culture, and literature of the nation. That was a particular trauma that destroyed the lives of regular people. Manto's representation of the partition violence pinches the intellect rather than appeal to the emotion. It is highly realistic and achieves remarkable objectivity, for it neither shows any biasedness for contending nationalisms of the traumatic times, nor hide own socialism or specific cultural visibility, nor any geographical, political or religious markers. It does not either present detailed characterization or grant the narrator hide authorial voice.</i></p>

I. INTRODUCTION

As the Indian subcontinent was divided, Saadat Hassan Manto (1912-1955), a well read Urdu short story writer, moved to Pakistan. A common theme in the countless literary works produced on this event from the East and West frontiers is complete bewilderment and angst. Like Manto, there were several writers for whom the boundaries made no sense. Manto, above all others, is still a master at capturing the perplexity of the average guy who is suffering from this catastrophe. Manto, who was raised in Amritsar by Kashmiri Muslims, abandoned the family profession of practicing law in favor of literature.

For the sole purpose of purging the other population, the violence at the time of Partition was reduced. Violence took many other forms, including body mutilation and physical torture in addition to murder. Manto, among all, could express the pain of Partition through his writings. The horror of an event led to a loss of ordinary language and its meaning. The victims of violence are observed to have no expression for their trauma; they are at a loss of words and signification. For my purpose I would like to discuss some of the short stories that Manto wrote after the Indian holocaust, like *'Open It'*, *'Cold Meat'*, and *'Toba Tek Singh'*, and try to understand the loss of meaning and the ability of cognition on the part of both the victim and the aggressor in the wake of Partition violence. Also violence becomes legitimate in the regeneration of social order in modern India, that is in the nation building process. Understandably, the state of victimhood also gets redefined with the various forms of violence. They ascertain that there is a breakdown of signification of language in the aftermath of the communal violence at the time of partition of India in 1947. I intend to understand this loss of signification of language on the part of the victims and the perpetrator of violence during the partition.

Many people decided they did not want to live in a minority, so they left their native countries and moved to the majority country in which they belonged. For example, Hindus and Sikhs from west Punjab moved to east Punjab, and Muslims from east Punjab moved

to west Punjab. With the partition of India, which claimed the lives of between 200,000 and two million people, ethnic violence began. Twelve to fifteen million people migrated across the border, and more than 75,000 women were kidnapped, raped, or abducted. In Punjab, Sikhs predominated in the east while Muslims dominated the west. Punjab was a princely state governed by the Sikhs

by 1857, when the British acquired full control of India. To preserve the Sikh identity, some religious Sikh leaders founded the Shiromani Akali Dal party in 1920. This party later played a significant part in the partition massacres. The Sikh people, who had initially believed that their distinct character deserved a separate state for Sikhs, understood that the British had no such plans when the boundary commission was revealed, and they subsequently started a massive genocide of Muslims. They organized Jathas in which well organized and trained people attacked Muslim villages and refugees. They burnt their houses and even whole villages, killed their male members and raped or abducted their young females.

No foot convoy or train carrying refugees was safe from their attacks during the migrations. Muslims in west Punjab began murdering Sikhs and Hindus after learning of the Muslim deaths in east Punjab. Following the partition, migration, and murders, Punjab's Muslim population fell from 53% in the 1941 census to 2% in the 1951 census. People who went through this trauma had permanent memories of this event, which they never forgot until death. These stories were transferred to the other generations in the form of oral stories as people still remember what happened to their parents or grandparents. The tragedy of this event makes it one of the most barbaric events of the century which history has been rather silent about. Millions of people died through unknown revenge, savagery was at its peak and humanity was at its lowest depth. Women and children were easy targets.

Manto continued to see himself as a citizen of undivided India even after becoming a second-class citizen over night. In other words, the basis of his writing is the no-man's-land, criticizing the inhumane

and senseless behavior associated with the partition. Manto's family moved to Pakistan as the Partition was happening, but he stayed in Bombay for a while. When he landed in Pakistan, a recently established nation, he was extremely disturbed. The brutality and anguish of the Indian partition drastically altered the social and political development of the Indian subcontinent, and its effects can still be felt today. Along with the number of death and the amount of destruction, the event left a deep psychological scar on the mind of millions of people in general and on the mind of women and children in particular. Such age of foolishness, the season of darkness and the time of despair could leave no writers of the time and aftermath

untouched. And so far the representation of Indian partition violence and trauma is concerned, whatever the cause and whoever the culprits accused or censured, most of the historians have done their best to silence violence by focusing on the great causes rather than the events themselves. The actual acts of abduction, uprooting, train raids, trauma, madness, suicide, murder and acts of destruction are vexed to keep under the carpet. Unlike this, Sadat Hasan Manto, one of the greatest Urdu writers, visualizes the unprecedented objectivity in the rendition of this heartrending milieu in his stories "*Khol Do*", "*Thanda Gosht*" and "*Toba Tek Singh*". Thus, methodologically, this paper makes content analysis of the purposively selected secondary resources where violence and trauma remain at the center rather than the politics of blame on Muslims or Hindus as perpetrator of the consequence. His first several years in Pakistan were confusing. Everything was out of joint. There was a mad massive crowd for allotments of evacuee properly and a sense of terrible insecurity.

Some folks were acting as if tomorrow wouldn't come. People who had once been wealthy were living on the streets. He was greatly alarmed by the cultural gap that India's division into two countries had produced. These confusing days had affected his writing quite radically but from the perspective of subaltern. With renewed vigor, he began writing in a sarcastic vein. He continued to oppose division and thought it was a foolish, unreasonable, and cruel human action. He

recreated the trauma endured by the many identified and unnamed victims in order to write related stories from the victim's perspective. Manto also portrays the history of division as one of dislocation, separation, riot, rape, fire, insanity, madness, racial and religious intolerance, loss of identities, and other negative aspects. To this day, it is not known with any degree of accuracy of how many people on both sides of the divide were massacred in cold blood. Savagery such as that witnessed at the time of partition as few parallels in history.

The tendency of preconceived identity markers, such as religion, class, nationality, and so forth, does not exist in Manto. He makes no assumptions about Hindus, Muslims, or Sikhs. He neither deifies nor demonizes any of the country's communities. In his opinion, during a spiritual crisis, any man, regardless of caste, creed, religion, or nationality, can be as irrational and inhuman as his characters. Without taking sides, he describes acts and scenes of communal violence. Manto's writing embodies his sympathy for underdogs. Manto's portrayal of the bloodshed during the division is cerebral rather than sentimental. It is extremely realistic and achieves exceptional impartiality because it does not display any partiality for competing nationalisms of the turbulent times, nor does it conceal its own socialism or particular cultural visibility, nor does it contain any geographical, political, or religious identifiers. The narrator doesn't have an authorial voice or detailed characterization. His writings are astonishingly clear of the ideological alienation that can be seen in the works of even some of the most well-known authors of South Asian partition literature when using the victim's point of view.

II. HISTORY OF PARTITION OF INDIA AND ITS CRITICS

The history of politico-religious partition of India, which had taken on the proportion of war, is the history of violence in colonial and post colonial India. The partition includes the familial and communal violence in which common people as women, poor, disable and all the under privileged groups remained

essentially at the receiving end as primary victims. This partition of India brought the division of greater India into two nations as India and Pakistan and this division is celebrated in the official history of both nations but the aspect of celebration varies according to the variation of people's status. The magnitude of the violence covered the various genres and inquisitive academic minds, especially of South Asia, could not remain untouched. Among those several creative writers, Saadat Hasan Manto is the one who has a microscopic view on that violence history and recalls the events with traumatic experience. Manto in his most of the short stories abundantly draws his subject matter from before and aftermath of partition of India. He is a great believer of man's freedom from man's oppression and a liberal humanist who has above all creeds and distinctions of race, religion and color. He was devastated by the depth of degradation and depravity to which quite ordinary and sane people could sink in frenzied times such as witnessed in the wake of partition. Manto doesn't shorten the boundary of outcome of partition in case of government and territory alone, rather he associates it with the division in every sector as language, culture, families, beliefs, religions and so on. These divisions primarily resulted with an antagonistic relation between Hindu and Muslims in both nations from the very beginning. There were the multiple results of partition as loot, killing, rape, abduction, murder, destruction of lives, property and houses, and after all the vandalism everywhere. There were the mass killing of 2 thousands of people which was beyond count and record. This partitions directly or indirectly affected the life of those common people who, in reality, have nothing to do with it. These all the grand realities were to be silenced for those partitions victims and these were the taboos for any sorts of revelation. Manto undergoes with those very topics which were considered as social taboos in Indo-Pakistani society. No part of human existence remains untouched for him. He sincerely brought the story of prostitutes and pimps, looted and looters, suppressed and suppressors, lunatics, widows, orphan and all. He simply presented the characters in a realistic light and left the judgment on the reader's eye.

III. PSYCHIC TRAUMA AND PARTITION OF INDIA

As the politico-religious partition of India in 1947 caused the great fragmentation among Indians and Pakistanis' from different levels, their traumatic feelings are recaptured by Saadat Hasan Manto in his short stories. Though cultural approach of trauma has a magnificent importance, psychoanalytical approach to trauma also needs to be discussed which even is inseparable part for the complete definition of trauma. So, to bring the hypothesis to the complete level, psychic trauma theory is the foremost methodology. Most of the characters in Manto's stories are lacerated by bloody and haunting memory of the partition violence. Prior to locality and contextualizing characters' trauma in the transitional phase of partition, the researcher has felt it necessary to expound the theory of psychic trauma which is the basic methodological tool applied in Manto's selected stories. The word 'trauma' refers to a mental condition caused by a severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time. It is even an unpleasant experience which upsets the experiencer and makes to feel anxious. Trauma theory, on the other hand, is a privileged critical category which includes diverse fields, with its specific focus on psychological, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic questions about the nature and representation of traumatic events. These concerns of trauma theory "range from the public and historical to the private and memorial" (Luckhurst 497). The Concise Oxford Dictionary has defined the word trauma as "1. a deeply distressing experience, 2. physical injury, 3. emotional shock following a stressful event" (1526). Freudian psychoanalysis provided a model of traumatic subjectivity and various accounts about the effect of trauma and memory. Etymologically trauma refers to the physical laceration and wound and it was widely understood by the same meaning during partition. Later, people related trauma to denote those who were 11 wounded and deeply infected by the problematic of complicated kind. Such a troubled psyche is said to be traumatic psyche and when this psychic troubles of people are extended

further within a limited duration of time, such a trauma was considered to be psychic trauma. The analysis of psychic trauma doesn't complete without mentioning the ideas of Cathy Caruth, a leading trauma theorist. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, her idea of latency argues that trauma as it first takes place is uncertain, but that "the survivors' uncertainty is not a simple amnesia; for the event returns, as Freud points out insistently and against their will" (6). She emphasizes that trauma can hardly be forgotten. She states on the part of latency of the temporary delay, which should not be misunderstood as repression because trauma by its very nature, displays with a vengeance over a period of time, especially when triggered by a similar event. Trauma for Cathy Caruth is incomprehensible by nature and by the same token it is referential as well.

Trauma of Partition of India in Manto's Stories :

Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories are the clear mirror of traumatic experiences caused by the violence of Partition of India in 1947. Most of the characters in his short stories are afflicted with severe cases of the trauma caused by partition. The sectarian violence has been an indigenous phenomenon of India. The country has seen hundreds of communal riots causing an unlimited loss to its lives and property but the partition violence was the greatest. Perhaps no communal riots will be able to exceed it. Manto, while dealing with the trauma of partition, highlights how the people from both countries, were parally affected by communal riots. This violence was so great in its magnitude that the word "Partition" itself became the metaphor for the sectarian violence for the inquisitive academic minds of South Asia. Manto's stories mostly deal with the two different localities where the characters migrate from one to another. To mention, these different localities are of India and Pakistan in this contemporary scenario. People suffer from identity crisis on both countries as they cannot relate themselves anywhere. In short, people are in Janus-faced state. On the one hand they were fascinated by the glamour of united past where there was no boundary between them and on the other hand the

haunting present always recalls about their glorious past which was separated by great riot, loot, rape, murder and the like. They are obsessed by the glamour of their own indigenous system of schooling. Leaving all these tortures behind, there was another common stain to these citizens of both countries who were compelled to occupy the western left deeply-rooted ideals of their culture. In front of the glamorous and superior attributes of the colonial culture, their indigenous culture loomed like an inferior pigmy culture. In almost all characters, extremely painful feeling of cultural superiority and inferiority mounted by leaps and bound. Their thinking gradually began to follow in consistent and illogical pattern. Their psychic purity turned out to be wounded love hatred, attraction-repulsion orientation towards colonial and nascent postcolonial essentialities pushed some of the leading characters of the stories to the corner of trauma. In fact their psychological makeup was affected by the revenges of trauma within the citizens of two nations. In the story 'She is Alive' Manto states as "the special train left Amritsar around 2 o'clock in the afternoon [. . .] On the way many people were killed, several got badly injured, some got strayed" . Sirajuddin, the principal character had faced the lively death of his wife leaving their only daughter Sakina on his lap. Her mother had said while dying "Leave me, take Sakina and run away quickly". Sirajuddin is the representative of the then tortured innocent city-dwellers. Those medium class citizens were in the frenetic and frenzied mood. They were compelled to act in defeated and submissive manner, because of their own internal pressure of psychic dichotomy. Not only had the pressure on them come from their own interiority but also from the external world. Because of sudden attack on Sirajuddin's part, he happened to miss his wife forever and daughter's whereabouts was lost.

IV. CONCLUSION

Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories mostly deal with the history of partition of India which has often been glorified and highlighted in the official history of both India and Pakistan. Manto, in reality, ironizes that

glorious history which was not of poor people, commoners' and of women but, rather, was of a handful so-called elitist. Partition of India of 1947 parted those commoners with land, religion, relatives, property and everything which ultimately provided them with the scattered image of glorious past. They repent for that lost history which Manto's characters' represent either being rapists, looters, murders, thieves, lunatics or so on. To unveil the cruelty, inhumanity and suffering of victims and to subvert the existing notion about partition violence, Manto ironically unfolds the repressed cry and mimicry of the sufferers'. Through the ironic narrative, Manto explores the actual experiences of the pain, suffering and trauma that the victims underwent while violence was in its apex. The unbearable and unspeakable pain and sufferings which were silenced by those sufferers' because of several reasons are expressed through Manto's stories. Making the lively depiction of common people's real suffering at various levels, Manto has been able to prove the notion of glory and celebration about Indian Partition as futile and ironical. This partition of India, as many writers have addressed, increased the intimate relationship between war, gender, and violence. The analysis of this division from different perspective disrupts both normative understanding of nationalism as ideology and interpretations of state-building as a simple set of bureaucratic practice. Almost all the stories of Manto are at the forefront of efforts to show how common innocent people were victimized. Most of these stories show how these people's suffering bodies provide a template for kin and collective honor and for disgrace as well. Violations are justified by inscribing them in a memorialization of a 50 past nation, present and construction of a religio-nationalist future that hold women as central to tradition, spirituality, and the meaning of community. Elitist history of the partition either erase these common people as subjects in their concentration of high politics or assumes them to be among the masses of victims whose experience can be homogenized as effects of the cost of war. Capturing all these details, Manto depicts and subverts the existing limited notion about partition and its aftermath which is understood only in terms of people

and territory which, rather, has the lasting effects in numerous factors as social, familial, industrial, tribal, racial, linguistic, administrative, cultural, religious and more.

Partition caused people to be rootless and homeless. People were destination less in search of their root. People became aimless, homeless, moneyless which caused them to involve in corruption. In 'A Lump of Cold Flesh', Manto mentions the loot and murder of those psychic sufferers'. Some people were conscious of violence but many other wanted to spread it all over. They enjoyed breaking peace, killing others, looting and other such activities. Isher Sing's killing to several people with his kirpan and disbelief to his beloved proves the lusty attitude of men over women and brutal mentality of men in the disguise of help and rescue while they were in difficulty. It shows the increasing animalism on human beings. They were fragmented in many aspects so they involved themselves in such activities. So, Manto depicts the excessive madness of people over sexual pleasure and loot which is the outcome of the latent brutal desire of those scattered psyche. 'Three And a Half Annas' is another story with vivid example of Manto's depiction of traumatic sufferers'. Manto is very straightforward to mention all those psychiatric experience of partition victims where the story starts from the topic of crime, punishment, loot, jail, murder etc. These all the uproars of those victims are to be inter-connected with specific ethical and socio-cultural tension. The continuous conflict either individual, societal, ethical, religious, national etc including genocidal episodes, and irrational and bloody events, loot, murder were very common during partition period. Rizvi, the principal character undergoes looting and murdering for his survival where he places the existence to be the primary and humanity to be secondary. Prevailing poverty, rulelessness, lawlessness, and individualism were the prime causes of bad schooling to them. Rizvi's identity is mixed with memory of murder. A poor and scattered mind does everything to get rid of epidemic of any kind. Rizvi advocates all those criminal actions and questions with surprise why people equate honesty with good qualities where all

the moralities are curse for poor and suppressed people.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bhalla, Alok.(Ed.)(1994, 3rd printing 2013). Stories about the partition of India.(Vols.1-3). New Manto, Saadat Hasan. "The Dog of Titwal". Stories about partition of India. Vol.II Ed. Delhi: Manohar
- [2] Bhalla, Rajindar Singh Bedi and Alok, "Lajwanti" JSTOR Source; Manoa 19 (2007) Chakraborty, Dipesh. Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000. Print.
- [3] Das,Veena and Nandy,Ashis. (1986). 'Violence, Victimhood, and the Language of Silence.' Ed. Das Veena. The Word and the World: Fantasy, Symbol and Record. New Delhi: Sage, 177-195
- [4] Farrell, Kirby. (1998). Post-Traumatic Culture:Inquiry and Interpretation in the Nineties. Baltimore, MD:Johns Hopkins UP.
- [5] Hasan, Khalid.(Ed.). (2007). Kingdom's end. New Delhi: Penguin Hasan Khalid. Introduction,Washington.1996
- [6] Berger, James. "Trauma and Literary Theory." Contemporary Literature. Vol. XXXVIII, 3: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 1997.
- [7] Blanchot, Maurice. The Writing of the Disaster: *l'écriture du désastre*, trans. Ann Smock, new edn. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
- [8] Butalia, Urvashi. "A Tradition of Martyrdom." The Other Side of Silence. Voices from the Partition of India. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. 153-71.
- [9] "Community, State and Gender: Some Reflections on the Partition of India." The Oxford Literary Review 16.1-2 (1994): 31-67.
- [10] Muslim and Hindu Men and Women: Communal Stereotypes and Partition of India. London: Zed Books, 1995.
- [11] Caruth, Cathy. Trauma: Explorations in Memory. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- [12] Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- [13] Das, Veena and Ashish Nandy. "Violence, Victimhood and the Language of Silence." The Word and the World: Fantasy, Symbol and Record. Ed. Veena Das, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1986.
- [14] Felman, Soshana and Dori Laub. Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History. London: Routledge, 1992.
- [15] Freud, Sigmund and Joseph Breuer. Studies on Hysteria. trans. James Strachey and Alix Strachey, The Penguin

- Freud Library, Vol. III, ed. James Strachey and Alix Strachey. London: Penguin, 1974.
- [16] Gupta, Madan. Trans. Saadat Hasan Manto. Selected Stories. New Delhi: Cosmo Publication, 1997.