

Re-traumatization in Saadat Hassan Manto's *Black Borders*: A Trauma Study

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Abstract

The research article analyzes the re-traumatization of the victimized and the survivors in the partition violence in Saadat Hassan Manto's "Black Borders", portraying the trauma of war and the conflicts of the residents. Its purpose is to show how the victims get traumatized through the literary text of the partition and to evaluate the atrocities in the history of the partition riots and huge holocaust. This vignette describes the unspeakable scales of reports of the riots of a culturally diverse people. They cannot safeguard the culture of that society, their beliefs, perceptions, values, and cultural ideology. These people are compelled to either remain faithful to the legacy of previous generation or choose their own destiny. A number of people formulate the worldviews in the case of the partition violence to accept the incident as an aberration. A valid philosophy of the partition is that it creates the shift in the cultural, political, and economic position of the nations. To interpret the text, the paper writer embraces the perspectives of Trauma and memory devices as a theoretical framework. For this matter, the perspectives of Cathy Caruth, Jennifer Yusin, Gyanendra Pandey, and Stefano Bianchini have been used. Since partition violent atrocities displace and deprive the people of the freedom and a choice, this article examines the experiences of the traumatized characters. The study concludes the significant role of the partition literature in helping the people to resolve their psychological disorder resulted due to the violence.

Keywords: trauma, violence, riots, partition, dismemberment, re-traumatization

Introduction**A Narrative of Holocaust Literature**

This research article analyzes Saadat Hassan Manto's *Black Borders* exploring the re-traumatization of the characters involved in the partition or post-partition riots from a perspective of the trauma theory and the holocaust literature. The article intends to show how the victims or the witnesses relive themselves of the past memories and experiences of the horrendous event which most people do not want to remember and to reveal its tremendous impacts on the individual or the groups in the delayed and repetitive form of hallucinations. Manto, a Pakistani writer, born in Ludhiana, was actively engaged in writings. Actually he took to writing largely in Urdu language, and he gave his readers the short stories, a novel, series of

radio plays, three essays and personal sketches. Writers and critics held his best short stories in high esteem. His best-known stories talk about the partition violence, but he showed his disagreement with the partition. Also, he was tried for obscenity. *Black Borders* brings back the memories of the bloodiest time in the history of the India-Pakistan divide, warning many persons who fail to learn from the past extremities. The text presents the disturbing vignettes from the holocaust of the partition. Combining the text of 32 cameos, Manto writes a short descriptive literary sketch, and this relatively slim book describes the cases of rape, murder, loot, greed and wanton destruction. Nowhere does anyone see an inconceivable horror like this. Moreover, reports of violent atrocities such as loot, kidnapping, intimidating, rape, and stern police investigation of the common people in Amritsar, Punjab are heard all the time and they create the frightening experiences.

Holocaust literature covers a series of documentary and fictional texts, together with memoirs, diaries, essays, novels, poetry, drama, fake memoirs, and children's literature. It contains some philosophical reflections on the genocide largely. Critical debates about Holocaust literature look into diaries, poems, and memoirs of survivors and works of history and fiction. In this respect, Manto's "Siyah Hashiye" is a compilation of anecdotes on the violence of Partition. In his stories, Manto has assumed a humanistic approach, without taking side with Muslims and Hindus but focuses his attention on reality in an unbiased way. For him, all these anti-Hindu and anti-Muslim activities are part of general human tragedy, the result of which is a horrifying disaster. Moreover, the study of the partition riots and holocaust in the research article would offer an outlook on the psychological hurts and wounds in the characters most of which were the women, minorities, indigenous and others. Thus, the research article studies the re-traumatization in Manto's vignette.

The focus is on critical insights of Cathy Caruth, and Jennifer Yusin. The article explores the impacts of partition riots and the survivors' traumatized experiences, using a Trauma perspective. The study focuses on re-traumatization that takes place in the individual or the collectivity as a result of retelling of the partition violence as well as memories of the horrendous event.

Research Problems

Monto's "Black Borders" has tried to explore the atrocities of violence in the name of religion and an unspeakable amount of damages during the riot. The partition is responsible for genocide in the subcontinent. Still, the horrendous event affects the people's psyches considerably. The individual or the group is perceived to develop the psychological injures because of the holocaust and these damages trigger the traumatized effects on the survivors and the witnesses. The research article has the following research questions:

- i. What factors are responsible for stimulating the re-traumatization in the selected text?

- ii. How are these people affected by psychological injuries in the text?

Research Objectives

The research objectives are given as follows:

- i. To find out the responsible factors of re-traumatization, and
- ii. To examine the effects of these psychological damages.

Literature Review

Also, the study makes a systematic review of the basic concepts and theoretical insights from Trauma to fill up the research gap and it reviews the criticisms of the author and the primary text: *Black Borders*. The following reflections and reviews have appeared differently. In the first place, Rakshanda Jalil (2003) talks about the negative picture of the violence, and she writes that the 32 cameos demonstrate “horrifying vignettes from the holocaust of the Partition”. Moreover, these small sketches present the possible horror of “rape, murder, loot, pillage, greed and wanton destruction” (para.1). Manto’s text reveals the unconceivable picture of violence and atrocity, which had displaced the innocent marginal people and victimized the women. Another reviewer Anjali (2008) maintained, “Manto's *Black Margins* is a beautiful collection of his short stories... for anyone who is interested at all in the affective dimension of decolonization, especially in the south Asian context it is quite extraordinary, depressing, but extraordinary (para 1). The text shows a depressing, emotional effect of decolonization because it is difficult to resolve the conflict management. Aftermath of the conflict divided the nation. Similarly, in *Mottled Dawn: Fifty Sketches and Stories of Partition*, Manto (1997) offers the painful reflections of the communal frenzy in times of the partition of India in 1947(para.1). Accordingly it depicts violence against women. The partition led to the communal friction and claimed the deaths of the people. Manto reflects on the plights of the victims, the vulnerable women, and the minorities involved during the conflicts. The forceful immigration took place against the free will of the general people. Also, *Mottled Dawn* consists of memorable stories such as “Toba Tek Singh”, “The Return”, “The Assignment”, “Colder than Ice” and many more. It depicts the most tragic incident in the Indian national history. All these stories deal with the psychological engagements of the fictional characters.

Likewise, Alexander (2012) observes, “When bad things happen to good people, they become shocked, outraged, and indignant” (p. 8). The terrible event activates trauma in the actors or participants when exposed. They decline to recall the horrifying event. But these shocks are repressed in the unconscious. Gyanendra Pandey (2001) claims that a written history of struggle is likely to ignore the dimensions of “force, uncertainty, domination and disdain, loss and confusion.” Afterwards the fight gets stabilized (p. 5). Actually, a history of struggle never includes brutalities and massive violence; rather its glory is much highlighted in history.

It fails to meet the aspirations of the victims. In stark contrast, Stefano Bianchini (2005) argues, “Nonetheless, state partition is a political phenomenon, which has increasingly occurred in modern times” (p. 40). The politics plays a vital role in the state partition. The public has no decision and the state leaders’ influence works well. From the above reviews, an attention has not been given to the area of retraumatization on the observers of the riots and those who have not yet experienced the event. Thus, the article indicates its departure, filling up the research gap. In this way, the article endeavors to analyze and reveal the impacts of partition riots and the survivors’ traumatized experiences from a perspective of Trauma as a methodological framework. In such cases, the individual or the community or the group is believed to heal the psychological injuries and behave normally.

Research Methods and Materials

This research article adopts a qualitative method of analysis of the primary text and secondary texts. For an interpretation of traumatized experiences, Trauma Theory as a theoretical parameter is helpful, and perspectives of Gyanendra Pandey, Cathy Caruth, Jennifer Yusin and Stefano Bianchini have been used. In this connection, Gyanendra Pandey states, “rupture and genocidal violence” marks end of one regime and the birth of two new nations (Pandey P.). In the same way, he further writes that the violence surrounds “Sikh and Hindu minorities that remain dispersed in the rural areas” of the country, when it is “compared to a tidal wave” (p. 23). The partition violence is unconceivable and massive and has tremendous impacts on the people especially of the rural parts of the country. He has a negative image of such a terrible event. Similarly, Jeffrey C. Alexander in her book “Trauma: A Social Theory” speaks of the mental wounds and hurts in the group consciousness due to the horrific incident in the past. In this light, she writes, “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (Alexander, 2012, p.6). Cathy Caruth (1991) in her article entitled “Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History” argues “...trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic event, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations...” (p.181). When the individual or the group responds to disastrous event in the belated manifestation of fantasies, the traumatized experiences occur. In a different note, Jennifer Yusin (2009) states, “... *Cracking India* was telling a different story about that momentous historical event than what was communicated in the Partition scholarship, which dealt more explicitly with the historical and political registers of independence and the end of British colonial rule in the subcontinent” (p.454). In this sense, the partition literature talks about the historical and political records of independence and the termination of the colonial rule. She perceives that in the Partition roughly million people were uprooted and displaced.

Communal riots across the nations steered to an incomparable scale of violence and atrocity during the partition.

Results and Discussion

Re-Traumatized Experiences of the Characters

In Manto's *Black Border*, the narrator reflects the painful experiences of those who have been wrongfully treated during the communal riots. Populace from both the borders have been affected and brutally crushed in the communal frenzy. For instance, both parties begin to raid one another indiscriminately, and intimidate themselves. Gyanendra Pandey (2001) states, "rupture and genocidal violence" marks end of one regime and the birth of two new nations (P.). The critic endorses the birth of one nation and end of another nation because of rupture and annihilation. The partition demarcates not the line of borders but the division of people in terms of religion, ideology and culture. Under "Partition", the narrator describes: "When the crate was opened, a man leapt out from it. In his hand was a sword. As he leapt, he split both partners into four pieces" (Black Borders 42). In the text the killings, uprooting occur. Bloodshed begins in massive scale. These incidents turn the people into arch enemies seeking revenge from one another. The rioters hide in the different locations and make a violent encounter on the people of other religion. Lives of those not directly involved in politics have to suffer for no apparent reasons and in particular the mistakes these people are unaware of. People are terror-stricken during the separation. Thus, the author never forgets the painful memory of the partition and the victims' plight and untold woes because of the violent atrocity.

Paradoxically, the nationalist politics invites not only the divide of the nation but also the violence and dismemberment of the people. When the leaders with the conflicting views on the separation decide not to unite, the partition, for example, becomes an unavoidable option. Quoting Jinnah as his address speech aimed at the Indian Muslims, Ranabir Samaddar writes, "It is essential that you must get not only the Muslim League but the Mussulmen's of India and here I am not speaking as a Musulman but as an Indian" (Samaddar year?88). The author points out the politics of rhetoric, and creates the contradictions. Arguably, politics divides and rules the entire population. In a relatively small vignette, the narrator speaks, "Chaos erupted. People were falling all over each other, scrambling to grab something, and brawls broke out. The Pathan, rifle in hand, muscled his way into the crowd" (Black Borders p.43). He says when anarchy breaks out, the massive scale of violence takes the minorities and the refugees into its firm grip. Consequently, these victims are supposed to unnecessarily suffer. In a similar tone, Stefano Bianchini (2005) agrees that the leaders of the opposing political ideologies propose the "role of geopolitics, the opportunities of dialogue and the context of transition" as an agenda which essentially leads to the partition (p.138). The critic here considers a general framework such as the politics, rounds of dialogue and context for the separate land. In other words, the division calls mass genocidal violence.

The partition and independence of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 has tagged the moment of rupture as the horrendous event in history of the partition. Take for example, uprooting, displacement and stern interrogation of the migrants result from chaos during the time of riots. In this view, Gyanendra Pandey (2001) writes that the violence, when compared to a tidal wave, surrounds “Sikh and Hindu minorities that remain dispersed in the rural areas” of the country (p.23). He articulates that if violence affects the section of populace, it is the people in minorities in the countryside. In “Appropriate Action”, the narrative continues, “When the attack occurred some members of the minority community in the neighborhood were killed; the rest fled for their lives. However, one man and his wife hid in the cellar of their house” (Black Borders p. 45). Members of minority community either suffer from the deaths of the relatives during the clash or migrate to safe places. This incident leaves the victims with fears and pains because life is pretty uncertain. Yet again, the critic Bianchini (2005) challenges, “Partition is not the expression of clashes of civilization. Rather, it is a local, but widespread, attempt at reacting against globalization by local/global means, patterns, symbols and beliefs” (Bianchini, 2005, p. 144). The partition circulates locally and globally. It globalizes the concept of the separation of the state that stimulates the partition. Hence, the actual notion of the separation of the land has cost many lives and properties alongside the disintegration of the nationalities.

The partition observes the discriminations. In these riots, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs have been killed. Unaccountable/massive numbers of the women are raped and converted into other religion without their will. Many millions are uprooted and transformed into official refugees as a result of the partition riots. Those that are about to be liberated was pitted against departing colonial rulers, therefore, Pandey (2001) views, “Several hundred thousand people were estimated to have been killed; unaccountable numbers raped and converted; and many millions uprooted and transformed into official ‘refugees’ as a result of what have been called the partition riots” (p. 2). The author gives an estimate of ruptures such as killing, rape, conversion of religion, uprooting and turning into refugees. Under “sorry”, the narrative begins, “The knife slit the belly past the navel, cutting the pa jama strings. Suddenly, from the mouth of the man wielding the knife came these words of regret, "Tsk, tsk, tsk . . . my mistake" (Black Borders p. 53). In the riots, men of other religion push the knife in the stomach and they either murder or inflict injuries seriously. Thus, the rioters lose their reason during the communal frenzy, and hatred begets hatred. The unconceivable incident is labeled as the terrible event.

Memories of the atrocities of the partition violence remain buried deep down in the observers’ mind because its history has not documented the reports of brutalities. In this vein, Pandey (2001) states that Hindu and Sikh refugees waiting desperately for transport train are crammed in the platforms, and cling to the doors and roofs of the train. Non-Moslems continue to halt for a few days to travel across the border. Surprisingly, the engine driver, a Muslim,

declines to cross the border because he fears risk of life (p. 36). According to the author, the refugees are concerned with their security so they do not bother to travel in the much-crowded train plying to the other side of the border. Passengers do not want to trespass the other border for fear of losing lives. Under the vignette “Love of Cleanliness”, the event of inhuman brutalities is observed:

“Three men with rifles approached the compartment. Peering in through the windows, they asked the passengers, "Hey, any roosters in there?"

One of the spearmen said, "Butcher it”

But another one replied, "No, not here--you'll mess up the compartment; take him outside." (Black Borders p. 54)

The gunmen torch their enemies in every corner of the compartment in the train if it stops at the train station. They murder the passengers with different religion when they capture them in the hide-out. Ironically, humanity loses its root in bestiality during communal friction and much to our annoyance, humans turn to the irrational territory of the mind, seeking revenge.

Viewed from the role of partition, the historians’ account solely differs from holocaust literature; for that reason, it is impossible to scrutinize how much guilt is distributed or inflicted on the differing parties. Take for example, mass genocide claims more lives and destruction of properties in many parts of the country, but indeed it is quite difficult to sustain the difference of the partition atrocities. In the same manner, Pandey (2001) perceives, “... the question of choosing where they wished to stay, or which nation they would adopt as their own, hardly arose for very large numbers of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus caught on the ‘wrong side of the border’ (p. 38). The national identity is determined not by the choice. Everyone is forced to accept the other nationality and to live in the other geography. Relatively, it is the imposition. These refugees cannot give their verdict. They have to accept whatever identity they are given. These populations are silenced by the ruling classes. In the vignette “Reality Denied” Manto writes, "What kind of people are we, anyway? Over there in the temples beef is selling like mad. But here, after all that trouble rounding up fifty pigs and butchering them in this mosque, no one's coming to buy pork” (Black Borders p. 55). Everybody involved in the riots plants the seeds of hatred. Paradoxically, both parties are venting their anger and violence, breaking the forbidden laws of killing animals in their respective areas. To cite an example, butchering and selling swine’s meat in the Mosque is an act of avenging on the one hand. Slaughter of cows near the temple provokes violence on the other hand. On the whole, it looks like as though both are acting as archrivals.

Retraumatization as a way of Understanding the Psychological Shocks

Actually, the narratives of the horrendous event minimize the traumatic experiences of the third generations who have heard the narratives over and over of the survivors from violence. In the vignette, we perceive the traumatization in the form of the repeated narrative and reports of the riots and violence unconceivable to both the parties. Genocides create the psychological shocks in the persons' psyches and such shock remains repressed in the human mind. Trauma appears in the form of shock, disturbance, suffering or ordeal. It shows that the act of withdrawal generates its enigmatic core. Psychologically, it is an emotional response made as a result of a terrible event. Shock and denial are characteristic: individual and collective. In this view, as Cathy Caruth (1991) believes, the shock of the event is stored in its unconsciousness. An act of departure allows it to take place. Such a departure remains completely opaque to the sufferer and the theoretician in the full force of its historicity. Similarly, the experience is connected to the victim when attempting to recall the experience to the forefront (p. 190). The victim restructures such shocking emotions when he accidentally remembers the event or when the identical incident is brought to light. Retraumatization of the sufferer emerges essentially. Similarly, Manto says, "Hearing this, he ran to his friend and said, "That bastard cheated us. He sold us girls of our own religion- come on, let's return her" (Black Borders p. 50). One of the rioters expresses his frustration for being cheated by the other dissent group. Actually, deception, betrayal and treachery are frequented from either of the disgruntled groups in the name of religion and violence. Women are either abducted or sold forcibly for sexual activity. Therefore, atrocity of violence is unpardonable and it leaves massive impact on the victims who refuse to remember the terrible event in the partition history. Remembering the incident traumatizes the sufferers and the injured party again.

The violence survivors prefer not to discuss the partition violence at all and summarily dismiss the talk saying that it is a mistake. However, the third generations have not been exposed to a dreadful event and probably they do not remember much about the impacts of violence. In this observation, Jeffrey C. Alexander (2012) states, "Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways (p. 6). If a majority of members are exposed to a horrendous event, and this incident affects the collective consciousness, cultural trauma arises. Its resultant effect lies in the fact that memories of the violence are buried and the victims might behave abnormally. The narratives reported and written in the vignette or the text serves the same purpose. One way of doing so is to evoke the memories of violence. Conversely, Pandey (2001) argues that the violence which involves the "killing, rape and arson" have been unparalleled in scale and method (p. 2). The writer mentions the immeasurable extremity of riots and violent atrocity during the division. In the vignette "Wages", Manto has his memoir, "Looting was going on at a fevered pitch. The activity

became more heated when fires broke out in every direction” (Black Borders p. 38). The writer presents a distorted picture of the loot and arson in every part of the country, and during the violence several houses are torched, looted and set on fire. The violence has happened in uncontrollable manner. Similarly, using the concept from lay theory, Jeffrey C. Alexander marks traumas as “naturally occurring events” in which “an individual or collective actor’s sense of well-being” is traumatized. To put it another way, the shock is believed to arise out of the terrible events themselves (p. 7). When the subject is disturbed because of the frightful incident, this shatters and distorts the subject’s personality. Consequently, the subject does not maintain his normal behavior. For example, in the text, either party loots or steals properties as the rioters break into the houses with great force and the housemasters forsake the homes. Even the firing begins everywhere without knowledge of the residents. Either the Hindus or the Muslims or the Sheikhs tend to attack going to the locations where these races live. No one can ever forget the shock. When exposed to a similar event after a stretch of time, he feels traumatized yet again. In other words, the immediate reaction to the event on the part of the individual or the group constitutes a cultural trauma. However, the mass media incites such sentiments sporadically. In summary, the continuous psychological wounding has emotional impact on the social groups with the different nationalities during their lifetime in the post-violence period. In this sense, the vignette indicates this psychological injury that passes on from the past generations to the third generations of the races-- the Hindus or the Muslims or the Sheikhs long after the partition violence has ended.

The depictions of violence are disturbing so they speak of a changed story about the significant historical event. The narrative of the violence is in stark contrast to a story communicated in the partition erudition. Agreeably, the historical and political records of independence do not address the trauma or shock received by the survivors and the eyewitness during the violent riots. Manto’s vignettes present and recreate the unspeakable shock of the partition violence. In line of this thought, the critic argues: “History has been rearticulated as a continuous movement across geographical, cultural, and temporal borders, becoming through its on-linear passages a condition or cultural symptom that attempts to rethink the relationship between the past and the present” (Yusin, 2009, p. 454). Thus, the partition history is communicated, depending on the geographical, cultural and temporal dimensions. History is not imagined in a linear order. Independence of the nation is valorized; rather, the two nations fail to manage the shocks from the violence in the borders. History, as Yusin suggests, needs its reinterpretation of such relationships. Manto’s narrator envisions the massive crime and atrocity during the incident. He writes, “One by one, the rioters filed into the house. But as soon as the looting began, chaos broke out again. The rioters mercilessly began to clean out the valuables (Black Borders p. 40). The rioters raid the house and rob the housemasters of their properties. After that, anarchy engulfs the villages. Thus, the frightful event leaves not only the

observers but also the writer with the trauma of the partition violence because he has never imagined of the divide. Writing literature of partition as a kind of therapy allows the victims to relive the past experiences, and to heal the psychological wound.

The description of the train journey observes that the passengers travelling avoid massacre. The fright is noticeable in the travellers' faces. They are not out of threat. The platforms in the train are filled with the refugees. They wait desperately to be transported to the other side of the border. Everybody wants to reach the country as early as possible because they suspect the rioters' sudden presence. In this light, Alexander (2012) argues, "The trauma experience takes place when the traumatizing event interacts" with human needs. If these needs are suddenly challenged, it is no wonder that people get "traumatized as a result" (p. 8). If people encounter the traumatizing event and feel unsure of their basic needs, the trauma gets activated in the target group. Manto's vignette observes the similar case. He remembers, "The train was stopped. Those of the other religion were taken out and put to death with swords or bullets. When they were finished, the rest of the travelers were treated to sweets, milk, and fruit" (Black Borders p. 51). At every train stop, the rioters pull out the passengers of other religion and kill them mercilessly. On the contrary, they cooperate with the rest of the passengers. Both parties hate their enemies in the name of faith. Thus, such horrendous incident constructs the psychological shock in the witness of the violence. These shocks are not erased, but they are actually repressed in the human mind. It seeks a safety exit. This way, retraumatization takes place in the individual or the groups because of genocide or attack or extermination.

Conclusion

The trauma experience emerges from the traumatizing event if it clashes with human needs. People get traumatized as a result of dreadful event. A ghastly event creates the shock in the observers or survivors of the violence. The partition is communicated differently because its narrative is influenced by the heterogeneous geography, culture and time. Independence of the nation is valorized, but the nations fail to manage the shocks from the violence in the borders. Writing literature of partition is simply a therapy because it allows the wounded to relive the past experiences. If the members of a collectivity feel exposed to a terrible event, it leaves permanent effects on their collective consciousness. The immediate reaction creates trauma. Even so, the mass media provokes nationwide sentiments of protest periodically. People have been killed, raped and converted. Many are uprooted and transformed into refugees as a result of the partition riots. This event has constructed the trauma but the victims refuse to mention the matter. The official report of atrocity scarcely conforms to exact number of casualties during the violence. The article is expected to provide invaluable knowledge of traumatization to those immensely interested in this area. Finally, reading Manto's text allows many readers to rethink the history of the partition violence and to assess its impact on the

observers including the survivors from the riots. Writing about the holocaust is to remember the tragic event and to get rid of the mental wounds caused by the disaster. The text can adopt the other perspectives such as Post-colonialism, or Cultural Studies.

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