

## **Triumph of Humanity over Communal Violence and the Aesthetics of Trauma in Manto's "Mozel"<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the aesthetics of trauma based upon virtue over vice in Saadat Hasan Manto's story "Mozel". As one of the renowned writers of partition literature, he has penetrated the limitations of trauma politics that fosters on demonizing the perpetrators to justify the innocence of the victims. Through Mozal's character— herself a victim of communal violence of the Partition— the writer has portrayed a humanitarian worldview on trauma, its victims and perpetrators; and a constructive, positive and reconciliatory approach to its settlement. A free-spirited Jewish woman, Mozal enacts nobility beyond all communal prejudices and religiosity that her friends Tirlochen and Kirpal Kaur represent. She starkly criticizes Tirlochen's communal rigidity as a Sikh despite her love for him. Sketched as a disillusioned woman from the sectarianism and identity politics of religious wars, she saves two lives of trauma victims although they belong to Sikh community, a different faith from her own. To argue against trauma politics for the advocacy of universal moral ground as the aesthetic of trauma, the cultural and revisionist theories of trauma mainly of Alexander C. Jeffrey and Gilles Deleuz have been brought into reference respectively. Mozal's character is discussed as a retrieved human(e) hero for her sacrificial deed of salvaging two victims of religious riots from feminist perspective.

*Keywords:* partition violence, religiosity, humanitarian, aesthetic of trauma, identity-politics

### **Introduction**

"Mozal" by Saadat Hasan Manto reclaims humanity through the central character of Mozal, a free-spirited Jewish woman. Mozal is a woman disillusioned by the euphemism of 'nationalism' and communal honor, the political slogans of The Partition - a major part of the Movement for Independence that resulted in cataclysmic religious riots, genocidal violence and misogyny. She falls in love with Tirlochen, a Sikh, but refuses to marry him because of his orthodox conviction on religious dogmas and strong sense of

modesty. She is Manto's agent in contributing to bring change in people and society through her humanistic vision of the world that is manifested in her noble work of rescuing and salvaging the traumatized victims of communal violence at the cost of her own life. This designates her as a retrieved hero who enlightens people from the darkness of religious prejudices to the foundation of humanity.

The credibility of Manto's literature of violence is largely grounded in his humanistic perspective on cultural trauma. His works are esteemed by critics and writers alike, including Gyanendra Pandey,

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author and member of Subaltern Studies, who speaks for the “others” in his essay “Prose of Otherness”. Manto's is concerned with the victims, especially women victimized by the animosity born out of love-hate relationships in the name of religion that has led to multiple perpetrations such as rape, abduction and murders. Manto shows: “the representation of women as full-fledged human beings with sexual desires, experiences and individual ownership of their sexuality that Mozel embodies in the story ‘Mozel’” (Joshi, 2018, p. 1). Manto's stories uncover the real history of partition violence, shatter the veil of nationhood and acknowledge the trauma that it entails. His stance on the true victims of violence turns into the virtue of trauma because he opposes the villainising of Muslims by Hindus and Pakistan by India and/or vice-versa as the “others”. Patching up the tear in the cultural and the social fabric through such “working through” is the voice of trauma. It fails to address the religious contradictions for its anti-secular identity politics and the “othering”. Hence, Manto challenges the tunnel-vision on traumatic experiences and proposes a peripheral approach that can help promote universal morality, and establish fraternity and peace.

### **Methods**

This article follows qualitative research methodology. So, the research is based on some theories of trauma and feminism. As the primary source, textual evidence is used for analysis from the story itself. Some relevant texts and theories are reviewed and related to support the argument and interpretations. Alexander (2012) discusses a process of constructing cultural trauma as follows: “In creating a compelling trauma narrative, it is critical to

establish the identity of the perpetrator- the antagonist” (p. 19). Such “working through” to repair a damaged social body often includes naming and punishing those who caused the damage but it ignores their right to request amnesty. Unlike this process of social healing, Manto's perspective on settling trauma discourages inducing revenge and escalating the cycle of violence. Rather, it evokes an auto-enfolded sense of shame, guilt and ‘ethics’ as Gilles Deleuz's idea of “the shock to thought” that forces “critical inquiry” into the given truth (qtd. in Bennet, 2005, p. 41) and promotes forgiveness that has a lasting impact on human relations.

Manto's silence in the story about the Hindus despite their large share in the horrendous outrage of the Partition elicits some sense of doubt against his humanistic mediation of trauma. But his nobility as a true historiographer is justified by Mozel's sheer critique of communal sensitivity, religious dogmas and intolerance. Her selfless struggle and championing for humanity overshadows any questions that one may raise about Manto's purpose. She advocates for Manto's appeal for universal morality through the aesthetics of trauma—a humanistic approach to repair the cultural rupture. But the political history of Partition as a “nonviolent” Movement for Independence ironically perpetuates the cultural tear. Hence, the underwriting of the real history of violence that Manto undertakes to unravel through “Mozel” has been explored and analyzed in this paper.

### **Discussion**

Mozel, the titular character, draws readers' attention with a strange and powerful presence throughout the story. Introduced by the character Tirlochen under his first impression: “... Mozel

looked like someone dangerously mad. ... She was wearing a long, loose white dress with a low neckline, the better part of her large, bluish breasts clearly visible” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 114). This trope of a mad woman foreshadows her resisting, apparently insane, emotional, and subversive character, or that of a disgraceful ‘fallen woman’, which is an attribute to the validation of women’s experiences and empowerment in some feminist interpretations. And, the remark that “Manto’s stories are testaments to fallen humans who somehow end up lifting themselves and others out of darkness” (Rumi, 2015, para. 9) justifies the retrieval of women’s agency through Mozel’s embodiment of human values triumphant over religious adherence and sectarianism. The argument below scaffolds Manto’s intended positioning of Mozel:

In fact, Mozel is in love with Tirlochen, but she cannot reconcile with his strong religious ‘Samskaras’. It is her real love for Tirlochen, as well as with humanity, that she gives up her life in an easy fashion as is her way of life. Mozel, to whom the cultured society would look down upon as an easy-going woman, is a great character for Manto and his readers. (Lal, 1993, p. 3)

This observation supports Manto’s purpose of showing power of love and humanity over religious convictions.

Pandey (1994) appreciates Manto’s works for their articulation of the subaltern’s missing voice that speaks of the real history of the Partition. He recommends reading the prose of Manto and watching the film *Garam Hawa* if one wants to write about the Partition history and violence upon which the two countries,

India and Pakistan, were founded. An excellent work of art on trauma “presents a literary aesthetics that seeks to instigate, facilitate or represent a transformational process of working-through of trauma by successfully containing its emotionally overwhelming content through form and style,” argues van der Wiel in her book *Literary aesthetics of trauma* (2014, p. 48). As in Manto’s other prose works on violence like “Khol Do”, “Siyah Hashiye”, “Cold Meat”, Mozel stands for the humanistic mediation of cultural trauma of partition violence rooted in the collectivity of the communities and provokes an empathic but critical response to her act of sublimity. Her smile and words of love at the last minute of her sacrificial death are testimonies to her compassion and altruism. Her denouncement of the turban, at the same moment, shockingly forces us to a critical inquiry on the values that most of the world religions are based on.

“Mozel” is set in the background of a society in 1947 Bombay undergoing communal riots along with fighting for resilience and reconstruction after the Partition of British India into two separate nations: Hindu-based India and Muslim-based Pakistan. The city is just one case of representation among many others that have more horrible stories of fratricide and so-called ‘martyrdom’ during the Partition— stories of mass suicide of women in Thoa Khalsa in Punjab; the massacre in Bihar; riots in Delhi, Amritsar, Gharmukheshwar; women suffering perpetrations like rape, murder, abduction, sexual assault, mutilation, dislocation, recovery, and such at the hands of so-called flagbearers of religion; and others. Manto’s look on women is specific— as it is with Mozel— because it excavates the patriarchal history of marginalized women

who truly are a big part of Partition and reconstruction. The following remark adds force to it: “Violence is almost always instigated by men, but its greatest impact is felt by women. And for every fire that is lit, it is women ... [who] painfully built the future from the ashes” (Butalia, 1994, p. 35). In the story, both Mozel and Kirpal Kaur are victims of Partition violence, though in different ways.

Mozel's first encounter with Tirlochen in Advani Chambers in Bombay leaves on him an impression of a strange character. Her mannerisms, dressing sense, and her noisy presence with her wooden clogs establish her as a defiant, carefree and retrieved woman. Her character, thus, is a shock to the conventional trope of a stereotypical woman in regard to her disavowal of the social and cultural taboos. Much of the descriptions focused on her manly body, robust breasts under her transparent dress, her beauty and facial features especially the “caked and cracked lips” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 114) relate to Manto's feminist concerns for women's liberation. But Tirlochen, befriending her soon and falling in love with her, interrogates himself about his negative perception of her. Her unruly hair, bare legs and wide strides, her stubbornness, switching emotions, wildness, and her lack of consideration are some strange characteristic attributes to her that ultimately conclude to project her in a different and unexpected note.

However, as the story progresses, she manifests herself as an autonomous woman exercising her agency over the subjugation to patriarchy, communal identities and religious hypocrisy. Her comfortable avoidance of wearing underwear, putting on loose and transparent gowns to allow her large, flat, bruised, blue

breasts to heave out of, and her masculine walking and standing postures are challenges to propriety and female safety in a patriarchal construct. Once in a hotel, Tirlochen, questioning on her flitting relationships and lovers, gets replied:

You are a Sikh. . . . You are not going to understand these delicate matters. . . . Who asked you to try and get along with me? If you want to get along with someone, go get yourself a Sikhni from your village and marry her. With me, this is how it will always be” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 115)

This apparent irrationality and freedom of choice reminds us of Free the Nipple Movement in New Hampshire championed against the sexualized objectification of women and the breach of the US Constitution that banned women's toplessness, but not men. Mozel, being a Jew, perhaps borrowed by the writer in the context of Partition violence, might have certain implications as an agent to call for humanity—the ultimate truth for peace and coexistence, realized from the German holocaust—the unprecedented violence of genocide brewed out of communal prejudices. Mozel, thus, opposes the religious extremism, bigotry and hatred that escalated the Partition violence to victimize millions of people—mainly women—and trampled everything with minimal care for humanity.

Mozel makes fun of Tirlochen's religious observance, humiliates him for his blind faith, mocks his religious rituals and conviction on modesty based on wearing underwear, and crudely disregards wearing a turban and growing hair and beard as a religious tribute. “Through Mozel, Manto has also made fun of religious rituals and symbols; of Tirlochen's obsession with the

turban and long hair” (Tiwari, 2013, p. 5). She loves this sardar but hates his turban and this inculcates in us a sense of power and supremacy of love over religious differences. Instead of being incited for vengeance to hear her persistent pressure on him to discard religious rituals and liberate himself from hypocrisy of religion serving as humility, her love to him rather helps him build up tolerance: “It was true that he often suffered humiliation at her hands. He was belittled in the presence of ordinary Christian boys who were nothing. But he had decided to withstand anything for her” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 115). Mozel’s pricking critique of Tirlochen, a religious orthodox, and her love for him sometimes tears him apart into a state of dilemma. He finds a sliver of truth in her arguments when she says,

You’re a Sikh. I know you wear silly underwear resembling shorts under your pants: this too is part of your religion, like your beard and hair. You should be ashamed - you’re an adult and you still believe that your religion is in your underwear. (Manto, 2007, p. 118)

Under constant nagging despite his conviction that she will “never understand the intricacies of this matter”, his decision to shave his beard and cut the hair—the condition she has put forth to marry him—that she thinks he cannot for he is a coward, is a distinct evidence of the vulnerability in his religious faith. The realization that “When he had his beard shaved and haircut, he felt with certainty that he had been carrying a burden that really had no meaning” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 119) adds more to the weak foundation of his religious stand. Mozel’s excitement at the knowledge of her agency contributing to bring change in his perception and make

him act upon it, in fact, is her expression of contempt towards the brutality of ideological motives and identity politics in the name of religion.

The extreme abuse of religion at the cost of humanity in the pretext of Partition is subtly delineated by Tiwari (2013):

Signs and markers of personal identity and religious symbols such as circumcision and the Sikh turban became crucial determinants of one’s being. While women’s bodies were often mutilated beyond recognition, the sexual violence was not limited to women but also brought men into its orbit. The men were either castrated or forcibly circumcised in many cases. Sudhir Kakkar suggests that, “Cutting off breasts or the male castration incorporates the more or less conscious wish to wipe the hated enemy off the face of earth by eliminating the means of its reproduction and the nurturing of its infants.” (p. 4)

And, her excited acceptance to marry him is not necessarily for her success in materializing her love into marriage but an exaltation of her success to make him liberal in religious stand and change for love to her. Her silent refusal to marry by not turning up as promised before justifies her intention.

Her hatred for bigotry culminates at the moment of her death when she stigmatizes the pedantry of Tirlochen, whom she still loves, overvaluing his turban—the symbol of his religious chauvinism. Her final words of love and symbolic act of removing the turban from her body are quite enlightening: “All right, darling, bye-bye . . . Take away . . . this religion of yours” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007,

p. 127). There, to the display of the outrageous crowd entangled with the illusion of religious mores, her naked body with her “robust breasts” (p. 127) speaks of her liberation and redemption.

But, frustrated and hardened by her unexpected betrayal that weakens his trust on her despite the fierce, flickering, irresistible memories, Tirlochen thinks of her: “a careless sort of girl . . . She was shameless, she was callous, she was inconsiderate, yet he liked her” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 118). Despite her inconsistent character, he still feels deeply hurt about her absence in his life but is unable to

figure out what kind of girl she truly was or what the fabric of her being was. She lay by his side for hours and allowed him to kiss her; like soap he blanketed her entire body, but she never permitted him to go a step further than that, saying in a teasing tone, ‘You’re a Sikh - I hate you’. (p. 120)

Such a provocative portrayal of Mozel, all open yet mysterious, is prone to criticism as this irrationality is considered a threat to hit at the very foundation of cultures and religions. Against this socio-cultural stigma is what Manto’s characters stand as pointed out by Rumi (2015): “Manto’s work reiterates that true morality is not silent, nor hidden under tradition, rules or a white veil of religiosity” (para. 10). Consequently, his wider humanistic perspective broadens our world view through his characters like Mozel who overruns religious practices, modesty and ethics to save lives of two traumatized individuals who have different faiths from hers.

His lost relationship with Mozel brings Kirpal Kaur, a Sikh girl, in Tirlochen’s life. In sharp contrast to Mozel

is there the character of Kirpal who is described as “a decent, chaste and pure-hearted virgin”, shy and humble. The free, open, inconsistent and careless Mozel, in Tirlochen’s observation, can’t understand the intricacies that he is entangled with. She reasons the same way: “We could never have had a permanent relationship because you are a silly man, a coward. I want someone courageous” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 121). This contrast in characterisation between Kirpal and Mozel, thus, serves Manto’s representation of the women as two forms of Devi— the humble and shy Gauri and the ‘dangerous’ and ‘mad’ Kali, respectively. Mozel’s readiness to help troubled Tirlochen to rescue his new beloved Kirpal, who is under the threat of outrageous attack by the staunch Muslims, intensifies her powerful retrieval. Mozel ponders over the delicacy of the situation and decides to help Tirlochen save Kirpal and her parents and make his marriage a success. This brings into spotlight her sensibility, prompt decision making and considerate nature against her apparent profane, violent and ‘contemptible’ character. “Manto redefines long held patriarchal notions of vulgarity and taboo through teaming up humanism with taboo” says Rumi (2015, para. 13). Mozel's seeming infidelity, her interest in facing dangers, strong sense of empathy and solidarity for the noble cause of humanity asks us to rethink the value of women's power.

Out of the fiendish and emotional Mozel whose mood switches between laughter and anger to find Tirlochen vacillating on his religious stance, there emerges a prudent and loving woman despite her hatred to his cowardice and lack of level-headedness. The same man who cuts his hair and beard for Mozel's love now

sticks to his faith for Kaur's love who, he fears, will begin to hate him if he discards his religious symbols, so stands rigid for them even at the cost of his life if needed. Mozel, infuriated on his recklessness, warns him:

“Oh, your love be damned! I ask you: Are all Sikhs stupid like you? It's a question of her life, and you insist on wearing your turban—perhaps that underwear too which looks like a pair of shorts.”

“That I wear all the time”, Tirlochen confessed.

“That's just great! But think: the problem now is that the mohalla is full of Miyan bhais who are mean and ruthless. If you go there wearing your turban, you will be slaughtered.”

“I don't care. If I go there with you, I'll go with my turban on; I don't want to jeopardize my love.”  
(Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 121)

However, Mozel undertakes the whole risk and asks Tirlochen to act on his own to prepare to proceed for the rescue in the curfewed area that sets Mozel for her heroic journey ahead.

Breaking the silence on both a literal level and its implications, she takes a masculine posture that gives an impression of a 'macho man' and keeps herself ready to withstand all the libels and defamation as something normal. To our knowledge, she is a salesgirl and is familiar with the people and the area that might have added to her confidence to break the curfew— an insurgency imposed in that area which ironically foregrounds the outrageous attacks inside the village where Kirpal and her parents are entrapped. Her open disobey of curfew again is an ironic interrogation to

the ritualistic display of order and the failure of state mechanisms to maintain it.

The imagery of silence is very potent to set Mozel on that the writer uses as a tool for contrast to give an ironic tone to the story. In the curfew-induced 'deserted' bazaar: “the breeze blew timidly as if fearful of the curfew. Streetlamps cast a feeble light” but Mozel walked. . . . unafraid and exhaling cigarette smoke casually” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 123), her clogs shattering the stillness. The element of contrast between silence and noise in the story has some irony embedded in the characters of Tirlochen, Kirpal, Mozel herself and the state apparatus— curfew to control violence. Kirpal and Tirlochen, the adamant Sikhs, who are backgrounded with the attributes of silence, loyalty and faith on the acceptance of religious creeds without any questions, in fact, stand for religious arrogance— the root cause of violence and communal carnage accompanying trauma. And, what can be more ironic than the imposition of curfew to control violence and maintain social order as it itself is blossoming murders, abduction, rape and bloodbath behind the curtain? It is noticeable in the descriptions: "It was very quiet. Although this was a well- populated area, not a sound could be heard, not even that of a child crying." But inside the Mohalla and the buildings, there: “they heard shouts of triumph and screams of fear” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p.124) that the security force failed to hear.

This situation of dramatic irony parallels to the gap between the Indian nationalist history of non-violent struggle for Independence that underwrites about “the singularly violent character of the event” (Pandey, 2001, p. 2) and the real history of violence described in the

partition literature as in Manto's prose and of few historiographers like Mohan Rakesh, Khushwant Singh, Kamaleshwar, Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon. One is bound to rethink the nationalistic historiography that "others" the real victims or overlooks the true sufferers, after one reads the true accounts of the unprecedented violence of Partition as by writers like Manto, himself a survivor. Gyanendra Pandey's subtle observation of the nationalistic historiography is relevant to note at: "Stated badly, there is a wide chasm between the historians' apprehension of 1947 and what we might call a more popular, survivors' account of it— between history and memory, as it were. This is one that survivors seldom make: for in their view, Partition was violence, a cataclysm, a world (or worlds) torn apart" (Pandey, 2001, p. 4) The irony draws out of the "official claims and denials— often supported by wider nationalist claims and denials - lie at the heart of what one scholar has described as the 'aestheticising impulse' of the nation state" (Pandey, 2001, p. 7). More similar elements of contrasts can be brought under discussion that add to the ironic flavour to the story furnishing Mozel's character as a transformer.

The frequent reference to Mozel's large breasts that are instrumental to capture people's attention in the story, speaks for women's liberation and empowerment that disclaims the mythic silence of women represented by the quiet and shy stereotypical virgin Kirpal with small breasts in her diminutive body. More to observe the irony here in the story; Mozel, who is revolting, violent, impulsive, pervasive, interrogative and noisy by her mannerisms and perspective as well testifies herself as a Saviour of human beings pleading for morality, peace and

universal unity that most of the religions abide by.

More supporting evidence to the ironic thrust can be observed in Tirlochen walking all quiet, terrified and helpless, and watching Mozel's boldness and experience that she employs to tackle every barrier on the way. His self-humiliating helplessness to rescue his own girl and his submissive following to Mozel must hit at the very core of his chauvinistic mindset grown out of the patriarchy. Besides, Mozel— herself a victim of misogyny at the end— rescuing another victim, Kirpal, may evoke shame in Tirlochen who also apports the misogyny. The collision of this affect of shame and trauma, gives shock to our thought leading us to critical questioning on the mythical role of male as the Saviour of their women. Tirlochan's subordination to Mozel reverses the patriarchal stereotypes of both genders prescriptive of certain roles specific to them. As Butalia (1993) argues, "For men, who in more 'nor-mal' times would have seen themselves as protectors of women, the fact that many of 'their' women had been abducted . . . meant a kind of collapse, almost an emasculation of their own agency" (p. 19), Tirlochan is too cowardly to protect his woman, almost a failure to fulfill his obligation owing to the courage endowed to the Hindu ideal hero Ram as the Saviour. Herself at stake but yet restrained and cautious to use any tricks, mischiefs, dramas and techniques as safety measures, she succeeds in giving Tirlochen a safe entry and Kirpal a safe exit out of the 'trouble of mysterious nature' that entails heart-shaking fear adding to the trauma to both Tirlochen and herself. At a point, Tirlochen, distinctly a Sikh, was almost under a Muslim's attack that Mozel handles so sensibly and humanly that compels us to think how small differences in the veil of



religion have turned venomous against brotherhood, co-existence and humanity. Her question to the man: “Ai, what are you doing? . . . Killing your own brother? I want to marry him” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007, p. 124) that effortlessly prevents him from the possible killing shows how small prejudices and petty selfishness have blinded those to be incited for genocidal violence and suicidal sacrifices for religious martyrdom. Butalia’s observation of some horrible religious sacrifices against rape is relevant to justify the abuse of religions against their theme of salvation: “the number of women is much larger than those of men— offering themselves for death, or simply being killed, in an attempt to protect the ‘purity’ and ‘sanctity’ of religion . . . a ‘martyr’s’ death seemed to be the only option preferable to conversion to the ‘other’ religion” (Butalia, 1993, p.10). Mozel’s death, as a counter to this ‘martyrdom’, to save the lives of two desperate lovers Kirpal and Tirlochen, surmounts all the religious boundaries and posits her at the zenith of her nobility as a redeemer.

Mozel charges Tirlochen with hope out of anxiety, patience and prudence out of emotional and irrational performances, order and plan out of the chaos inside the insurgency and has good command of her agency over his strong adherence to religion. Even after her betrayal, he seems overcome by her sense of altruism and convinced of her power to take challenges and tackle dangers that he witnesses in her struggle for the rescue. She empowers the nervous and terrified Tirlochen with her words of love and positive thoughts: “Listen, Tirloch dear— it’s not wise to be scared. If you are afraid, something is bound to happen. Believe me, I know what I’m talking about” (Manto & Naqvi, 2007,

p. 124). His silent acceptance of her words approves his subjugation to her power as a person of experience and retrieval with a big mind and kind heart that stands out any sermons and preachings trodden over by the narcissistic practices.

Tirlochen’s religious austerity and pigheadedness always turns out to be a threat to himself and a challenge for Mozel to accomplish her mission. How to evade the accusing eyes of the “mean and ruthless” Muslim rioters from noticing his turban round his head that he insists on wearing at any cost infuriates and troubles her time and again but out of this narrow escape, comes out a more innovative, strategic and sensible Mozel to act ahead. Mozel’s quick idea of playing themselves a drama of being a part of those rioters and victims at the peak point of danger to Kirpal’s life, in fact forces us to ponder over women’s power and role that human history has always undermined. Torn apart between affection to see the helpless Kirpal and the prompt action to be taken to save her, there emerges a fearless Mozel amidst the chaos full of shouts and screams from above. Simulating Kirpal into a guise that gives an impression of her being under rape, at the cost of her own modesty and cultural ethics, Mozel dramatizes the whole scenario, presenting herself as a mad woman. While Kirpal being unclothed to change her dress, the hypocrisy screened under humility manifests itself in the two— Tirlochen and Kirpal— who shun watching each other in shame even at that critical moment. The contempt evoked from their meanness and the esteem enfolded from Mozel’s compassionate act with her naked body gives the readers ‘a shock to thought’. The whole drama she plays with her fair and beautiful naked body is instrumental to save the two from the possible ominous

mishaps that otherwise might have taken over their lives. This reminds us of Deleuze's idea of 'encountered sign' that Jill Bennet brings into reference: "the sign . . . agitates, compelling and fuelling inquiry rather than simply placating the subject. In its capacity to stimulate thought, the encountered sign is . . . superior to the explicit statement . . ." (qtd in Bennett, 2005, p. 37). Her openness, sagacity, visionary power, all-pervading love, compassion, sacrifice and prompt decision-making; behind her vulgarity, carelessness and irrationality, calls for the retrieval of women's agency against the given humbleness and modesty as female virtues. She breathes a sigh of relief with a smile even just before her last breath after she confirms Kirpal's rescue—the accomplishment of her noble mission.

### Conclusion

Hence, Manto's humanitarian voice overpowers the thin lines of religious differences when Mozel happily bids

farewell to her love Tirlochen for her success to help him reconcile with his beloved Kirpal safely. Her selfless service for others' happiness at the cost of her own love and life sets herself victorious as a hero and her sacrifice to save people by defying the identity politics of religious and communal hypocrisy sets herself triumphant. Her appeal to fraternity, harmony, peace and compassion overcomes all the communal barriers and resets the foundation for humanity. Mozel, herself a victim of the Partition violence, serves Manto's purpose of asserting the power of trauma and pain that evokes in readers a sense of universal morality. It is the ultimate truth to bind humanity and is strong enough to shatter any illusions of 'martyrdom' as a form of patriotism and religious sacrifices for communal recognition that, in fact have led to the unprecedented cataclysms in human societies as in the subcontinent of India born out of the Partition of 1947.

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