
Lust, Loss and Longing: The Psychology of Partition in Manto's Urban Sketches

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Abstract: This paper explores the complex interplay of human desire, trauma, and identity in Saadat Hasan Manto's Partition-era urban narratives. By rejecting simplistic binaries of victim and victimizer, the study uses a psychological lens to highlight the fluidity of human roles during the violent upheaval of 1947. Drawing on Manto's unflinching portrayal of morally ambiguous characters, it argues that both victims and perpetrators are psychologically entangled in cycles of guilt, loss, and longing, often enacting violence while simultaneously being haunted by it. Unlike the legally defined dichotomies of justice, Manto's stories reveal how trauma transcends time and space, complicating any clear distinction between good and evil. The study also engages with critical voices in Partition literature and trauma studies to underscore the inadequacy of nationalist justifications for violence, emphasizing instead the need to understand Partition as an enduring psychic rupture. Ultimately, this paper positions Manto's narratives as a powerful medium for dissecting the grey zones of human behavior in moments of historical catastrophe.

Keywords: *Partition, violence, trauma, Manto, binaries*

Introduction: Risen out of an ambivalent rupture is the tale of 1947 Partition which, unlike the Holocaust, is not one of the closed events. As much a partitioning of minds as it was of geography, the process of partition, along with cataclysm, speaks of humans and their multiple, ever-changing selves that are in no way linear as time on Earth is thought to be. The stone of Partition thrown in the sea of humanity has caused endless ripples, each of which extends itself across space and time while being dominated by experiences, memories, tales, nostalgia, and trauma. The dispersion of each wave has washed away the binaries that once existed and has caused the creation of the grey within humans which marks with its different shades, the multiple layers in a human being. While there exist countless stories in Partition literature, the ones that speak of the shades of grey of a human being are undoubtedly those of Sa'adat Hasan Manto. "Manto's human being is neither an angel nor a devil. He is an earthling, a creature of the flesh and blood who has the potentiality of Original Sin, mischief, murder, and mayhem" (Mumtaz Shirin). Disrupting the discrepancy between

appearance and reality, Manto's stories are a testament to Partition being a bond of pain between a victim and a victimizer.

"Justified as a necessary evil to avert greater unrest and violence, Partition has been an uncertain instrument of conflict management and a veritable barrier to conflict resolution"(Jalal 2). This study aims to use psychological vantage points to understand how victims and victimizers negotiate with trauma. It is hypothesized that the terms- victim and victimizer shall move beyond binaries that have been created across the poles and will not be dicots but interlocking terms wherein the victim will inflict violence as a victimizer across space and time, and/or simultaneously while being a victim, and vice versa.

Deriving its root from the Latin term '*victima*', who is a person or an animal killed as a sacrifice, the term 'victim' has undergone various changes over the years while the term 'victimizer', has always been defined in relation to a victim. It is the one who victimizes. Considered absolute binaries under the penal code, which defines a victim under Section 2(WA) of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, as "a person who has suffered any loss or injury caused by reason of the act or omission for which the accused person has been charged and the expression 'victim' includes his or her guardian or legal heir", the terms are used as dicots. Understood as a relation of two, where one harms and the other is harmed, the victim and the victimizer are presented under the eye of Lady Justice as opposites where one is to be punished for their wrongs and the other is to be proved right and therefore is to become an awardee of justice. The idea of justice, however, fails its skewed definition of balancing the scale and drawing the sword on the wronged, when one reads the harrowing tales of human behavior in the face of the cataclysmic process of partition. In these stories, the victim and the victimizer are not separate and opposite identities of different physical beings but are rather interchangeable identities of one being, that either change across space and time or function simultaneously in the same plane of existence. If the victims of Partition must negotiate with the guilt and trauma inflicted upon them, so do the victimizers because, at the end of the day, both are beings who are trying to make sense of their actions, ideologies, and identities.

The canon of Partition literature showcases various accounts that include both fictional and historical narratives but those of Manto form a particularly good point for this study because of his engagement with the psychological depths of the characters he birthed out of the pity that was Partition. It is through his stories that one can observe and question both "the wisdom of Partition and the sheer madness it had let loose" (Jalal, 3). Manto's stories are of victims and victimizers that portray the colors of violence that had painted the entire land and the face of humanity to create a picture of the most horrific times that impacted and continue to impact the generations that came after. Although the works of eminent writers such as Sudhir Kakkar, Veena Das, Alok Bhalla, Urvashi Butalia, and Anirudh Kala speak of the psychological impact of Partition, little has been spoken concerning victims and victimizers as interlocking terms. While various types of representation of victims surfaced in Partition literature, the trauma inflicted on the

victimizer has seldom been magnified via a critical lens. It has been reasoned numerously that victimizers were born under the wave of ‘nationalism’ to protect the honour of their nation and family, but it is a fact hard to digest for one cannot justify their violent actions by simply blaming the torment of time. The psychology behind the path of a man from a harmless being to a loathsome perpetrator cannot be dissected as easily by labeling the victimizers as protectors of nationality and honor and letting “the victims succumb to labels like ‘loyalist’, ‘communal’, ‘liberal’, ‘extremist’, or ‘nationalist’” (Nair, 4). The thought of becoming and declaring one a martyr in the shadow of unprecedented violence neither makes one’s act brave or heroic nor does it wash away the guilt that accompanies the act. “Fueled by appeals to an ideal society and determined to bring about their own interpretations of Swaraj and Pakistan, some of the murderers no doubt operated with the mistaken idea that they were doing what was best for their Nation” (Khan 206). However, the ‘predominant attitude’ at the time does not help one negotiate with the guilt and the trauma that lingers even today, many years after the unreasonable catastrophe. In the preface to their book *The Psychological Impact of Partition Of India* (2018), Jain and Sarin write:

In the larger space of public consciousness, the consequences of the divisions that endangered the Partition smoulder on. While these are reflected in literature, cinema, social theory, gender studies, and even wider critiques of political analysis, their impact on psychiatric and psychological health is not as well articulated. There has been little discussion between the streams of public consciousness, social theory, and the practice in the clinic. (xiii)

The terms ‘victim’ and ‘victimizer’ are not subject to a single spatiotemporal location and neither is violence limited to a singular act. Along with the extended act of violence across space, time, and individuals in the form of communal flare-ups now and then, the identities of victims and victimizers become fluid and are passed from one generation to another to present the reality of the society and the psyche of humans as complex beings in the purview of the non-closure event that was Partition.

It wasn’t only that the country was split into two- bodies and minds were also divided. Moral beliefs were tossed aside and humanity was in shreds. Government officers and clerks with their chairs, pens, and inkpots, were distributed like the spoils of war. Those whose bodies were whole had hearts that were splintered. Families were torn apart. One brother was relocated in Hindustan, the other to Pakistan; the mother was in Hindustan, his wife – in Pakistan. The bonds of relationships were in tatters, and in the end, many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off for Pakistan. (Chughtai, 12)

While depicting the tragedy of the uprooted, Partition stories act as a cognitive tool to raise questions of knowledge-making, and Manto’s stories, along with the literary aspect, involve a microscopic study of the macroscopic society. “Saadat Hasan Manto (1912-55) is widely recognized as one of the greatest short-story writers that the subcontinent has produced and indeed one of the finest writers of the age. His stories have been called

“vituperative, slanderous, and bitterly ironic” (Kala and Sarin, 13). As Alok Bhalla writes, they “are terrifying chronicles of the damned who locate themselves in the middle of madness and crimes, and promise nothing more than an endless and repeated cycle of random and capricious violence in which anyone can become a beast and everyone can be destroyed.” (23) Manto’s “Cold Meat” (translated from “Thanda Gosht”) is one such sketch that shocks its reader with the layers it is assembled with. Peeling each layer to understand the intent of the text, one can notice Manto’s excellence in observation of the society and the human mind which functions on power, pleasure, and possession of hunger and sexuality- the two requirements that had taken birth along the birth of humankind.

“The world’s biggest problem, the father of all problems, was born when Adam felt hunger, and a lesser but equally interesting problem emerged when the world’s first man met the world’s first woman” (Manto 3).

The title of the sketch alone is layered to not just indicate the corpse which Ishar Singh (vulgarization of ‘Ishwar’) had tried to ‘claim’ but the desire of humans who seek heat in pleasure and move from savoring to devouring flesh in the thirst of power. Liking their food/dish served hot, it disgusts the men otherwise if their agency is snatched away from them. Ishar Singh’s numbness and fear in the sketch are not due to Kulwant Kaur’s rage against him but are reactions to the coldness of the corpse, whose ‘heat’ he had thought he could claim by “putting her over his shoulder” (210) and carrying her along with him as an object he had looted along with the jewels in the house or a prize that he had won by killing the people in the house. Ishar’s trauma stems from him becoming a victim of his own thoughts- his failure to be able to conquer yet another body for pleasure like a possession via his power.

Manto’s wisdom lies in his technique to not focus on the surroundings or the setting of the physical space but on the psychological behaviors/workings of the characters in the space. Ishar Singh’s constant struggle to reclaim what he lost to an already ‘powerless’ victim can be seen in him trying to shuffle not his cards of sexuality but of his thoughts as he tries to assert his sexuality (power) on Kulwant Kaur. Him turning pale each time Kulwant questions him on the night of his trauma indicates his struggle of not wanting to submit his power at the hands of a corpse which victimizes not just Ishar but Kulwant Kaur as well. He detests his thoughts which take him back to the night he lost agency of his own body, his sexuality, to a space he thought he could own by phallically marking his territory, by devouring the heat of the flesh which made him cold instead (impotent), along with it.

“Cold Meat” is not Ishar Singh’s story alone. Peeling the layer that speaks of Ishar, one can notice that of Kulwant Kaur, a victim of Ishar Singh’s forced savagery. Kulwant’s submission to physically strong Ishar represents women who do not realize their agency because they are blinded by patriarchy. Even when the absence of ‘heat’ makes Kulwant Kaur’s emotions rage to an extent of becoming victimizer to Ishar, her threat still finds its root in her father, in whose name she threatens Ishar Singh to submit his authority. Kulwant’s

rage is fueled by the idea of Ishar Singh not treating her but other women as his object of desire, which leads her to hurl abuses at them and not at Ishar. Kulwant's mind then, can still be seen as a victim of patriarchy and gender even when she tries to victimize Ishar by slitting his throat open. Her derivation of power stems not because of the realization of her submission at the hands of Ishar but, the submission of his mind and power at the hands of a girl who was a victim of the loot and who later becomes a victim even when she had already died, of Ishar's sexual hunger. The imbalance in the rawness of sexuality of equal partners leads to a sexual and psychological stunning that causes further, the death of Ishar's virility and later his, at the hands of Kulwant Kaur.

"Cold Meat" then, is not an obscene story of sexual surfeit and articulation versus the death of sexuality for which Manto was charged but, a sketch of a society that had long blurred the boundaries that it claims exist, between a victim and a victimizer. The layers in the story speak of the society's complexities amidst the structures of power which manifest themselves in the hierarchy, gender, sexual pleasure, hunger, pride, possession, and honor.

To penetrate the Other, whether a woman or another group, is to be superior, powerful, and masculine; to be penetrated is to be inferior, weak, and feminine. It is the blending of the images of power and sexuality in a phallogocentric vision which makes many men all over the world, for example in parts of the Middle East and Latin America, regard only the man who is penetrated by other man as a despised homosexual while the active inserter on the 'top' is considered as 'normal' even macho male. (Kakkar 181)

One such story of machismo that highlights the pleasure-seeking greed of males and the futility of war is Manto's "The Dog Of Tetwal" ("Tetwal ka Kutta"). Victimitizing the dog to assert their masculinity and establish their territory and dominance over the Other, the enemy on either side try to penetrate through the dog, the ideology of the Other to establish control and power via engaging with violence. In their blinded egos, they inflict violence on the voiceless, the one who does not know the concept of boundaries and communities and is made a powerless victim of the ideology of the oppressor. The character of the dog is a metaphor of countless humans who fell into the trap of those with power and ended up being killed after being tamed in the name of false protection and one true religion. Victimized at the hands of the soldiers who take charge to affix its identity themselves by feeding him food and putting on a tag, the dog, who otherwise is called the most loyal animal was rendered a traitor by either side and was reduced to a bait that could be dodged until the game of "honor" met its end. While one side declared the dog a martyr, the other said how it "died a dog's death" (Manto 199). One cannot help but be reminded of the futility of war and the dilemma of a soldier who puts his life at the line of fire without knowing the path he is about to tread on. It resonates Makhdum Maiyuddin's lines "*Jaane waale Sipaahi se poocho wo kahan ja raha hai*" While humankind continues to victimize the established Other, nature continues to function its way and adds an important layer in the story to highlight the futility of war for a piece of land that does not distinguish the smoke coming out of the fire and the fragrance from the flowers from either side. While soldiers victimize the dog, they too, are victims of

‘cultural memory’ and ‘communal coloring’ which induces in them the identity of their respective religion due to the presence of the Other. Quoting Sudhir Kakkar who, stating the example of the Pardi’s writes, “It was strikingly apparent that the Pardi’s self-identification as Hindus occurs only when they talk of the Muslim; otherwise the conversation is of Pardis, Lodhas, Brahmins, Marwadis, and other castes. It seems a Hindu is born only when a Muslim enters. Hindus cannot think of themselves as such without a simultaneous awareness of the Muslim’s presence” (Kakkar 136), it becomes evident in the story too that until the establishment of the dog’s identity as a ‘Hindustani’, both the sides rather preach the idea of love over war and of peacefully co-existing on either sides of the valley, harmonizing over songs they sing for their beloved. They are not committed to fighting and the only dividing line that was drawn between them was that of religion which made them ask even the dog to pick sides, using it as a tool to promote their ‘Nationality.’

The unawareness at the part of the victimizer that they too, is/can be a victim and vice versa is not the only facet that Manto’s stories highlight. He also speaks of chaos in order and wisdom in madness when he writes about the tragedy of Bishen Singh and other lunatics in the story “Toba Tek Singh” to highlight the victims, once of fate and then of politics, power, and the multiple tragedies that surrounded Partition. “That is why all the inmates of the asylum who weren’t completely insane were thoroughly confused about whether they were in Hindustan or Pakistan. If they were in Hindustan, then where was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then how was it possible since only a while ago they had been in Hindustan, and they had not moved from the place at all?” (Manto 213) A decision at the hands of the ‘wise’ had let ‘madness’ loose. Amidst utter confusion and lunacy lies the story of not Bishen Singh alone but of prisoners and lunatics who could not recover from the shock of division. Victims and victimizers of their own time, all of them came under a single lens to experience sheer diffusion of their already disintegrated identities because the authorities decided to “free” the ‘Hindus’ and the ‘Muslims’ for them to go to their Nation, the one which a while ago was not even known. “The question as to whether these were patients fit to be transferred across the border remains unanswered” (Kala and Sarin 19). The impact of the order on their minds produced characters in fiction like Toba Tek Singh, who, in his nonsensical mutterings known as neologisms³ in psychiatric terminology, reflected the trauma that was inflicted on him in the garb of freedom. “Among the multiple tragedies of Partition, the further disempowering of an already disempowered population in custodial care is the powerful tool of narrative, both fictional and factual”(19). Through his story, Manto gave the readers “the social and psychological world of the citizens (that) was hidden by these files” (23). Speaking of Bishen Singh’s story first, his constant mutterings, “*Opar di gurgur di annexe di bay dhiana di mung di daal of Wahe Guruji ki Fateh... jo bole so nihaal sat sri akaal*” (Manto 217), seemingly “string of strange unintelligible phrases” (217), are in fact an outburst of frustration and utter confusion that had accompanied the unplanned division. Bishen Singh’s words are but colloquial abuses driven by changes in culture and technology, which are helping him vent out his anger against the powerful who kept on passing the baton amongst themselves while the disempowered continued to suffer. The combination of English and Punjabi words and phrases signify the confused status of

language in a Nation that was once ruled by the British and suddenly was passed to other leaders who could start their own rule in the name of freedom. The utterances are a traumatic reaction to the displaced status of a body and a mind which was made further victim to the hasty and unplanned decisions of renaming boundaries and marking distinguishing borders across places and spaces with which people once identified their sense of belonging. Bishen Singh's unintelligible phrases speak more than what was ever written in files regarding the status of the mind during the process of partition. His utterings signify the shattering of the identity of a human being who could not hold himself and the mirage of identities together. The glass of identity created by a combination of religion, gender, faith, fate, politics, language, class, caste, and sanity, laid everywhere like shards that hurt each time Bishen Singh tried to lay down. Him leaning against the wall and not sleeping for months in a row were marks of the unrestful status of minds who knew not what to do and how to react and process the external shattering internally, and internal shattering, externally. Manto's minute observations pertaining to each lunatic in the story suggest how those who were confused were in fact the sanest, for it was only them who could realize the impact of what had been done. The protest in their minds was more understandable than those who beat drums thinking they were finally free. It was in fact them, who were victims then and are victims now to the ideology of pseudo freedom which kept them enslaved and insane for years longer than they can imagine.

The term 'victim' then, is not limited to the definition written under section 2(wa) of the penal code and has changing contours that need to be acknowledged and not prioritized by those holding power. Toba Tek Singh's death towards the end on a 'no man's land' is not his submission to the power but an end to his trauma. Trauma, however, does not always end in death. It has an afterlife for both victims and victimizers and is negotiated differently by each one. Manto's story, "Open it" (Khol do) is a jarring narrative that speaks of trauma and how it is dealt with by victims of society. The story opens with a shocked father, Sirajuddin, who, before he recollects how his daughter is missing, is himself a victim of displacement. His bewildered expressions speak of his trauma and shock which do not let him come to terms with the reality that surrounds him until the images in his mind jolt him to remember the traumatic experience that took away his daughter, his 'honor' from him. In desperate need to find what he had lost, Sirajuddin sets out on a journey that makes him think of only himself and not, therefore, understands his daughter's victimization and trauma towards the end. Manto's description of Sirajuddin's actions are a reflection of society's men who place their honor in their daughters and wives and further put a veil on their problematic thinking by asking the women of the house to always keep themselves covered for their dignity lies in their clothes and not in their minds. Treating his daughter's dignity as a cloth, Sirajuddin stakes his and his daughter's life while he stops to pick up her dupatta. It is the same dupatta that reminds him of his lost honor (daughter) when he reaches out for it in his pocket. Sirajuddin is a victim of society's stereotypes which he strengthens further by not valuing his daughter's life but by associating it instead with his sense of skewed integrity. His triumph towards the end is not so much about finding his daughter but his dignity alive. It is why he fails to notice his daughter's trauma which has scarred her to such an extent that even

words act as triggers to her. A victim of savagery, Sakina's mind is also made a contesting space along with her body. The event of her victimization, even though it is over, rests in her mind forever only to be reminded of her again, each time a similar situation is built around her. Her reaction to the words 'open it' signifies how one is not a victim to a singular event set in time but is made a victim across space and time since its trauma continues to exist in the mind of the victim. The event does not only extend but changes the life that the victim has to live forth. It is also important to understand how the victims do not live in isolation and are still a part of the society which victimizes them further by putting the onus of the victim's victimization on the victim itself. Sakina's father's reaction is an example of the same and points out how if the story were to continue, he would have probably lashed out at her for not putting her dupatta on in the midst of running. Incidents such as these continue to occur even today and point towards the society's stagnant growth and limited understanding of the reality that surrounds them versus the one they have created according to their own convenience. Suffering great losses often drives the person either towards ending their life or working on it to recover from the trauma but seldom does it happen that society lets that happen in peace. Society's response to the trauma in no way helps but furthers the trauma of the victim and leads to further concretizing of the same identity, attaching it with the person like it is a stigma. The victims in such cases are seldom empathized with and are made to feel guilty instead for what they underwent even though it was never in their will or had their consent.

Shades of violence however are not always aggressive in nature. Manto's story "The Woman In The Red Raincoat" highlights with the tool of narration, an account of Manto's friend who, even when he did not penetrate the woman in the red raincoat, managed to penetrate her mind and even when he did not kill her, managed to become the reason for her death. "She didn't say anything. I began to rub her knee. She offered no resistance" (Manto 42). Mrs. M's not resisting the initial moves of S in the story might as well point towards a psychological stunning that she might have undergone when she was first touched. While women have had to prove across the passage of time if they were molested, men have had the right to be voyeuristic and take the absence of a no as the presence of a yes. Violence need not always require the victimizer to be an active agent. S's moves in the story point towards violence in the form of articulation where he first claimed the woman on the road by stopping her car in the middle of the road and then passively, through his words, forced her into the act of victimization while trying to convey otherwise. Further, to make an outpost in her head, he draws back and pushes the thought of engaging with her body once he sees her face. His actions portray how he had been treating her as nothing but an object of gratification and the very sight of her had broken his lust since she was aged. Manto's description of S at the beginning of the story and calling Mrs. M's death a 'strange tragedy' is a comment on society's reception of a violent act where violence needs to be physical and requires proof. S, even though he engaged in arson and looting is called an honest man to mark the shortsightedness of the society which would rather frame a woman for submitting to her victimizer or for hating men, than actually calling out the victimizer for being sadistic and masochist. The story also highlights the idea of men choosing the object of their desire.

S engaged in “looting from various shops and houses” (36) but rejected the objects of loot. He brought Mrs. M home by driving her car and making her forcefully sit in it while declaring how he would not force her if she wanted to leave only to reject her later. His silence towards the end of the story is the marker of him becoming a victim to the body he had victimized. “You are the murderer of two women. One, who is known as a great artist, and the other who was born from the body of the first woman in your room that night and whom you alone know”(42). Mrs. M’s death, as remarked by Manto, was a murder of not just her but her essence and her existence. The statement “you are her murderer”(42) is also an accusation made on the society which, while reading the story, must have blamed Mrs. M for submitting to her perpetrator instead of questioning his actions and must have called him a victim instead, for a crime he did not physically commit. The society too, then becomes the agent that victimizes the victimizer and further disintegrates the identity of the victim which adds on to both of their traumas.

The nature of trauma and the bond of pain between trauma, victim, and victimizer either end in death or have been passed on across generations in the case of the 1947 Partition. It is why little children grow up idealizing their religion, their position, over the Other and grow up to pass the same to the generations next. The ripple effect created, gives rise to a domino effect which topples empathy, sensibility, and sensitivity to creating a vortex, which subsumes within itself, the cognitive ability and efficacy of humans to understand and comprehend their nature and that of their actions. They end up coloring the experiences of others as paintings of their possession and make skewed judgments instead of letting the ones in question hold the brush. Such are the colors of violence and changing dynamics of victims and victimizers of Partition that continue to be painted upon, across space and time, instead of cleaning the easel. “Thus, we (have) never had a questioning of the events unlike the response to the Holocaust in Europe, or the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa or a conscious acceptance of guilt and blame” (Kala and Sarin 32). The process of Partition, marked by the vested interests and sacrifice of many, lingers unresolved through the acts and experiences of human beings. Not reconciled with, the pain of Partition continues to affect the psyche, identities, and actions of the people that have further drawn the society apart. Ranging from mild instances to gruesome and heart wrenching incidents, the society, even after 73 years, still witnesses the workings of victims and victimizers amidst shades of violence that color the face of humanity and brings out their inner devils.

Literary responses to the Partition of India provide us with tools to study society and human beings in a way that history does not. While files and documents stay hidden from the commoners in the name of political secrets and the books of history undergo reprints each time the power in rule changes, it is narratives such as Manto’s and other writers that we get the agency to formulate an understanding of the past and work on our present to better our future. Acting as cognitive tools of knowledge-making, these narratives reflect the growth of the society across time and space, in and out of Partition. The understanding of humans through characters of a narrative and their workings through the plot create for readers a workspace that can be used to chalk out a plan that helps us make sense of the

rupture that was Partition and how it affected the generations involved and those that came after. However, we fail to recognize the importance of these texts and continue to be passive consumers of knowledge that carries the answers to the trajectory of human civilization. The failure to understand the nature of the human being via these narratives and the ignorance to understand the efficacy of literature in contemporary times lies not in telling but the reception of the stories. We are bereft of reflective and cognitive moments in our lives that hold the power to keep us sensibly and sensitively intact. It is the reason why one has countless tales surrounding partition but seldom does one carry the answers to why it happened and what was the magnitude of its impact. Left with questions and hardly workable answers, we continue to function in a society of confusion where the construction of each one's identity involves markers of religion, class, and caste amongst other constructs and dominate the sense of self resulting in society's divisiveness. Our silence on the event speaks makes us complicit bystanders of the event and fuels the perpetrators to continue to become victimizers. The ripple effect of Partition carries on while our inaction encourages the outburst of violence. It is not just the creation of victimizers but the never-ending trauma of the victims as well that lingers on, unsettled. Passed on in families and socializing circles the trauma of the past grows on us and in our surroundings to give birth to unrest and violence.

For many, though, the mourning is never completed; its stock of narratives of loss and elegiac mood become a part of the family heritage that is passed from one generation to the other. For these men and women, the poet Iqbal's line 'Lightning only strikes the hapless Muslim'(Barq girti hai toh bechare Musalmanon par) has acquired a personal significance which has been incorporated into the social aspect of their identity. (Kakkar 167)

It is us only then, who gives birth to both victims and victimizers.

If not reconciled with, society's gradual downfall is certain. Various critics and researchers have pointed out the need to negotiate with the trauma via the act of closure but the magnitude of the event and the casualties in the statistical data make it a rather tough task. In their paper *Partition and its Meanings* (2011), Jasodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta write, "one is in the possession of one's trauma, not the possessor of it." The nature of trauma is such that it cannot be accessed objectively. Revisiting it would involve post-traumatic stress and both the victimizers and the victims becoming the victims of their own thoughts among other issues. However, its reenactment aesthetically can become the first stage of recovery. Writing about their tragic tales can help ease the trauma of victims and victimizers because it involves letting out their fears, experiences, and emotions into the world which may reassure them how they are not alone. According to Bagchi and Dasgupta, as life happens, the people involved in the event start showing the ability to survive and therefore make a conscious effort towards closure. This process is what they call 'triumph' wherein passive victims become agents of change and reorganize the social environment around them to carry forth with their lives peacefully. However, it cannot be ignored that the event and its trauma continue to rest in their subconscious and hold the trigger to shoot the bullet of relapse with a greater impact than before. It is why the process is rather complex

and demands closure. While Rwanda's Reconciliation Theory seems an option best suited to accomplish the same, its vagueness comes in the way along with the drawback of a timely action not taken in the past when the event was fresh and unhealed. Years down the lane, the memory of the event has been structured, restructured, and has been passed on as ideologies amongst individuals, families, and communities. A restructuring of not victims and victimizers of partition but of public and private social spheres, therefore, is the minimum requirement to further the idea of closure.

The existence of violence does not mean "that a coexistence of the communities, at least in the public arena, is impossible. The hope for such a coexistence comes from many directions" (Kakkar 143). Amidst stark rivalry and uncalled riots, many instances of rival communities protecting each other surface as well. These instances, even when their count might not match that of violent incidents, still instill hope and resonate words from Nasir's nazm – "*Waqt achcha bhi aaega Nasir, gamm na kar zindagi padi hai abhi*" (Good times will come Nasir, don't feel dejected for there is still hope left in life). Partition, even though it is a bond of pain between the victims and the victimizers, did not dehumanize humans in its aftermath. The hope to sustain and the inherent goodness has let empathy thrive over ruthlessness.

The existence of this empathy– even if it is in a restricted sphere demonstrates that the history of violence between the communities (which can fairly be said to have made enemies of Hindus and Muslims, at least in the poor underbelly of the city) has not yet dehumanized the enemy. There is still empathy on both sides which does not a Muslim consider a Hindu– vice versa– less than human and therefore a deserving prey of every imaginable brutality. Empathy with members of the other group, even when considered the enemy, defends the other from the untrammelled aggression which can so easily be let loose against all those considered sub-human. (Kakkar 180)

The conscious efforts at the end of the contemporary youth to rebuild on the rupture that was Partition via a close understanding of the accounts of victims and victimizers seems to be a probable solution in the field of Psychology. It is imperative to understand that this field had not developed in its research and scope when Partition had occurred. It was why there were hardly any therapies and only mental asylums that tagged the person 'mad' without any scope of cure. With the expansion of Psychology and Psychiatry, the trauma caused back then, even when it has lingered on through space and time can find its recovery. The same questions that arise through literature such as that of Manto's can be put forth to mental health professionals who can analyze further, the findings and present answers which history limits to provide. This path shall require time and will work at its own pace but will present detailed results that will help the society regain its perspective and flourish on empathy and dignity.

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