



## The Depiction of Women, Partition and Trauma: Evidences from Literature

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**Abstract-** This paper is an attempt to revisit women's history through stories written around the time when partition of India was unfolding. The paper taking cognizant of various streams of thought within partition literature makes use of two short stories. *Ban Baas* (Banishment) by Jamila Hashmi and *A Farewell to The Bride* by Khadija Mastoor, both originally written in Urdu. The paper argues that the trauma of abductions, suicide, rape and forceful conversions has literally been obliterated from history of partition. Nationalist accounts of history in both India and Pakistan are dominated by elite politics. There is however enough on women's plight in the fiction of those times especially short stories. These stories act as testimonial accounts of the women who had to suffer the violence. Borrowing from the concept of 'trauma' as laid out by Cathy Caruth and that of subalternity by Ranajit Guha, this paper further argues that the trauma of partition was deeply felt by women and the general amnesia about gendered violence from nationalist histories must now be revisited.

**Key Words:** Women, abduction, subalternity, trauma, violence, cultural amnesia.

### I. INTRODUCTION

There is no dearth of collections and anthologies of shorts stories that deal with the subject of partition of India and the suffering it brought. Writers associated with the progressive writers' movement were particularly sensitive to the sufferings of women. Analyzing all those stories is beyond the scope of this paper. It therefore brings into focus only two stories, the selection of which is guided by three factors. Firstly, these stories are less canonical. Saadat Hasan Manto's work forms the core of literature on partition. His stories have captured the attention of critics too much. Since his centenary celebration in 2010, many books and papers, have been written and conferences have held dealing specifically with Manto's treatment of partition. His general appeal can also be gauged from the fact that two films in India and Pakistan have been made on his life with a special focus on his treatment of partition and violence. This has all been at the expense of story writers whose treatment of the subject has been equally humanistic. This paper therefore has chosen relatively less familiar short stories. Secondly, women short story writers have not been paid much attention. Ismat Chughtai's story *Jarein*, (Roots) and an essay on Partition and Literature is all too familiar. The paper attempts to see stories which have otherwise evaded the attention of critics and scholars. Thirdly, since both the stories deal with the subject of abducted women during partition, therefore an analysis of the two is in the natural order.

A lot has been written on and about partition during the last couple of decades. While traditional historiography was centered on 'high politics' of Congress and Muslim League and the power struggle between various political centers, a scant attention has been paid to the human side of the partition (Chattha, 2011). Of late there have been numerous attempts to bring out the human side of the partition but little is written on what partition specifically meant for women. There were mass suicides, rape, torture, abductions, forced marriages and conversions, crimes that were specifically gendered in nature. Ian Talbot has shown that at least one million people lost their lives during the communal riots that broke out (Talbot, 2001, p.23) This does not account for the problems women faced during all this time.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This paper has reviewed literature under three main themes. Of the first category are those early works which engage with partition fiction and mark a shift away from the traditionalist accounts of the great divide based on crude and often singular nationalist political identities. In the second category are those writings which make oral and literary accounts as testimonies of the victims and survivors of the violence. The third category are the writings of literary critics who have revisited the works of fiction through women's subjectivity. This paper tries to situate its findings on the margins between the second and the third set of writings.

Fictional accounts have broadened the scope of partition historiography. (Hasan 1995, Bhalla, 1994, Jalal 2015). Mushir-ul-Hasan (1995) has for instance opened a window into the 'mood and sensitivities of the people tormented' by partition in *India Partitioned: The other face of freedom* (Hasan, 1995, p.1). The two-volume book contains the works of fiction mainly short stories, interviews and memoirs of those who had directly experienced the pangs of partition and the violence that it caused. Countless such short stories were written on both sides of the border. Quite in line with the Mushirul Hasan's work, Alok Bhalla has prepared a three-volume anthology of short stories written on partition in languages of North India but also in other languages. The editor has grouped together stories from nearly all the main communities involving the whole affair, namely Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. Bhalla has treated the subject of partition in a way that it appears not merely a political event but as a human event with deep psychological imprints (Bhalla, 1994). Of late some serious academic writings have come out that expose the '*pity of partition*', a book of this title by Ayesha Jalal captures the depth and scale of the violence from the short stories of Manto. (Jalal, 2015, p.143). The book is an intimate account of the partition and its catastrophic effect based on the stories, sketches and personal letters of Saadat Hasan Manto. The writer of course was a creative genius of high caliber. He had many penchant questions about the 'events, 'the violence and the mob justice'. (Manto, 1990, p.302) . In one of his essay, *Mahbus Auratein, The Caged Women* on the plight of abducted women, Manto reminds of the 'extreme violence and destruction humans are capable of' (Ali, 2015, p.7). He holds humanity in general responsible for crimes in the wake of partition.

A sizeable body of work on partition comes from the fictional as well as oral accounts of the events. (Saint, 2010) (Zakariya 2015), (Bhasin and Menon, 1998) (Batalia, 1998). These include the oral histories based on the personal accounts of the survivors and the victims. *Witnessing Partition; Memory. History and Fiction* by Tarun K Saint (2010) brings out the human side of the partition by focusing on the trauma caused by displacement and dislocation. The book also looks at the psychological side of the traumatic experiences through testimonial literature, mainly Urdu short stories. Of great importance is the fact that how these short stories have been treated as a 'self-reflexive mode of testimony' (Saint, 2010, p. 240). There is a section devoted also to the victims, especially abducted women. While the book devotes a fairly good space to the portrayal of women as victims in the tragedy, it doesn't specify the ways women writers have spoken of the victims. So, the stories specifically written through the lens of female subjectivity remains unexplored. As far as the question of female subjectivity is concerned, the work that comes closer to this paper is the one done by Indian writers; Kamla Bhasin and Retu Menon (1998) in *Borders and Boundaries*. The book however is a project in oral history based on survivor's account. *The Footprints of Partition; The Narrative of four Generation of Pakistanis and Indians* by Anam Zakariya (2015) is another project in the oral history tradition that traces the evolution in the popular narratives of four generations of Pakistanis and Indians living on either side of the border. While the book offers a peak into the complexity of partition by exposing its multilayered nature, it is not especially a work about how women suffered in those turbulent times. It is the collection like these which convey that the 'agony, pain, sorrow and indignation of a generation lost' in the communal conflicts (Zakariya, 2015, p. 7). These voices must be attended to in order to bring an alternative take on history because those who speak through these stories do not 'occupy the center stage in national or provincial arenas of formal and institutionalized politics (Zakariya, 2015).

The third category of the literature this paper reviews is based on the academic and critical writings on partition with a special focus on women's subjectivity. There has recently been a great contribution by literary critics to judge the fiction on partition from women's subjectivity. Much of this trend owes its origin to the popularization of feminist literary theory among academic and literary circles. This has made possible the publication of good number of articles on the female positionality in the works of fiction written by women. Radhika Purohit (2011) has for instance taken account of the female reflexivity on partition in her article, *What the Body Remembers; A feminist perspective of the partition of India and Pakistan*. The article analyzes a novel *What the Body Remembers* by Shuana Singh Baldwin. Purohit while

commenting upon the novel in the article writes that 'it (the novel) depicts the vulnerability' of women by 'blending the personal with the political and the individual with the historical.' (Purohit, 2011, p. 95).

In another work Radhika Purohit has compared the 'androcentric' and 'gynocentric' approaches to the study the victimhood of women reflected in partition fiction. Purohit has adopted a comparative methodology to show how some of the works of fiction written by Khushwant Singh (Train to Pakistan) and Bhisham Sahni (*Tamas*) lack the women perspective. On the other hand, some of the literary works by women are found to be legitimate representation of women. Purohit (2011) has selected the works of Bapsi Sidhwa and Shuana Singh Baldwin to establish that the protagonists portrayed by women writers explore the 'female consciousness and value system', an aspect disregarded by male writers (Purohit, 2012, p. 448). Similarly Barjinder Singh has conceptualized the female subjectivity in the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa through 'gynocentric approach', a phrase the writer has used to describe and stress the female reflexivity (Singh. 2015, p.1). This paper takes a step further in this direction and examines two short stories by Jamila Hashmi and Khadeeja Mastoor.

### III. CONCEPTUAL PRELIMINARIES

The interdisciplinary nature of this work demands a complex web of conceptual tools to make sense of the subject. The subject matter of this study branches off into such diverse disciplines as history, literature, gender theory and psychology. First and foremost, this work claims to be an alternative take on history of the partition. It does not look at the high politics; neither does it ground its assertions in the nation state paradigm. This paper is an attempt to do history of partition through subjectivity of the women. It theorizes the absence of women in partition through the concepts of *subalternity* as seen by Ranajit Guha (19). Similarly, it explains the specificities of partition historiography through the work Gyanendra Pandey (2001). Finally, the psychological imprints left on women because of the violence have been understood through 'trauma studies' borrowing from the work of Cathy Caruth (1996). The first among the concepts outline above is that of subaltern studies propounded by Ranajit Guha (Guha, 1988). Subaltern studies have become a popular method in the discipline of history and social sciences at large. History, Guha argues has always been told from an 'elitist' standpoint and the job of a historian is to rectify 'elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work' (Guha, 1988, p.1). In simpler terms the idea of subaltern studies assumes that history has mostly been about kings and wars and it should instead focus on the groups and classes on the margins of the society. Subalternity within South Asia, writes Guha is expressed in terms of class, caste, age and finally *gender* (Guha, 1988, p.1). The gender aspect of subalternity is what this paper is concerned with. It tries to expose the subalternity of women during the rupture caused by partition.

The conceptual foundation of this work is further strengthened by Gyanendra Pandey's (2001) arguments on history generally and on the history of partition particularly. In *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* he identifies certain challenges that historiography of the partition faces. One of these challenges is that anything written or said on the subject becomes a way of 'apportioning guilt on the opposing side' (Pandey, 2001, p.3) This is a problem that in Pandey's view goes back to the problem of progression in history. Historians tend to take a progressive view of past in which every event is seen as a build up to something greater than the event itself. For instance, Renaissance in the context of European history is seen as a lead up to enlightenment and enlightenment in its turn is seen as a building block towards scientific and industrial revolution and so on. Such a view of the past establishes the primacy of certain notions as preordained truths. In the case of partition of India, the historians on both sides of the border tend to suggest that what partition amounted to a new constitutional and political arrangement and this newness then becomes an academic attraction greater than the event that caused it (Pandey, 2001). So, the focus is always on new processes that partition brought in its wake and not the partition itself. This view of the partition strongly contradicts the survivor's accounts. In other words, the memory of those who lived through an event i.e partition clashes with the history.

The relationship between history and memory is fundamental to an understanding of the history generally of history of partition of India specifically. Violent events of the past are recalled in nationalist memory and thus the commemoration of an event becomes more significant than the event itself. In such a situation the accounts of the victims and survivors often contradict the collective memories. 'History' seems to have 'conquered memory' because after all what is called the collective memory is also archival in nature and is constructed through increasingly 'institutionalized sites of memory' (Nora,1989, p.21).

The implication is that though memory is constructed yet it can give an alternative view of the past. The remedy that Pandey (2001) seems to suggest for doing history generally and for history of partition specifically is to appreciate the complexity of the event and then also to explain it from a multiplicity of standpoints (Pandey 2001). The paper is an attempt to add to the multiplicity of historiography on partition by looking at the fiction of that time.

The sufferings of the women throughout the partition of India brought trauma in its wake. The condition of trauma has been explained by Cathy Caruth (1996). The concept of trauma is particularly relevant to the study of the characters that have witnessed or undergone a 'rupture' (Mukherjee, 2012, p.94). Caruth argues that trauma is a peculiar condition of human mind. Its impact on the victims and the survivors are enormous and often contradictory. The violence characters in the stories of Jamila Hashmi and Khadeeja Mastoor and stories endure is gendered in its nature. Rape, abductions and torture are crimes peculiarly associated with women. Of specific relevance is the abducted women in during partition. The protagonist in both the stories are abducted women. Its effects on the victims are traumatic. This paper theorizes the concept of trauma as laid out in Cathy Caruth's seminal work *Unclaimed Experiences* (1996). Trauma can be characterized by a sudden and catastrophic event in which the response of the victims occurs through signs of delayed and 'uncontrolled emotions through hallucination and other intrusive phenomenon'. (Caruth, 1989, p.11). The image of a soldier freshly returned from war zone is clearly relevant to an understanding of the way trauma operates. The stories of US soldiers in Iraq are fresh in our minds. The violence they experience becomes a recurring sight in their imagination.

The characters of the stories selected for this paper have undergone a trauma that haunts them in their later lives. For instance, *Bibi* the protagonist is a middle-class Muslim woman in *Banishment*, a short story by Jamila Hashmi. She is living a reassured life with her brother, father and mother in some Punjabi village when all of a sudden communal riot break out. She is abducted by Gurpal and is forced to live with him while the rest of her family moves into Pakistan. She keeps waiting and hoping that her brother will come for her rescue, but the brother never comes. The scenes of violence often get repeated through her imagination. She is after all a victim of the trauma and her mind becomes a complex web of contradictory emotions. Such a state of mind exhibited by the protagonist of the story has been conceptualized through Caruth's reading of the trauma and its psychological impact on the victims. The inferences Caruth makes in *Unclaimed Experiences* have been used as a conceptual tool to psychoanalyze the characters of the short stories.

The dialectic interplay between history and memory can help explain the psychological impacts of trauma experienced by the victims and survivors of the violence. Not only is the connection between history and memory important for understanding of the history itself but it also provides a method to understanding the characters that appear in fiction on partition. This relationship has been conceptualized through the work of Natalie Davis and Randolph Starn. Their work mainly takes the victims and survivors memory as a testimony for history. This method has been useful in situations where reality becomes marred by the politics over conflicting narratives. When an event becomes a sight of contestation for competing claims, the testimony of the victims can serve as a historical document. Whenever memory is invoked as a guide to history, one should ask such questions as, where, in which context and by whom the memory is being invoked (Davis and Starn, 1989). The 'whom' question in this study means the women affected by the communal violence and the answer to *where* question lies in fiction, mainly short stories. The silencing of this sensibility from the collective history is the result of 'cultural amnesia' (Davis and Starn, 1989, p.2). For an event as contested as division of India, the memory of the survivors is important. For this research fiction, acts as a commemorative monument where memories converge, condense and define relationship between past, present and future. The idea of memory as conceived by Natalie Davis and Randolph Starn (1989) works at two broad levels. Firstly, the memory of the victims and survivors of the partition violence portrayed in Urdu short stories reenacts itself and produces what Caruth calls 'traumatic neurosis', Secondly it also serves as a building block to partition historiography.

#### IV. FEMALE VOICES; JAMILA HASHMI AND KHADEEJA MASTOOR

The two short stories, *Banishment* by Jamila Hashmi and 'Farewell to the Bride' by Khadeeja Mastoor originally published in Urdu but now translated have been selected for thematic analysis. Both stories speak about the abduction of women in the communal riots that broke out. It seems that abductions, rape and sexual assault on the women of the opposite group was 'metaphoric association' with the political

'other' (Mukherjee, 2012, p.94). The battleground then was female body, and the retributive logic of justice was applied with impunity. The abductions of the women is not only fictionalized accounts of the suffering of the women. It is recorded by history as well. For instance, as late as 1950, an agreement was reached between the governments of India and Pakistan to recover the abducted women (Ali, 2015, p.7). There are accounts of the women who were recovered, of those who had babies from their abductors, and even of those who refused to go back because they would not be accepted back and might even be killed for conceiving babies from their abductors (Ali, 2015, p.7)

#### V. BANISHMENT BY JAMILA HASHMI

*Banishment, Ban Baas* (in Urdu) by Jamila Hashmi is story of an abducted women. Bibi, the protagonist of the story comes from a middle-class Muslim family. Bibi is abducted by Gурpal and is forced to marry him in the days of violent clashes between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. As the story opens, Bibi has been living with her abductor. She has a daughter from Gурpal but she still waits for her brother who has now moved to Pakistan and take her with him. Hashmi borrows the metaphor of *Ban Baas* from *Ramayana*, the great Hindu epic. *Seeta* in the great epic was abducted by *Raavan* and waits for *Raam* to rescue her from the wrath of *Raavan*. Similarly Bibi waits for his brother to come to her rescue but he never comes. Since the night Bibi was abducted. she too has become 'Seeta who has suffered the pangs of banishment and has been imprisoned in Sangraon', the village where she is living with Gурpal (Enayatullah, 1994, p.121). Perhaps her brother has forgotten his sister as a price worth paying for the newborn freedom. Bibi's return might bring a shame so huge that he might not withstand the disgrace. It could also be that Bibi has reconciled with his fate. A return back to her family, where she originally belongs might not be as promising either. Bibi now is a complex web of contradictory emotions; she wishes to get back but also loves her daughter, Munni. When finally there is an agreement for the recovery of abducted women between India and Pakistan and soldiers come to take her back, she refuses to go with yet another band of strangers. She is appalled by the fact that she has never been treated as a Bahu in Gурpal's house. Though the night she fell into Gурpal's hands and was brought in front of his mother, she was introduced as a Bahu. Gурpal says to his mother.

*'Look here, Ma. I have brought a daughter in law for you. Young, charming and healthy. She is the best from among the girls who fell into our hands tonight'* (Enayatullah, 1994, p.120).

This is how she was introduced in Gурpal's house but she herself never felt like a Bahu. She thinks that whenever someone calls her a Bahu, she 'feels as though, she is being abused' (Enayatullah, 1994, p.120). Indeed Bibi is not alone who has been taken by the abductors as a wife. There are many in that village. These women have been turned into wives and daughters-in-law the same night. They have been married without the rituals. They have started their matrimonial life so unceremoniously that 'there were no festivities.' 'No music was played nor did village belles sang joyous songs to the accompaniment of dholak. And the dancers did not perform.' (Enayatullah, 1994, p.120).

Bibi has now reconciled with her fate, but she sometimes remembers the days when the country was not yet partitioned, and she was living in the comforts of her Amma and Abba's house. The world looked so reassuring until everything was smashed. Bibi has no one to complain to and she has no one to whom she can express her anger. She does not let go of it when she comes across an opportunity to speak up her mind. In the story, Gурpal, the abductor in the garb of a husband takes Bibi and his daughter to the village fair. There is a great hustle and bustle in the festival and the commotion so great that many of the children have been separated from their mothers. While on their way back from the fair, the family stops by the muddy road and Gурpal looking at the wailing woman who had lost their children, curses them for being so negligent of their children even when they know that children are often lost at these fairs. This moves Bibi so much and she bursts out with a tinge of anger, 'children are lost even apart from fairs' (Enayatullah, 1994, p.123). Her saying so has made Gурpal see his real face, as if she has successfully made him aware of the evil he himself had committed by abducting her. Surprised by this assertion on her part, he gently asks Bibi if she has not yet forgotten about that dreadful experience. Upon this, Bibi responds in a way that offers some interesting insights into the intersection of trauma, memory and womanhood. In a monologue she says

*"How could I forget? How could I explain to Gурpal that time never changes? It is always the same. There is pain and anger in one's destiny because one can never forget. Those wretched days are alive in my memory*

*with all their vividness. A fire was ranging everywhere. The country was partitioned. On the eve independence live lost its beauty and the human blood began to flow on the roads. In the name of Bhagwan, Guru and Allah people cut each others' throats. Those who were ready to die and save the honour of their mothers and sisters and daughters started regarding womens' chastity and honour as a myth."*

This interior monologue by the protagonist of the story is reflective of the link between violence in the name of identity in the postcolonial state and also of the way women either remember or forget the many shades of violence and their impacts on their minds and bodies. The violence that women suffered at the hands of men had either been deliberately forgotten or was considered a price for the promised freedom. That is one of the reasons it never got the place it deserved in nationalist historiography. There eraser from the collective memory is a sign of their subalternity in the partition history (Guha, 1988). If however a casual reference is made, it results into a biased narrative in which a conscious attempt is made to 'apportioning the guilt on the opposing side' (Pandey, 1989, P.3). This story is a reminder of how violence on the female body is made sense of and how it is nearly impossible for the women's body to forget the loss. The body might in time forget the catastrophe, it is the mind that does not forget because rape, abductions and torture are a crime known to impact not just the woman's body but also her mind.

When Gurpal says that those were different times and she should have forgotten what happened to her by then. She exclaims with wonder as to how someone can forget an event as catastrophic as that. In the very next instance, loads of memories begins to flash through her mind and she starts recalling what had actually happened in her close vicinity. Prior to this, she just appears a helpless woman to the reader and the precise details of her suffering are not known. The trauma gets repeated in her mind and generates what Caruth calls 'traumatic neurosis'. The trauma therefore returns to haunt its survivors later. Bibi has in a way tried to give voice to her emotions about the loss, pain and suffering through her silence. For her silence is a sign of 'inability to find a language to articulate her experiences' (Didur, 2006, p.43) It seems as if the partition and the violence is a wound that has just started to bleed afresh.

A curious change has occurred inside Gurpal. By that time the communal frenzy that took over him and many around him seems to be over. He knows what he did was wrong but there is nothing that could guarantee him the redemption. When he says, 'those were different times', the reader can almost detect a change of hearts. The impression one gets is that of regret and remorse. As if he is trying to suggest that it was the madness of those times that prompted him to do a crime so great and there was nothing much to resist the urge.

Bibi too, has undergone a huge transformation. There are news circulating that peace has been restored between India and Pakistan. The arrangements are being made for the safe return of the abducted women at the state level. Soldiers of one country are going to the other to ensure a safe swap. She has been listening to these stories and pondering upon the possibility of her safe return but under some unknown force she is skeptical of going with soldiers. Perhaps she is fed up of yet another journey. She eventually manages to reconcile with her fate and towards the end of the story, she thinks it appropriate to live with the Raavan. She has managed to break whatever link she had with her past and is gradually able to win the confidence of Gurpal's mother so much that when all the rest of the women complain about their daughters in law, she speaks very good of Bibi.

## VI. FAREWELL TO THE BRIDE, KHADIJA MASTOOR

*Farewell To The Bride* also showcases the theme of abductions and kidnapping but it differs from *Banishment* in terms of its style and technique of narration. While *Banishment* is a story told in first person narrative interspersed by one or two flashbacks, *Farewell to the Bride* is a story entirely told in the flashback. In the opening scene the narrator has just been free from a bath and is sitting in the courtyard to warm his body when he sees around him tiny pools of water running around. These water pools remind him of the pools of blood he saw that fateful evening. He was busy in the relief efforts along with the workers of the corporation when suddenly he saw a mob gathered outside a house. From what he could gather from the scene was this. The door of a house is locked from the inside and the mob is wondering loudly as to why the room was locked from the inside when they had already killed all the inmates three days ago. The mob is in a hurry to break the lock open. The narrator is trying to keep them away from doing so and begins to pacify them in the name of 'humanity'. His speech is abruptly interrupted by someone in the mob who loudly says. '*when our mothers, sisters and brothers were being*

*butchered and bathed in blood, where was your humanity then? And where were you* (Zaman, 1994, p. 355). Realizing that the crowd is too charged up to listen to anything, he lets them break open the lock but he has not given up on his efforts to stop them from killing those who might still be inside the house. To put this idea into practice, he hits upon a scheme. He advises the mob not to rush up to the fugitive lest he should have a gun and lest he should open fire on them. This, he thinks will give him the time to arrange for the escape of the poor fugitive. The mob agrees to this. It is a three floor house. The mob has searched every nook and cranny of the first two floors, but they have not been able to lay their hands on anyone. What they find instead is 'emptiness' and 'silence' as if the 'entire place is haunted'.

In the last instance, the narrator manages to reach at the third floor and is shocked to see a young and beautiful girl sitting in one room. Her eyes are swollen as though she were crying and soap dish, hair pins and clips are spread all about her. The mob tries to grab the girl while he stops them until someone puts a knife to his chest and he is held back. They pick the girl and the last image the narrator sees of her is that she is asking for his help. The mob leaves the building. He had seen many women being abducted, 'heard their protests and their cries but his heart had remained unmoved' (Zaman, 1994, p.358). The question as to why the girl was left alone in the house has perplexed his mind. The question that pinches him even more is that why the girl had been putting the make up if all the others in that house had been killed. He is pondering upon all these questions when suddenly he finds an old letter from under the pillow. It reads.

*'My darling, I ll soon be coming to meet you. I am so desperate to see you again. Now even if a catastrophe obstructs my way, it will not stop me from reaching you. I will come directly to your room, where you will be waiting for me, all dressed up'* (Zaman, 1994, p.358).

The story ends when the narrator overhears cries of loot from a nearby building, drops the letter on the floor and moves on.

The story can be interpreted at two levels. In the first stage, the narrator is also the protagonist. But when the scene shifts to that house through a flashback, there emerges another protagonist whose identity is not yet known. Once it becomes clear that the fugitive in the house is a young and beautiful girl, she suddenly appears as the protagonist around whom the story begins to revolve. The questions begin to rise in the reader's as to who the girl is? Why is she still alive when all the rest of her family members have become victim to the mob violence? And above all why and for whom is she putting the make up? One does not get any definite answers to all these questions. The letter the narrator finds in her room does tell a few things about the situation. For instance, she had been waiting for her beloved who had promised to reach her and take her with him. The fact that she had been putting on make-up is a sign that probably her wedding was set the day she was abducted. This is also evident by the title of the story. *Farewell to the Bride*. The title signifies that the bride is about to depart from her family. The marriage of a girl involves sending her off to a new house. Perhaps the new house, this girl is being sent to, is not yet decided. For it is not known to whom the girl is going to be handed over to as an exploit of the plunder.

This metaphor of a bride is a unique commonality between *Banishment* and *Farewell to the Bride*. While Bibi has been taken as a hostage, she is made to feel like bride but has never been treated as one. The girl in *Farewell to the Bride*, on the other hand though anonymous till the end is also set to marry around the time when she is abducted by the mob. The letter reveals that she had been waiting for her would be husband.

There is another dimension that binds these two stories by a familiar thread. The women characters in both the stories are living a life of anonymity. The reader does not know much about them. Bibi, in *Banishment* is the name through which the reader is introduced to her. One does not know her real name, nor does one find too many details about her character except the fact that she has been abducted by Gural and that she hopes to reunite with her family. Similarly, one does not know about the girl in *Farewell to the Bride* except when she is being taken away by the mob. Even her name remains anonymous. This anonymity can be seen as a larger absence of women in the history. While a guess can be made about the communal affiliation of Bibi of *Banishment*; her name suggests that she comes from a Muslim family. The same cannot be said about the girl in *Farewell to the Bride*. She is just an anonymous woman left alone at a wrong place and at a wrong time.

The narrator in *Farewell to the Bride* exhibits all the symptoms of 'traumatic neuroses'. The trauma of not being able to save the girl from the mob anger haunts him in his later life. An image, a sight or a sound is enough to lay before him all the memories he has of that event. The actual incident is all over now. Peace

seems to have been restored. He has just taken a bath when suddenly he sees water running around in small pools. The sight of the water reminds him of the blood running around in streets and from then on, he is reminded of the evening when the girl was forcefully taken by the mob.

The dialectic interplay between memory and history as stated in the part on conceptual framework guides into the larger process of history writing. The women that appear in these stories are the victims of communalized identities in the wake of partition. Their absence from the collective memory of the new nation states is the result of cultural amnesia (Davis and Starn, 1989) that characterizes history writing. The symptoms of cultural amnesia lie in the divorce between history and the memory. Gyanendra Pandey would say that the history of the partition is imagined as a lead up to a process greater than the partition itself.

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