

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 6. Issue.4. 2019 (Oct-Dec)

ISSN
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

DEPICTION OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES IN ATTIA HOSAIN'S "AFTER THE STORM"
AND SAYED WALIULLAH'S "THE ESCAPE"

DEVI PRASAD GAUTAM

University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida

doi: [10.33329/ijelr.64.205](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.64.205)



DEVI PRASAD GAUTAM

ABSTRACT

This article examines Attia Hosain's "After the Storm" and Sayed Waliullah's "The Escape" through the lens of trauma theory of Cathy Caruth and Dominik La Capra, with a special focus on the narrative techniques employed by the authors of the stories. The paper argues that although "After the Storm" and "The Escape" deal with the themes of pain and trauma undergone by the protagonists in the stories and try to bring out physical as well as psychological pain of the victims of the cataclysmic violence of the South Asian Partition of 1947, the authors' employment of different techniques lend significant difference to their representation. If Hosain in "After the Storm" relies upon narrativization of the disturbing experience of the protagonist, Waliullah in "The Escape" resorts to the more objective technique of the transmission of trauma thereby producing a more powerful shock effect on the readers.

Key Words: traumatic memory, acting out, working through, narrativization, transmission

Partition violence of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 records unprecedented accounts of suffering in human history in terms of dislocation, uprootedness, forced migration, madness, destruction and death. Attia Hosain's¹ "After the Storm" and Sayed Waliullah's² "The Escape," written around the cataclysmic violence deal with similar themes of pain and trauma undergone by the protagonists. While both the stories depend much on the memories of the protagonists and try to bring out physical as well as psychological pain of the victims of Partition, readers can notice that the employment of different techniques by the writers lend significant difference to their representation of the violence of 1947. If Hosain in "After the Storm" relies upon

¹ Attia Hosain (1913-1998), a Lucknow born writer and an actor, who graduated from Isabella Thorburn College, has authored *Phoenix Fled and Other Stories* (1953), and a novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1963). Cowasjee and Duggal describe her novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* as "a requiem for a whole way of Muslim life that vanished with Indian Independence" (345). Hosain has acted in *The Bird of Time* at the Savoy Theatre, London.

² Syed Waliullah (1922-1971), a Bangladeshi writer, was born in Chittagong and partially educated at Calcutta University. Waliullah worked at Radio Pakistan, and at the Pakistan embassy before he joined UNESCO. His important works include novels such as *Kando Nadi Kando/Cry, O River* (1968), and *The Ugly Asian* (1959), plays such as *Tarangabhanga/The Breakers* (1964) and *Sudanga* (1964), and short-story collections such as *Nayanchara* (1951) and *Dui Tir O Anyanya Galpa* (1965). Popularly known for his novel. *Lalsalu* (literally, Red Cloth)/*Tree without Roots* (1948), Waliullah is remembered for his existentialist analysis of characters' psyche.

narrativization of the disturbing experience of the protagonist, Waliullah in "The Escape" resorts to the more objective technique of the transmission of trauma.

Transmission as opposed to Narrativization, as exemplified by Claud Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), has the advantage of more objectivity in representation because it does away with the narrative perspective and relies entirely on the accounts of individuals who have experienced the trauma. Interviewed and filmed by Lanzmann, *Shoah* is a groundbreaking French documentary film about the German Holocaust, "made exclusively of testimonies: first hand testimonies of participants in the historical experience of holocaust."³ Consisting primarily of interviews, *Shoah* offers testimonies of the witnesses, survivors, and perpetrators of violence, and tries to present a most truthful picture of the genocide in Germany during World War II. Although Lanzmann plays triple role in the making of the film--as the narrator of the film, as the interviewer of the witnesses, and as the artistic-cum philosophic inquirer, he offers no narrative view point.⁴ As a narrator, he remains silent and presents only the scenes and the traumatic accounts of the individuals who experienced them. As in the case of traumatic experience, there lies a paradox at the heart of *Shoah's* representation: its *overwhelming evidence* makes the film into an *utterly proofless event*, an event whose magnitude of reference is at once below and beyond proof.⁵ In other words, Lanzman's *Shoah* furnishes a good model of impartial account for writers and filmmakers by epitomizing an objective representation of trauma. Saadat Hasan Manto and Waliullah can be ascribed this quality of objective realism in their transmissive representation of the traumatic events of the subcontinent's Partition.

In contrast to transmission, narrativization becomes less truthful a testimony, as it has the liability to affect the objectivity in representations. A narrativized text has the possibility of losing its objective stance by considerably allowing the narrator or the author room for taking sides. That is, in contrast to Waliullah's "The Escape," with its techniques of transmission of trauma, Hosain's "After the Storm," being narrativized by an individualized character having a recognizable identity and personality, allows space for authorial politics. However, even while narrativizing trauma, the author avoids the pitfall of "othering"⁶ as Hosain refrains from sympathizing with one community and demonizing the other.

In "After the Storm," a short story of about four pages, Hosain presents the story of Bibi, a little girl of about ten years who has apparently lost her mother, uncle and aunt in the genocidal violence of the Partition. Her name, her dress, her association with the brave Chand Bibi, and her memory of the ceremony at the shrine of Shahji lend her clearly the identity of a Muslim girl. Remaining for some time in a refugee camp Bibi runs away from the place, and now she has been working as a servant in the house of the narrator who seems to have much understanding about the plight of the children of storm. Little Bibi expresses her wish always to live with and never to leave the narrator, who has adopted her. Bibi has started performing some odd tasks in the narrator's house and seems quite happy and contented. Every morning she brings flowers and every evening she brings garlands to put in the bottle and decorate the house. Despite being the daughter of an affluent man who employed laborers to "help in the fields," she has successfully been playing the role of a servant (Hosain 111). Her easy and self-assured manners tell us that she has been quite successful in reconstructing her life after the initial shock she received of violence. However, readers soon realize that Bibi deliberately tries to forget or even deny some of the experiences she had in her sorrowful past.

Surviving the sufferings experienced during brutal violence involves making a conscious effort to remember and document the experiences and emotions; however, it also often includes the deliberate act of forgetting certain experiences. That is, memory of a traumatic experience comprises both the acts of

³ Shoshana Felman, "In an Era of Testimony: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*," 40.

⁴ Felman, "In an Era of Testimony," 50.

⁵ Felman, "In an Era of Testimony," 45.

⁶ In "Prose of Otherness," Gyanendra Pandey argues convincingly that the Partition literature suffers from the tendency of "othering" the opponent community because the writers from the rival nations compete to disparage and demonize the other (188-221).

remembering and forgetting. According to Christopher L. Heffner, forgetting is caused by an error of association, i.e., by attributing wrong information to a data, by amnesia of psychological or physiological origin, and by the phenomenon of repression. In the act of repression, the subject pushes his/her memory purposefully because he/she does not want to remember the associated feelings with it, as when adults “forget” incidences of their childhood sexual abuse.⁷ This is exactly what is evident in Bibi’s case as she tries to suppress her fragmented tortured memories of violence, and the disappearance of her mother and aunt. By involvement in the everyday actions as a servant, she tries to forget things particularly related with her mother. For instance, when the narrator asks where her mother was at the time of riots, Bibi just says, “At home,” and starts telling certain other things. Her complete answer to the question is as follows: “At home. They said the house was full of blood. They said Chand Bibi kept on fighting until her arm was cut off” (Hosain112). Bibi deliberately evades the conversation regarding her mother and talks about Chand Bibi, trying to suppress the memory of her mother because remembrance of the mother would be too painful for her to bear now. To avoid further traumatic agony, Bibi wants to forget the tragic incident of separation from her mother.

However, Bibi is not successful in erasing her memory because trauma lies in her as a latent fact. Trauma theory, which originates in Freud’s Psychoanalytical works such as *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Moses and Monotheism*, posits that the current psychic problem of an individual can be attributed to his/her repressed memories related to a traumatic experience in the past. In *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud argues that memory of a traumatic event can be lost over time (latency) but then regained in a symptomatic form when triggered by some similar event.⁸ Freud claims that traumatic memory, if triggered by a similar event, can manifest after a gap of “latency,” or the period of incubation.

In her essay “Traumatic Awakenings,” Cathy Caruth elaborates and interprets Freudian theory of trauma thus: “trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena.”⁹ Caruth emphasizes on the repetitive nature of trauma, and further explains that apart from the psychological dimension of suffering, traumatic experience “suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it, that immediacy, paradoxically may take the form of belatedness.”¹⁰ Caruth underscores the incomprehensibility of the traumatic event at the original moment of its occurrence,¹¹ but its intelligibility later, after its symptomatic repetition. In her opinion, what can simply be seen or known are not the only things involved in a traumatic event as it is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility which remain at the heart of repetitive seeing.¹² According to Caruth, the experience of the soldier faced with sudden and massive death around him, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later in repeated nightmares is a central image of trauma.¹³

Caruth’s theory can be applied profitably to the situation of Bibi and said that she is under trauma and keeps remembering certain events in her life whenever her memory is triggered by similar incidents. Trauma lies in its phase of “latency” in her. For instance, after bringing flowers and threading garlands she turns towards the narrator and says: “Aren’t they pretty? In my home we had two big bushes near the well. I made garlands for my mother and aunt” (Hosain 110). And again, when she brings tea and cakes to the narrator, she says: “Do you like these English cakes? My mother made such lovely *halwa*—you would have loved it” (111). Here Bibi remembers certain pleasant events related with her mother, her aunt and her house much after she becomes

⁷ Christopher L. Heffner, “Memory and Forgetting,” (allpsych.com/psychology101/memory/#.Vd4d-IViko).

⁸ James Berger, “Trauma and Literary Theory,” 570.

⁹ Cathy Caruth, “Traumatic Awakenings,” 208.

¹⁰ Caruth “Traumatic Awakenings,” 208.

¹¹ In “Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects,” Irene Visser stresses on “Caruth’s notion of the enduring and ultimately unknowable and inexpressible nature of traumatic wounding,” 255.

¹² Caruth, “Traumatic Awakenings,” 208.

¹³ Caruth, “Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History,” 181.

the victim of actual trauma. Most of the incidents that lay buried in her psyche come to surface when similar events or situations occur in the later phase of her life.

Dressed in discarded clothes, wearing glass bangles that are gifts from her mistress/the narrator, Bibi remembers her gold earrings and the gold bangles that her mother had promised her before the outbreak of the communal violence. Hosain writes: "I had gold earrings," she said proudly, but with no reproach. "My mother said after the next harvest she would buy me gold bangles. When we had feasts I was sorry I had no bangles" (Hosain 111). Bibi's recounting of the past incidents not only include her experience of unfulfilled promises but also reflect the lovely conversation and pleasurable moments she shared with her mother. Bibi had left home at the time when "there was the fair at Shahji's tomb" (110). She remembers bloodshed, she remembers how Chand Bibi, in whose big house she used to play, "fought and fought and killed so many of them" (112). She also remembers her sister, her brother, the man with whom she ran away when Chand Bibi's house was attacked, the refugee camp, her flight from there, and the policeman who brought her to the house of the narrator-mistress.

Bibi does not remember, however, what had happened to her mother for she had gone to visit Chand Bibi. Also, she does not remember what had happened before she ran away from the refugee camp. When asked by the narrator why she had run away, her quick answer is: I don't know. I got up at night and ran away. Then I came here" (Hosain 112). Much is not remembered or suppressed here. She does not remember or rather as the narrator says, "her mind deliberately refuses to fill the gap between the refugee camp and her adoption" (112). Thus, Bibi remembers select events (not all) related with her past. Though certain incidents constitute important parts of her memory, they remain submerged in her consciousness because she intentionally tries to forget them. The events that lay concealed in her being come to surface when similar conditions occur in the later phase of Bibi's life. Even at that time, she deliberately suppresses the events that have too painful associations with her and does not remember them. However, to come fully out of her trauma, Bibi needs to remember or make conscious effort to remember the unpleasant facts of her past.

As a child, Bibi has become the victim of a very intense violence affecting her entire life. Therefore, the assertion of the narrator sounds true that "her eyes had no childhood memories" (Hosain 110). She has only the traumatic memories that gradually re-surface. At the initial stage, she tries to repress the unpleasant memories but later, these too make their way into conscious memory as "the return of the repressed," despite her deliberate effort to suppress them. As Freud, and Caruth suggest, Bibi needs to remember her traumatic past and tell her story to come out of the ghostly, macabre past.

In agreement with Freud and Caruth, Dominik La Capra also emphasizes on repetitive nature of traumatic memory, and develops a concept of "acting out" which means compulsive repetitive behavior of the traumatic event. Grounding his psychoanalytical work on Freud's concept of "return of the repressed," La Capra insists on "transference," or "a conscious summoning of the repressed" traumatic memories to effect a "working through."¹⁴ Working through, according to La Capra, means creating a therapeutic situation that re-traumatizes the victim with the witnessing and experiencing of the earlier scene of violence which impels the victim to recognize the trauma as one's own, and to acknowledge that the trauma is still active and he or she is implicated in its destructive effects.¹⁵ La Capra suggests that trauma needs to be "worked through," for an effective cure of the victim because its suppression cannot end the painful experiences as it merely stores them in the latent state in their memory which re-emerge in more dangerous forms.

So, in the words of La Capra, Bibi needs to "work through" her trauma. Hiding the bitter facts of her life or suppressing the ghastly memories will simply carry the wound with her and eventually harm the little girl. La Capra maintains that "acting out" is an unpleasant experience but however hard it may be, Bibi must perform it to "work through" her trauma to lead a healthy life in future. And although unconsciously, Bibi has been acting

¹⁴ Berger, "Trauma and Literary Theory," 576.

¹⁵ Berger, "Trauma and Literary Theory," 576.

out or working through her trauma by telling her story off and on. The narrator rightly says: "By now I knew her story, but she had to tell it herself how and why and when she willed" (Hosain 110).

Bibi's recounting of her tale or the narrator's approval of it furnishes views directly opposite to that of Javed Alam. Alam argues that the trauma of Partition violence "should be left behind, should be forgotten so that people may live in peace, socially normal everyday life, politically as well as individually."¹⁶ Alam believes that discussions and reporting of trauma re-opens the wounds of the past and harms the communities living together in harmony and peace. Also, because the discussion of trauma "is morally not sustainable,"¹⁷ Alam avers that Partition is something unnamable, something not to be remembered and talked about.

Although Alam may be considered right to some extent, Caruth, and La Capra argue more persuasively regarding the healing of wounds. ¹⁸Agreeing both with Caruth and La Capra, Gyanendra Pandey also believes that violence must be owned up and traumatic tales must be told to establish a happy and healthy community life. According to Pandey, concealment of the traumatic feelings cannot exterminate them; they will remain in latent state and resurface in the future at the cost of the health of an individual and community. Therefore, paradoxically Bibi must tell her story time and again to forget it and to come out of the latent trauma before it gets manifested in its devastating form.

While Hosain's "After the Storm" employs the technique of narrativization, Waliullah's "The Escape" employs the more powerful technique of the transmission of trauma. Devoid of any remarkable cultural marker and specific habitation, the events in the story unfold with the same intensity of violence as they might have occurred. Although the story is developed around the image of a train journey undertaken by the people rendered homeless refugees in the aftermath of the division of the Indian subcontinent, it presents no threat of a train massacre. The riots and killings have already taken place.

In "The Escape," the central character, a nameless young man serves as the "focal point of the story" and through his memory we come across the violent scenes of bloodshed. He is going to his part of the divided country along with several other refugees including a bulky wailing woman, a mute, statue-like old man and an innocent and apparently unperturbed young girl. Among others, the protagonist has witnessed the death of an old man as well as a child's death and burial. He cannot tell a story despite his desperate effort to do so because the overwhelming impression of the tragic experience has almost benumbed his body and muted his speech. As he is in a dazed state of mind, he is unable to make any sense of his present situation. Although he tries to flee from macabre memories of gruesome acts he has witnessed recently, he happens to encounter another spectral image on the way getting further trapped in the morbid experience. At a railway station, he sees the dead body of his friend, who probably was killed by a riot before he could cross the border to enter the geographical location recently allocated for his community.

As he considers himself a strong man capable of keeping the balance of his mind, the protagonist feels the need to protect others in the train who, in his opinion, are broken down because of the intense experience of deadly violence. He tries to tell a fairy story to an innocent girl in the train to keep her away from fear, and to help preserve her "innocent fragrance," but he can never recollect any such story (Waliullah 8). He can only recall the scenes containing hoary things: killings, dead bodies and constantly oozing blood, because only these lie fresh in his memory. Although the protagonist ventures to narrate the familiar story of death and destruction, he cannot complete it because he feels the necessity to get rid of the demons of his memory first. By telling the

¹⁶ Javed Alam, "Remembering Partition," 101.

¹⁷ Alam, "Remembering Partition," 100.

¹⁸ In his article "Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response," Michael Rothberg claims that trauma theory such as that of Caruth is "tied to a narrow Eurocentric framework," and does not much help understand and heal the trauma of people globally, it is still useful to have a basic understanding of the situation of traumatized characters and the healing process (227).

story to the little girl, he wants to escape in vain the painful memory of the grisly violence he has witnessed. Finally, he turns insane, and gives up his life by stepping out from the running train.

The overpowering trauma that leads to the madness and death of the protagonist, is reminiscent of a similar situation in Manto's "Toba Tek Singh," one of the best stories on Partition. While at one level, "Toba Tek Singh" suggests that the so-called mad people in a lunatic asylum are saner than the leaders who decided to divide the subcontinent into two, at another level, the story looks at the entire process of Partition as sheer madness. Though Bishan Singh, the protagonist, resists the division of his country by refusing to move either to India or Pakistan, at the end of the story, he falls and collapses in no man's land in between the geographical boundaries of the two countries. When he learns of his country's Partition, Bishan's lunacy becomes intensified leading ultimately to his death. According to Stephen Alter, Manto views Partition violence as a "collective madness," and adds that "the only conceivable response" of Manto's characters' to the inhuman brutality of Partition is madness as evidenced by the characterization of Bishan Singh.¹⁹ Both literally and metaphorically, thousands of people on both side of the border went mad during the horrible violence of Partition. As in Manto's "Toba Tek Singh," the protagonist in Waliullah's "The Escape," responds to the incomprehensible violence of Partition with madness and death.

"The Escape" also operates as the anecdotal stories of Manto's "Black Margins," such as "Wages of Labor," "Fifty-Fifty," "A Raw Deal," "Sharing the Loot," "Humility," and "Sorry," wherein Manto captures the specificity and intensity of the violence, by creating an objective narrative stance. The author avoids all kinds of cultural markers and stereotypes, takes no side of any community, and presents graphic details of horrific incidents. For instance, in "Sorry," Manto does not provide any identity to the victim in terms of caste, creed, community, belief, nationality, religion, or culture. Likewise, Waliullah's characters in "The Escape" do not get any identification in the name of religion, community, nationality or politics. The central character bears no name and identity. Except for the mention of a cap put on by an old man, the author presents no markers to recognize the ethnicity or the communal group to which his characters belong. At a specific point, the train is supposed to be about to cross the border, but it does not mention to which side the train proceeds. The readers can only guess that the refugees it carries are heading towards Pakistan, the newly created nation. Such an objective viewpoint is a rare phenomenon in Partition fiction since authors from both sides of the border show the tendency to betray a bias toward their nation or religious community.

Also like Manto's creation of traumatic situations in several vignettes in "Black Margins," in which the author realistically depicts the scenes of violence in a minimalist style, Waliullah's "The Escape" renders the tragic tale through a narrator, who instead of narrativizing, confines himself to the powerful description of scenes whereby he transmits the shocking reality of partition violence:

The moment of chaotic indecision had been replaced by the real and decisive rattle of the slow moving train over the rusty metre-gauge rails which stressed and continuously narrowed behind. The sun rode mercilessly high in the cloudless sky. The tedious journey in the vast expanse of void and heat seemed destinationless. Human odour hung heavy in the crowded compartment. A little, insignificant fly buzzed near the toilet-door where a thin line of dirty water streaked along its threshold. (Waliullah 7)

This opening paragraph with its description of the slow-moving train, the rusty rails, the merciless sun, the cloudless sky, the crowded compartment, the buzzing fly, the dirty toilet-door, and the tedious journey of the protagonist creates the most proper realistic setting for the tragic story, which has a slow but powerful impact on the readers.

Readers can also notice stark but shocking realism in the description which comes midway through the story. When the young protagonist gets down the train to buy some eatables for the little girl, he is "jostled, trampled, and pushed this way and that. Somehow, he managed to escape and go to a corner of the low, dust-covered platform" (Waliullah 12). After the realistic description of the platform and the movement of the central

¹⁹ Stephen Alter, "Madness and Partition: The Short Stories of Saadat Hansan Manto," 91. In his interview, Alam too describes Partition violence as a manifestation of "sudden madness" (101).

character in this passage the author writes: "The sun beat down; a pungent nauseating smell of human odour filled the atmosphere" before moving into the description of a "partly covered" dead body of a man "who had wanted to cross the border for safety but now lay there stiff, his skull completely battered" (12). More shocking description follows when the young man sees "the corpse and, in an instance, froze like a statue." The reaction of the protagonist reads thus: "He turned abruptly and ran towards the train for all he was worth. In the train, he sat panting for a long time, his lips parched, and his Adam's apple, jerking up and down" (12). These passages illustrate a convincingly realistic depiction of the plight of the victims of Partition. Even the most callous people can shudder at the predicament of the victims of riot and homeless refugees graphically presented in the passages above.

Leaving aside the heart-rending descriptions, most of the content of "The Escape" derives from the fragments of protagonist's memory, reflected powerfully in an ironic vein: "Absolutely nothing happened. Only blood, silent and vicious, oozed and oozed" (Waliullah 9). The image of the constantly oozing blood combined with the phrase "absolutely nothing happened" makes much happen in the readers' sensibility. As in the case of *Shoah's* opening song, where there is "a discrepancy between the context and the lyrics,"²⁰ the sweetness of the song of the innocent singer, and the comment by the witness, the second sentence of Waliullah gives a twist to the first one and creates an ironic distance between the two.

"The Escape" provides another piece of the protagonist's memory which reads: "The blood was there, oozing in primordial silence" (Waliullah 14). The image of blood oozing in silence presents a horrendous scene of Partition violence. In yet another scene of memory, readers find the character reflecting on: "*the slender girl who used to stand pressing her flat abdomen against the floral designs of the rusty rails of the balcony,*" and "*the little grave under the pipal tree where no one ever shed tears or burnt candles just because it was the grave of a child?*" (15). Thus, the mentality of the narrator and the ingredients of his reminiscing mind, including the lonely and abandoned grave of a child, exemplify a most truthful representation of the horrifying aftermath of Partition violence.

The fragments of memory in "The Escape" create an intellectual effect on the readers by implicating them in the tragedy of the characters. The story successfully transmits to the readers the traumatic experience of Waliullah's characters reminiscent of the endings of Manto's advanced stories of Partition such as "Toba Tek Singh," "Cold Meat," and "Open It" in which the author, refraining from emotional narrativization, relies upon transmission of trauma.

Waliullah's objectivity can also be seen in his refusal to grant the narrator the privilege of narration. Admittedly, the protagonist tries to recount his experience in a narrative form. He tries to tell the child "a nice thrilling story," but in vain (Waliullah 8). Every attempt he makes to narrate a tale gets thwarted as he loses himself in memory. He keeps on asking questions such as "Didn't I finish it?" (13), and "Well, where was I?" (13), and finally declares, "I wish I could at least tell you a nice little story" (15). The narrator cannot tell any intelligent story; he rather conveys a sense of silence. He can only present some instances of memories. Silence reigns supreme whenever he makes efforts at narrating events, rendering Waliullah's text "essentially a narrative of silence."²¹ However, amidst silence, the author presents the readers with the protagonist's flashes of hoary recollections. The recalled scenes with the agonized mentality of the central character, and their sinister content, depict nothing but "living pain."²² Just as the experiences of characters in *Shoah*, "The Escape" records the limit experience of humanity at the time of overwhelming crisis. Waliullah's technique, comparable to Lanzmann's, gives us the extraordinary sense of "how," leaving us to wonder about the "why?" in the

²⁰ Felman, "In an Era of Testimony," 42.

²¹ Felman, "In an Era of Testimony," 52.

²² Felman, "In an Era of Testimony," 53.

representation of trauma.²³ "The Escape" shows what happened and how but remains silent about why it happened. It resorts to the technique of showing rather than telling as the text presents scenes but does not offer explanations in the form of narrativization.

The closing lines of "The Escape" are also reminiscent of the abrupt and ironic endings of some of the most impactful stories of Manto. In response to the little girl's repeated remark--"Look, he is mad," the young man feels it his responsibility to get rid of the mad cap and to protect the innocent girl (Waliullah 11, 14). He becomes furious and starts looking for the mad man eventually losing his life. This is how the author presents the last few lines in the story:

Then, like a leopard, he jumped forward and began to search the compartment for the man
Viciously, he scanned every passenger's face. But he found him nowhere.

Then he thought maybe he was outside and so, opening the door, he stepped out of the running train.
(Waliullah 16)

This ending of Waliullah's story is very powerful for both its ironic edge and chilling effect. The man in pursuit of the supposedly mad man turns himself utterly insane and dies stepping out of the running train.

In view of Caruth's theory of trauma, it may be said that Waliullah's "The Escape" does not depict trauma as such for she holds that trauma can occur only belatedly. Readers might agree that the young narrator and the old man who sits in the train "like a statue in a park" have not yet acquired the status of traumatized subjects because they have not yet undergone the period of incubation or latency. They still remain in a mute and dazed state. They are in the thick of violence and although they witness it, they do not possess the ability to know it. For these immediate witnesses, or victims of violence, knowledge of the moment "may take the form of belatedness" as Caruth would have it.²⁴ Consequently, the young protagonist, the old man and even the little girl may be able to make sense of the immediate experience of the violent event only later provided that they remain alive.

The case of the little girl in Hosain's story is different. She has passed the state of inability to understand the meaning of events. However, as far as the rendition of the mind of the subjects is concerned, Waliullah, like Manto, scores over Hosain for he more effectively transmits the shock of violence than does Hosain through her narrativization. Saros Cowasjee rightly remarks that "the real horror of the story ["After the Storm"] comes not from what the child says, but from what she leaves unsaid."²⁵ The same can be said about "The Escape": its real horror lies in the very inability of the narrator to tell the tale he wishes to tell. By not telling the tale, or narrativizing, Waliullah powerfully transmits to the readers the traumatic experience of his protagonist. Like Manto in his famous short stories and like Lanzmann in *Shoah*, Waliullah remains above petty politics of the time and shows very impartially and with a shocking effect the pain and agony brought about by Partition of 1947.

Works Cited

- Alam, Javed. "Remembering Partition." With Suresh Sharma. India 1997: *Seminar* 461 (1998): 98-103. Print.
- Alter, Stephen. "Madness and Partition: The Short Stories of Saadat Hansan Manto." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 14 (1994): 91-100. Print.
- Berger, James. "Trauma and Literary Theory." *Contemporary Literature*. xxxviii, 3 University of Wisconsin, 1997: 569-582. Print.
- Caruth, Cathy. "Traumatic Awakenings." *Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination*. Eds. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber. Stanford: Stanford UP, (1997): 208-222. Print.

²³ In "After word: The Shoah between Memory and History," Saul Friedlander says that Lanzmann has given us the extraordinary sense of "how" and has left us wondering about the "why?" concerning the case of trauma (351).

²⁴ Caruth, "Traumatic Awakenings," 208.

²⁵ Saros Cowasjee. Introduction. *Orphans of the Storm: Stories of the Partition of India*, xix.

- - -. "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History." *Yale French Studies*. Vol.79 November 7 (1991): 181-192. Print.
- Cowasjee, Saros. Introduction. *Orphans of the Storm: Stories of the Partition of India*. New Delhi: UBS, 1995. i-xxi. Print.
- Cowasjee, Saros and K.S. Duggal. eds. *Orphans of the Storm: Stories of the Partition of India*. New Delhi: UBS, 1995. Print.
- Felman, Shoshana. "In an Era of Testimony: Claude Lanzmann's Shoah." *Yale French Studies*. 79 (1991): 39-81. Print.
- Friedlander, Saul. "After word: The Shoah between Memory and History." *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auswitz*. Ed. Sicher Efrain Urbana: Illinois UP, 1998: 345-357. Print.
- Heffner, Christopher L. "Memory and Forgetting." *AllPsych: Psych Central's Virtual Psychology Classroom*. Web. Aug. 24, 2015. <http://allpsych.com/psychology101/memory/#.Vd4d-_IViko>.
- Hosain, Attia. "After the Storm." *Orphans of the Storm: Stories of the Partition of India*. Eds. Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal. New Delhi: UBS, 1995. 109-112. Print.
- Manto, Saadat Hasan. "Toba Tek Singh." *For Freedom's Sake: Selected Stories and Sketches*. Ed. and Trans. Muhammad Asaduddin. Karachi: Oxford UP, 2001. 112-148. Print.
- - -. "Black Margins." *Black Margins: Sa'adat Hasan Manto Stories*. Ed. Muhammad Umar Memon. Trans. M. Asaduddin. New Delhi: Katha, 2001. 177-187. Print.
- Narang, Gopi Chand. "Manto Reconsidered." *Life and Works of Saadat Hasan Manto*. Ed. Alok Bhalla. Spec. issue on Saadat Hasan Manto. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1997. 1-12. Print.
- Pandey, Gyanendra. "The Prose of Otherness." *Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honour of Ranjit Guha*. Eds. David Arnold and David Hardiman. New Delhi: OUP, 1994. 188-221. Print.
- Rothberg, Michael. "Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response." *Studies in the Novel* 40 (2008): 224-234. Print.
- Visser, Irene. "Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects." *Humanities* 4.2 (2015): 250-265. DOI:10.3390/h4020250
- Waliullah, Sayed. "Escape." *The Escape and other Stories of 1947*. Ed. Niaz Zaman. Dhaka: Dhaka UP, 2000. 7-16. Print.
- Zaman, Niyaz. Introduction. *The Escape and other Stories of 1947*. Dhaka: Dhaka UP, 2000. 1-6. Print.