

"Manto and Anirudh Kala on the 1947 Partition: A Comparative Study of Trauma and Truth"



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The Abstract

The horrors of the India-Pakistan Partition, unfolding at the stroke of midnight in 1947, left a lasting imprint on the subcontinent's psyche. Forced displacement, communal violence, and fractured identities on both sides of the border continue to echo as enduring trauma. While its historical and political impacts are well-documented, the emotional wounds persist. This paper compares Anirudh Kala's clinical perspective with Manto's lived experience of partition reveals contrasting approaches to trauma. This study highlights their distinct portrayals of its emotional, psychological, and social impact. While Kala's analytical lens dissects trauma through psychiatry, Manto's raw storytelling captures its visceral pain. Their works—set in medical institutions like *Toba Tek Singh* and *No Forgiveness Necessary*—expose the fragmentation of bodies, language, and identities. Their writings report about women, who bore the worst of Partition's horrors, as sexual violence was used as a means to punish and humiliate rival communities. Ultimately, both authors break the long-held silences surrounding these atrocities. Together, their works provide a deep insight into the psychological, emotional, and social devastation of Partition.

Keywords: India-Pakistan Partition, Manto, Anirudh Kala, The Trauma of Partition, Violence and Madness of Partition, Displacement,

Introduction

The Partition of India in 1947 remains one of the most defining moments in South Asian history (Ahmad A. , 2001), drastically altering the region's social, cultural, and political fabric. While the historical, political, and socioeconomic consequences (Alexander, 2019) of the Partition has been extensively examined, the psychological and emotional scars left on individuals continue to linger. The trauma of separation, displacement, and violence still echoes in the collective memory of the people (Bajpai A, 2017), affecting generations in profound ways (Balaev M. , 2008). At the midnight, precise, of 14th August 1947, the homes of approximately 15 million people were abandoned as they migrated toward either India or the newly established Pakistan. Tragically, about one million lives were lost during the journey. Shashi Tharoor describes:

The creation and perpetuation of Hindu-Muslim antagonism was the most significant accomplishment of British imperial policy: the colonial project of "divide et impera" (divide and rule) fomented religious antagonisms to facilitate

continued imperial rule and reached its tragic culmination in 1947. (Tharoor, 2017)

Partition literature emerged as a response to the failure of historians to adequately convey the magnitude (ALI, 2020) of the tragedy. Unlike history, which is state-centric and often unidimensional, literature prioritizes the experiences of individuals (Balke, 2002), particularly the common people who were rendered destitute overnight and endured unfathomable losses. It roots into the emotional and psychological trauma of displacement (Butalia U. , 1998), as well as the profound sense of alienation that followed. One of the most harrowing aspects of this period was the plight of women, exacerbated by the Central Recovery Operation initiated by the government (Caruth, 1996). During Partition, as many as seventy-five thousand women were abducted—Hindu women by Muslim men and Muslim women by Hindu men—subjecting them to immense suffering and exploitation. Women suffered the brunt of partition the most. "The story of partition is also the story of scores of raped and abducted women, defiled to teach the rival community a lesson" (Ghosh B. , 2019)

This ongoing suffering, across multiple dimensions, presents an interesting field for comparative study, especially within literature, where different authors have sought to explore and document these deep-rooted experiences (Ali, 2020). Collective memory transcends mere recollection of past realities; it is a reconstruction deeply shaped by testimonial narratives and cultural artifacts born of traumatic events. The act of recalling these histories—whether through written, visual, or oral forms—not only perpetuates collective trauma but also safeguards the emotional and psychological imprint of the past. (Uma Maheswary, 2024)

Particularly, comparing the works of two distinct writers—one from the perspective of a psychiatrist (Anirudh Kala) and the other as a victim of the Partition (Manto). Such a comparative study offers fresh insights into the ways, these authors approach the trauma of Partition, bringing to light new understandings of its emotional, psychological, and social consequences. The contrast between the clinical, analytical viewpoint of a psychiatrist and the raw, emotional portrayal of a writer who lived through the Partition presents an opportunity to examine not only how different individuals perceive trauma but also how these perceptions shape their narratives and literary contributions. For illustrating, how these stories portray the fragmentation of bodies, language, and identities, their depictions—primarily set within medical institutions in 'Toba Tek Singh' and 'No forgiveness Necessary'. Authors' approach seeks to reveal the silences that have shrouded these atrocities for decades (Singer, 2023).

Review of Literature

The enduring repercussions of Partition necessitate the preservation of its traumatic history—individual episodes of suffering (Chatterji, 1999), the persistent yearning for closure despite its elusiveness (Butalia U. , 1998), and the remembrance of violence that continues to shape the present lives of survivors (Veena, 1996). Though limited in number, these accounts remain vital (Howard, 2013). While they cannot fully undo the ongoing emotional and psychological scars of Partition, they serve as indispensable voices in crafting more comprehensive and nuanced historical narratives. Manto's sharp criticism and cynicism made him a controversial figure among the Pakistani elite (Ahmad A. , 1987), leading to multiple accusations of obscenity and legal battles. His writings not only challenged nationalism and bureaucracy (Brenton, 2013) but also reflected his personal struggles with mental illness, including alcoholism and depression: "Manto's work was coloured by his experience of mental illness, including alcohol addiction and possible depressive disorder" (Jokinen Tahir, 2022) ,

his work reflects not only his struggle against nationalism and bureaucracy but also his personal battles with mental illness, including alcoholism and depression (Ghosh B. , 2017). For example, after relocating from Bombay to Lahore, the renowned Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto experienced an unusual creative block, going two months without writing narrative fiction—an extraordinary lapse for such a prolific author (Saint). These deeply personal experiences permeate his narratives, adding layers of introspection and raw authenticity to his literary voice (Uddin, 2020) . On the other side, Kala gives rise to transgenerational trauma, where memories in these narratives take on a haunting quality. In *No Forgiveness Necessary*, the photograph-memory of the past that Iqbal's son presents unsettles Ramneek Singh, forcing him to confront the inescapable weight of his history. His encounter with Asif (Iqbal's son) becomes a catalyst, resurrecting a past that refuses to remain buried (Kopf, 2019).

Manto's short stories and vignettes, in particular, strive to render the humanitarian catastrophe of Partition into linguistic expression (Grewal, 2019). However, much like Kala, Manto does not adopt a strictly realist or documentary approach (Jalal, 2013). Instead, his narratives unfold with irony and satire, maintaining a critical yet nuanced perspective. Despite the stark portrayals of violence, his work resists descending into absolute cynicism, preserving a sense of depth and complexity (Singh, 2016). Kala's *Folie à Deux* similarly explores the unsettling persistence of memory, as the violence the protagonist once witnessed continues to haunt her. Through this portrayal, the text underscores the enduring power of memory and its pivotal role in shaping trauma narratives (Levin, 2019).

Whereas Kala examines madness not only as a literary motif to articulate the inexpressible but also as a clinical condition, exploring its psychological and existential dimensions (Balaev M. , 2019). The *Unsafe Asylum* aligns more closely with Saadat Hasan Manto's works, which depict Partition through the lens of a mental institution. Both narratives highlight the stark contrast between asylum inmates and the so-called rational world outside, challenging the very notion of madness amid communal violence (Treessa, 2022).

As a leading voice of the Progressive Writers' Movement, Manto undeniably eclipsed his contemporaries, portraying the Partition's harrowing "pornography of violence" with unflinching realism, stripping away any "thick veil of hypocrisy." (Ali, 2020)

Manto's writings stand as formidable sentinels of social resistance, boldly confronting overarching themes such as the exploitation of the powerless, religious orthodoxy, communal strife, caste

discrimination, and the failures of ineffective administrations (Roshni Sengupta, 2024).

Objective And Expected Outcomes

The works of Anirudh Kala and Saadat Hasan Manto both probe into complex social issues, often with a focus on human nature, societal norms, and the harsh realities of life. If we were to set objectives and expected outcomes for their works in an educational or critical context, they could be framed as follows: Anirudh Kala, known for his writing that reflects societal and psychological depth, often explores the darker facets of human emotion, identity, and existence.

Objectives:

- To unveil psychological depths: Analyzing characters' mental and emotional complexities.
- To interrogate societal norms: Exploring how social structures shape identity and relationships.
- To Foster empathy and insight: Cultivating understanding of personal and societal struggles.
- To deconstruct human nature: Examining the complexities of human emotions and behaviour.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased Awareness of Mental Health: Readers may gain a more nuanced understanding of mental health issues, recognizing the importance of empathy and support for those facing psychological struggles.
- Critical Thinking on Social Structures: Increased questioning of societal norms and systems that marginalize or oppress certain groups.
- Emotional Intelligence: Development of emotional intelligence by recognizing and empathizing with the complexities of human emotions in various scenarios.

Whereas, Saadat Hasan Manto's writing is marked by its stark realism and exploration of taboo subjects, often dealing with the partition of India, human sexuality, and the complexities of societal morality.

Objectives:

- To address partition trauma: Exploring the emotional and psychological impact of Partition and its aftermath.
- To Challenge social morality: Critiquing societal and moral boundaries, especially in sexuality, gender, and relationships.
- To Examine social marginality: Highlighting the struggles of marginalized groups and challenging power structures.
- To Encouraging Dialogue on Taboos: Promoting open discussions on sexuality, mental health, and social stigmas.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased Empathy for Partition Victims: Readers will have a deeper understanding of the trauma caused by the Partition, including the human costs of political and historical decisions.

- Provoking Critical Thought on Morality: An encouragement for readers to reflect on their own moral judgments and consider the complexity of human actions.
- Breaking Down Taboos: A shift toward a more open dialogue on topics traditionally deemed taboo, leading to increased acceptance and understanding in society.

Life Sketches of Manto & Kala

Both authors aim to push the boundaries of conventional thinking, whether it's about mental health, social norms, or the human experience in the face of historical trauma. Their works challenge readers to confront uncomfortable truths and engage with the more complex aspects of humanity.



Saadat Hasan Manto

(Manto: A direct observer and sufferer of Partition, reflecting trauma through fiction.)

Saadat Hasan Manto (1912–1955) was a prolific and controversial Pakistani writer, who emigrated from what was then Bombay – now Mumbai – to Lahore in Pakistan after the partition of India, known for his bold and unflinching portrayal of the harsh realities of life, particularly the devastating effects of the 1947 Partition of India. He born on May 11, 1912, in Samrala, Punjab (then British India), emerged during a transformative period in history. While many writers of his era sought to revolutionize the literary world, Manto humbly declared that he was ahead of them, seeking to plunge into uncomfortable and brutal truths that were often ignored (Ahmad S. I., 2023). Manto's personal struggles were intertwined with his professional ones. He faced significant emotional and financial hardships, notably from numerous obscenity trials, which weighed heavily on him. His writing was marked by a fearless exploration of society's most disturbing elements, revealing the stark realities of life with a rebellious and unflinching pen. Manto's work moved readers emotionally, often evoking a flood of tears, pity, and anger as he addressed themes of apartheid, repression, and deprivation. His writing was not just an artistic endeavour but a form of protest, against

the injustices of his time, particularly during the tumultuous period surrounding the Partition of India.

Despite these challenges, Manto's commitment to freedom, particularly his rejection of the Gandhian philosophy of "Ahimsa" as the sole path to liberation, was unwavering. His satirical writings targeted the British colonial regime and the hypocrisy he saw in both the leadership of his people and the nation at large.

Manto wrote short stories, plays, and essays that focused on the trauma, violence, and moral complexities of post-colonial society. Born in British India and later migrating to Pakistan, Manto's works often examined human desires, suffering, and the boundaries between sanity and madness. His writing was marked by stark realism and deep empathy for the marginalized, and he faced legal and societal backlash for his portrayal of taboo subjects like sex, class, and religious tensions. Despite his controversies, Manto remains a significant literary figure, celebrated for his courage in depicting the painful truths of human existence.

He chose an epithet:

"Here lies Saadat Hasan Manto. With him lie buried all the arts and mysteries of short story writing. Under tons of earth he lies, wondering if he is a greater short story writer than God" (Ispahani, 1988)

Manto's writings continue to challenge readers, provoking intense reflection and emotional upheaval. He never shied away from confronting the darker aspects of human nature, and through his words, he exposed the filth and corruption within minds shaped by absolutism and ideology. His exploration of the human condition during one of history's most traumatic periods remains a testament to his rare insight, his courage, and his unwavering voice in the face of adversity.

Anirudh Kala



(Anirudh Kala: A psychiatrist writing about Partition trauma with clinical insights.)

Anirudh Kala, a distinguished Indian psychiatrist, stands at the crossroads of mental health advocacy, scholarly research, and literary expression. His diverse career reflects a deep commitment to unravelling the complexities of human psychology, specifically in relation to momentous historical events such as the Partition of 1947. Combining clinical expertise, academic depth, and empathetic storytelling, Kala has become a pivotal voice in examining the lasting psychological repercussions of trauma on both individuals and communities.

Anirudh Kala is an Indian psychiatrist and a prominent figure in the field of mental health. Known for his in-depth research on the psychological effects of trauma (Rathor, 2017), particularly those caused by historical events like the 1947 Partition, Kala has contributed significantly to the understanding of mental health issues related to conflict and displacement. His writings often focus on the long-term impact of trauma and the complexities of human behaviour in the aftermath of violent events (Pillai, 2021). Kala has worked extensively with survivors of trauma, exploring the intersection of psychiatry and history. His work helps bridge the gap between clinical practice and social history. Reflections on his parents' memories, his visits to mental institutions in Pakistan, his cross-border collaborations with mental health practitioners from both countries, and his firsthand experiences with the mentally ill enrich his storytelling, providing depth and authenticity to his narratives. (Benny, 2022)

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodology, with textual analysis serving as a key analytical tool. The works of Manto and Anirudh Kala constitute the primary sources for this research. Through close reading and thematic inquiry, the study aims to explore and illustrate the concepts of collective memory and the enduring effects of trauma in these stories. The data gathered from various research platforms, including ResearchGate, Mendeley, and Google Scholar etc., along with relevant books, serve as secondary sources for this study. The discussion will focus on the complex interplay between trauma and collective memory as represented in the selected literary works. It will examine the narrative techniques employed by the authors to depict the lasting impact of trauma on both individuals and communities. Additionally, the discourse will explore the therapeutic potential of narratives in helping individuals confront and recover from traumatic experiences.

By analysing how Manto and Kala navigate the intersection of personal and collective suffering, this study seeks to illuminate the enduring psychological and sociopolitical ramifications of trauma.

Additionally, it will explore how literary depictions of trauma function as acts of resistance against historical erasure, fostering a more profound understanding of past atrocities and their persistent influence on contemporary society. The study also acknowledges the role of diverse historical periods and cultural contexts in shaping the intricate dynamics of trauma, collective memory, and narrative. The subsequent examples will demonstrate how narratives born out of distressing events contribute to the construction and preservation of collective memory, reinforcing their significance in shaping historical consciousness.

Observations:-

Representation of Partition and Brutal Truth

The horrors of the India–Pakistan Partition marked by forced displacement, communal violence, and shattered identities on both sides of the border—have left an indelible mark on the subcontinent's collective psyche. This devastating eruption of violence was also accompanied by other forms of division. As the Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai (1915–1991) put it:

"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."

This migration was accompanied by violence on an unprecedented scale. While the exact numbers will always be a matter of debate, it is estimated that thousands of women were raped, at least one million people lost their lives, and between ten to fifteen million were displaced, forced to leave their homes as refugees (Sarin). The lingering absence of those who suffered, along with the ghostly echoes of lost homes and fractured communities, continues to haunt the present, resisting any effort to consign them to history (Kaushal, 2024).

Ye dagh dagh ujala, ye shab-gazida sahar,
(This dawn, stained and blemished, this night-bitten morn,)

Vo intizar tha jis ka, ye vo sahar to nahi,
(is not the awaited dawn, we've sought for so long,)

Ye vo sahar to nahi jis ki aarzu lekar
(Not the dawn we yearned for, carrying our hopes,)

Chale the yaar ke mil jaegi kahin na Kahin
(To find our beloved somewhere, somewhere beyond.)

This poignant verse from Faiz Ahmed Faiz's "Subh-e-Azadi" (Dawn of Independence) poem captures a deep sense of disillusionment and longing. The "stained light" and "night-worn dawn" symbolize the disillusionment with the promised future, as the poet reflects on the false hope of a better tomorrow. The dawn, expected to bring fulfilment, is instead a fractured, unrecognizable reality. The lines lament

the unfulfilled desires and unmet expectations, as the speaker mourns the loss of a dawn that was once envisioned as a symbol of reunion or a brighter future but has now become an elusive and disappointing reality. The "friends" (yaar) who once walked towards this hopeful dawn now face the harsh truth that the anticipated fulfillment is nowhere to be found.

Both Anirudh Kala and Saadat Hasan Manto have explored the theme of Partition in their respective works, but from distinct perspectives and through different mediums. Here's how each approached this monumental event:

Saadat Hasan Manto and the Partition Theme

Manto's exploration of Partition is deeply emotional and narrative driven. Writing from his own experience of being a witness to and a victim of Partition (Assadullah, 2022), Manto's stories reflect the brutality, chaos, and human suffering (Hassan, 2018) that followed the separation of India and Pakistan. His writings, particularly during the Partition, were deeply influenced by the violence and trauma of the period (U.Akhter, 2022), as he grappled with the human cost of migration, displacement, and the brutal treatment of women and children.

His stories, like *Toba Tek Singh* and *Thanda Gosht*, delve into the lives of individuals caught in the turmoil, showing how Partition not only divided the land but also fragmented minds, identities, and relationships. Manto's characters often struggle with the psychological scars of the violence, migration, and disillusionment that came with Partition. His unflinching portrayal of the horror and the moral ambiguities of human behaviour during and after Partition is what sets his work apart.

To truly grasp Manto and the essence of his writings, one must recognize Partition as a pivotal influence, shaping his non-fiction works such as "Khol Do", "Toba Tek Singh" and "Thanda Ghost" and many others. His approach to character development is akin to acquiring a taste for fine wine—initially perceived as sweet or bitter yet ultimately delivering an unexpected depth. As the narrative unfolds and reaches its climax, its impact lingers, leaving a lasting impression on the reader (Hitesh, 2019).

Manto's metaphysical and emotional depth drove him to write stories that not only captured the violence and chaos of Partition but also offered a critical examination of the madness that accompanied it. His works, such as *Toba Tek Singh*, reveal how, amidst the chaos, it was the "mad" who retained the clarity to recognize the true insanity of the situation. The writing desk, Manto's "real court of law," became his sanctuary, a space where he confronted the world's madness with sharp insight and unyielding critique.

Manto undoubtedly possessed a rare and profound insight into the human condition, particularly in how he portrayed the aftermath of Partition (Abbas, 2024). His rebellious pen was more than just a tool of expression—it was a weapon that cut through the veneer of societal norms, exposing the raw realities of life (Lathwal, 2019). With every stroke, Manto challenged conventional boundaries, offering a fearless exploration of taboo subjects such as violence, lust, and human frailty. His stories resonated not just within India and Pakistan but across the world, leaving an indelible mark on global literature. His pen ignited a flame of truth, one that illuminated the darkest corners of human existence, without hesitation or fear (Tariq Usman, 2024). Through his writing, Manto captured the chaos, despair, and moral ambiguity of his time, forever altering the literary landscape (Shah, 2023).

Anirudh Kala and the Partition Theme

Anirudh Kala, as a psychiatrist, views the Partition of 1947 primarily through the lens of trauma and mental health. He left his ancestral home while still in his mother's womb, born on this side of the border. His connection to Partition is thus shaped by the memories of his parents and the haunting accounts of his mentally ill patients, many of whom bore the scars of its death, destruction, and trauma (Vasan, 2020). His work focuses on the psychological impact of the violent partition on individuals and communities, especially in terms of long-term mental health consequences such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. Kala delves into how the brutal truths of Partition—mass migration, communal violence, and loss of home—affected the survivors. He uses a clinical approach to describe how people coped with displacement, the loss of family, and the reorganization of identities after the Partition. His works bridge psychiatry and history, offering insights into how traumatic historical events are experienced on a psychological level.

Anirudh Kala's recently released seminal work, *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness* (2018), explores into the complex interplay between migration, memory, and psychological trauma. This collection of interwoven short stories, penned by the renowned Indian psychiatrist from Ludhiana, Punjab, expands the discourse of Migration Studies by foregrounding the profound psychological turmoil experienced by Partition survivors. Often, these individuals remain haunted by their suppressed traumas, which resurface long after the historical event, triggering mental and physical distress as they involuntarily relive their past ordeals.

Kala's writing explores multiple dimensions of madness: the madness of communal violence, the

insanity of asylum inmates, the psychological wounds of Partition manifesting as madness, and the irrationality of those trapped by their past (Sanjeev Jain, 2012). *The Unsafe Asylum* is a collection of thirteen interlinked short stories set in mental institutions across Lahore, Amritsar, and Ranji. Using both first-person and third-person narration, it presents diverse perspectives on Partition, exposing the violent ambiguities of communal conflicts and their lasting trauma. Anirudh Kala subtly weaves in colonial ideologies through his portrayal of madness, where asylum inmates symbolically reflect the chaos of Partition, the surrounding violence, and the deep psychological turmoil of the displaced.

Many characters in the anthology, including Rulda and Fattu, Iqbal Junaid Hussain's son Asif in *No Forgiveness Necessary*, Prakash Singh Kohli in *Belly Button*, Harpreet Cheema/Firdaus in *Sita's Bus*, and Venky in *Partitioning Madness*, exhibit trauma-induced pathological disorders. Notably, the story *Folie à Deux* explores a case of transgenerational trauma, where the unnamed female narrator's fear psychosis is transmitted to her three children.

Their Work Based on Partition

Works of Manto

Saadat Hasan Manto's stories on Partition provide a raw and unfiltered portrayal of the horrors, chaos, and human cost of the division of India in 1947. His narratives focus on the brutality, identity crises, displacement, and psychological trauma faced by individuals across religious and social lines. Below is a summary of some of his most notable Partition-themed stories:

1. *Toba Tek Singh*

One of Manto's most famous stories, *Toba Tek Singh* is set in a mental asylum during Partition, where Hindu and Sikh patients are to be transferred to India, while Muslim patients are sent to Pakistan. The protagonist, Bishan Singh, a Sikh inmate, struggles to comprehend the division of his homeland. In the end, he collapses and dies in the no-man's-land between the two borders, symbolizing the absurdity of Partition.

2. *Thanda Gosht* (Cold Meat)

This story explores the deep psychological impact of violence. It follows Ishwar Singh, a Sikh man, who recounts to his lover how, in the heat of communal riots, he killed a Muslim family and abducted a woman—only to realize, to his horror, that she was already dead. The tale exposes the moral decay brought about by Partition's brutality.

3. *Khol Do* (Open It)

A heart-wrenching story about Sirajuddin, an old man searching for his missing daughter, Sakina, amid the Partition riots. Eventually, she is found by some men who bring her to a doctor. When the doctor asks

to open the window for fresh air, Sakina, in a dazed state, mechanically loosens her salwar, interpreting "Khol Do" (open it) as an order to disrobe—revealing the horrifying extent of her trauma and violation.

4. *Kaali Shalwar* (The Black Shalwar)

Although not directly about Partition, this story reflects the social instability of the time. It revolves around Sultana, a prostitute, who yearns for a black shalwar as a symbol of dignity and self-worth, reflecting the desperation and shifting identities of people in a fractured society.

5. *Tetwal Ka Kutta* (The Dog of Tetwal)

Set against the backdrop of the Indo-Pakistani conflict post-Partition, this allegorical story follows a stray dog that unknowingly crosses the border multiple times. Soldiers on both sides of the border first play with it but later shoot it, reflecting the senseless violence and hostility that emerged after Partition.

6. *Akhri Salute* (The Last Salute)

This story portrays two soldiers—one Indian, one Pakistani—who were once friends but now fight for opposing sides. The tale captures the pain of Partition through the personal loss of brotherhood and shared history.

7. *Gurmukh Singh Ki Wasiyat* (Gurmukh Singh's Will)

The story highlights the dilemma of a Sikh man who refuses to leave his home in Pakistan, believing that faith and love transcend borders. However, he is ultimately consumed by the violence of Partition, underscoring the tragedy of those who resisted migration.

8. *Ram Khilawan*

This lesser-known story focuses on a Hindu servant who stays in Pakistan after Partition to care for his Muslim employer. It explores themes of loyalty, displacement, and the breakdown of human relationships amid national division.

9. *Yazid*

This powerful story draws parallels between the atrocities of Partition and historical tyranny. It examines human cruelty and the religious justification of violence, showing how both sides justified their brutal acts.

10. *Sahae*

A tale of friendship destroyed by Partition, Sahae follows a Hindu-Muslim pair of friends who are torn apart by the communal frenzy. One friend betrays the other in the name of nationalism, showing how Partition corroded even the strongest of relationships.

Manto's stories do not merely recount historical events; they expose the deep psychological wounds, moral decay, and irreversible human loss that Partition inflicted. His unflinching realism remains one of the most powerful literary documents of that tragic era.

Works of Kala : "*The Unsafe Asylum*"

Anirudh Kala, a Ludhiana-based psychiatrist and a descendant of a family uprooted by Partition, masterfully conveys its profound psychological impact. Drawing upon his parents' recollections, his visits to psychiatric institutions in Pakistan, cross-border collaborations with mental health professionals, and his extensive experience with the mentally ill, he crafts a compelling narrative that brings these stories to life. Anirudh Kala's *The Unsafe Asylum* is a collection of thirteen interconnected short stories that explore the psychological trauma of Partition, the madness of communal violence, and the impact of displacement on generations. Set in mental institutions across Lahore, Amritsar, and Ranji, the stories draw parallels between the so-called "madness" of asylum inmates and the irrational brutality of those outside, questioning the very definition of sanity. The narratives span from the 1947 Partition to the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, showcasing the lasting scars of historical violence.

1. *The Unsafe Asylum* – The opening story sets the stage for the collection, illustrating how mental hospitals during Partition became unintended sanctuaries. The asylum is portrayed as both a place of protection and a site of colonial neglect.

2. *Belly Button* – This story follows Prakash, a psychiatrist, who returns to his birthplace in Pakistan decades after fleeing with his family. As he reconnects with his roots, he reflects on how people across the border continue to long for news of loved ones they were separated from during Partition.

3. *Sita's Bus* – A powerful narrative about Harpreet Cheema, a woman whose identity is reshaped by Partition. Originally Hindu, she converts to Islam after her family leaves her in Pakistan and remarries. When she is later forced to return to India, she undergoes a non-consensual abortion to erase any traces of her second marriage. Her ultimate rejection of both religious identities signifies the struggle of those caught between two divided nations.

4. *Folie à Deux* – This story explores intergenerational trauma through the lens of shared psychosis. A woman who fled to Ludhiana during the riots becomes consumed by delusions of Muslims hunting her. Her paranoia is passed down to her children, illustrating how Partition's psychological scars persist across generations.

5. *The Diary of a Mental Hospital Intern* – The narrative contrasts European and Indian asylums, exposing colonial-era racial segregation in mental health institutions. While European asylums are humane and rehabilitative, Indian asylums are overcrowded and chaotic, symbolizing the systemic neglect of Indian lives.

6. *No Forgiveness Necessary* – This story critiques the arbitrary nature of Partition, highlighting the role of Cyril Radcliffe, a British lawyer with no

understanding of India's history, in drawing the border. Through a conversation between Rashida and her husband Iqbal, the story underscores the absurdity of a foreigner dividing a land with centuries of shared culture.

7. *The Factory of Madness* – The story explores the high number of asylum inmates post-Partition, leading to the unsettling realization that communal violence itself had become a factory producing madness. The mental health crisis is depicted as a direct result of displacement and trauma.

8. *Fattu and Rudla's Story* – The asylum paradoxically becomes a place of safety for Fattu and Rudla, who remain in the institution despite being discharged. Their families, struggling with the chaos of Partition, never come to collect them, leaving them stranded between two worlds.

9. *The Mental Asylum as a Refuge* – A Sikh and Hindu family, along with their children, seek shelter inside an asylum, highlighting how, in times of extreme violence, the mentally ill are sometimes safer than the so-called "sane" members of society.

10. *The Madness of Communal Riots* – Through the experiences of asylum inmates and doctors, this story critiques the irrationality of communal violence, showing how those outside the asylum, driven by religious hatred, often exhibit greater insanity than the patients inside.

11. *Ramneek Singh's Story* – This narrative follows Ramneek Singh, a man who killed Iqbal during the riots but is haunted by his actions. Unable to find peace, he suffers from lifelong insomnia, illustrating how guilt and trauma can be as damaging as physical wounds.

12. *Rudla's Discharge* – The penultimate story revisits Rudla, who is finally released from the asylum and taken in by his nephew's family. However, as communal riots erupt again following Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984, he realizes the world outside remains as violent as before. Desperate for safety, he gets into a taxi and asks, "Is there a mental hospital in this city?"

13. *The Final Escape* – The collection concludes with the notion that, in a world plagued by recurring cycles of communal violence, the only true refuge may be within the walls of a mental asylum. The insanity of Partition and its aftermath blurs the line between madness and sanity, leaving readers to question which is truly more dangerous—the asylum or the world outside.

Kala's *The Unsafe Asylum* draws a chilling parallel between the fractured psyches of mental asylum inmates and the deep-seated communal madness that fuelled Partition and its aftershocks. Through powerful storytelling, the collection exposes the long-lasting trauma of displacement, the absurdity of religious divisions, and the failure of post-colonial nations to heal the wounds of history.

Results and Discussions: -

Comparing Their Approaches to Partition

Manto was one of the earliest writers to portray the trauma of Partition in literature, a tradition that Kala extends while maintaining its vivid imagery. Both authors, in their testimonial approach, refrain from assigning one-sided blame or offering simplistic explanations. Their narratives are intricately woven, seamlessly blending documentary elements with fiction.

Kala's approach is more clinical and theoretical, focusing on the mental health impact of Partition through case studies or psychiatric narratives. Whereas Manto's approach is literary and raw, using fiction to expose the moral decay, personal disillusionment, and deep psychological scars left by Partition.

Manto and Kala's short stories blur the lines between documentary and fiction, challenging conventional body imagery and psychological discourses. Rather than merely depicting suffering through images of pain, Manto portrays a society in crisis, where even physical pain loses its communicative power. The breakdown of language, medical terminology, and definitions reflects both a cynical view of societal collapse and a form of resistance. By simultaneously dissolving and exaggerating arbitrary categorization criteria—like those that fuelled Partition—they open the possibility for these categories to be reinterpreted.

Both writers, though in different fields—psychiatry and literature—highlight how the trauma of Partition transcends time, deeply affecting generations. Kala provides a more scientific understanding of the emotional aftershocks, while Manto captures the human side, where the personal and collective traumas often remain unspeakable and unresolved. Together, their works offer a comprehensive view of the psychological, emotional, and social devastation caused by Partition.

When Manto writes eye witnessing preserves the immediacy of an event, making us direct spectators of suffering—a hallmark of the realist mode. However, bearing witness goes further, requiring an aesthetic that transcends the visible to reveal the unspeakable beneath the surface.

In "Toba Tek Singh", Fazil Din reports to his friend Bishen Singh that his family has fled to India. He then adds that his fifteen-year-old daughter Roop Kaur is also probably safe. This assurance is undermined in Khalid Hasan's translation by ellipses and an explicit hesitation:

"Your daughter Roop Kaur, ...'-he hesitated-'She is safe too ... in India.'"

The visitor's hesitation thus allows the interpretation that she was a victim of violence. If one looks at the style and rhetoric of the translation,

it has two literary functions: Manto forces the reader to read precisely. The texts demand a detailed look and do not allow the reader to turn away from the horror described. In this way, Manto offers a form of literary testimony

As the quote suggests, Manto often avoids explicitly depicting violent crimes. Instead, his stories create gaps, replacing a documentary approach with silence and omission. The challenge in translating Manto's work lies in resisting the urge to fill these blank spaces with interpretation, allowing the traumatic silences to remain intact.

The Similar Narrative Approach:

Both Manto and Kala serve as case studies for examining narrative techniques used to portray the enduring impact of trauma. Through their distinct storytelling styles, Manto and Anirudh Kala highlight the fractured and lingering effects of historical, social, and psychological wounds on their characters. One of the most prominent techniques employed in both works is fractured narration, which mirrors the fragmented nature of memory and trauma. By structuring their narratives in a non-linear fashion, both authors reflect the instability and disorder that trauma imposes on their characters' lives. This disjointed storytelling forces the reader to experience the characters' confusion, loss, and struggle with reality.

Additionally, the authors utilize shifts in perspective and unreliable narration to deepen the psychological complexity of their works. Manto experiments with storytelling that depicts sharp and unfiltered view of society. His narrative technique blends historical and fictionalized elements, creating an almost meta-fictional experience. Similarly, Kala juxtaposes clinical psychiatric observations with deeply personal, emotive storytelling, demonstrating how trauma operates at both the individual and collective levels.

Manto's Approach is raw, emotional storytelling with irony and shock value. As a writer, Saadat Hasan Manto fearlessly challenged societal taboos, digging into the depths of human psychology with unmatched audacity. His body of work unflinchingly portrayed life's harsh realities, from the starkness of poverty to the savagery of violence, all while exposing the entrenched hypocrisies of the social elite. Manto's prose, marked by raw realism and striking vividness, immersed readers in the gritty landscapes of existence with relentless clarity.

His narrative style—concise yet profoundly evocative—captured the very essence of his characters and settings, infusing them with a haunting resonance. Within the discourse of Partition, Manto portrayed its violence with stark realism, yet without succumbing to fundamentalism or rigid traditional beliefs. As both an observer and a

victim of Partition, he bore witness to its brutality while maintaining a detached yet deeply empathetic lens. For Manto, being different was not merely a personal trait but a profound sociological reality—an inherent condition of existence (Vishavnathan, 2009). Moreover, his ability to seamlessly weave humour into tragedy endowed his stories with poignant depth, compelling readers to confront the unsettling truths of the human condition. Neither his life nor his art allowed for reinvention. Though he employed simple language, its structure was intricately layered with symbols, allusions, and quotations, all woven into his distinctive philosophical framework—whether rooted in morality or its absence. This depth renders his work profound, expansive, and rich with multi-dimensional interpretations. (Moid, 2015). Manto deliberately preserved a space for imagination in his writings by incorporating elements of ambiguity, whether in character portrayal or storyline. While he conveyed the factual essence of his themes, he intentionally withheld specifics regarding religion, caste, location, or nationality. This deliberate omission served a purpose—one that becomes evident through a deep and thoughtful reading of his stories. For example: "From his built, one could tell that he was a perfect man for a woman like Kalwant Kaur."

In *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness*, Anirudh Kala employs a fragmented, non-linear storytelling technique that mirrors the disjointed recollections of trauma survivors. This unconventional narrative structure disrupts traditional coherence, effectively capturing the overwhelming impact of their experiences. The trauma endured by the characters intensifies their psychological suffering, highlighting the intricate link between memory, dislocation, and mental instability. He throws light on the multiple facets of madness ironically and juxtaposes the notion of partition madness. He implicitly points to the socio-cultural factors that result in such madness and thus questions the ideas of madness within the present Indian context. Anirudh Kala throws light on the multiple facets of madness ironically and juxtaposes the notion of partition madness. He implicitly points to the socio-cultural factors that result in such madness and thus questions the ideas of madness within the present Indian context.

A similar conviction of British actions during Partition is echoed in *No Forgiveness Necessary*, which highlights the arbitrary and uninformed nature of the division. The story references how Radcliffe, a man with no prior knowledge of India's cultural and historical complexities, was entrusted with the task of drawing its borders. Rashida, Iqbal's wife, underscores this absurdity by remarking, "Do you know that man Radcliffe, who is already in Delhi

drawing the boundary line, came to India for the first time last week? And do you know what his profession is? ... He is a lawyer."

Characterization of the Suffering Mind

Kala: Depicts patients diagnosed with PTSD, schizophrenia, or other disorders. The short stories in *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness* explore the victimization of women and the profound psychological trauma they endured. In the story "Folie à Deux," the protagonist, though not a direct victim of the brutal massacres, is deeply affected by the horrors she has witnessed. Her fear stems from the violence surrounding her, making her feel perpetually vulnerable, acutely aware that she, too, could become a victim of the slaughter at any moment. Views Partition trauma through psychiatric cases and its long-term effects.

Although the broader implications of Manto's work have been previously discussed, his literary engagement with mental illness remains particularly significant. In *Toba Tek Singh*, the character of Bishan Singh can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the displacement experienced by countless individuals, while also embodying aspects of Manto's own struggles. In both cases, the trauma of being uprooted and the ensuing emotional turmoil manifest in profound psychological distress, whether overt or suppressed. Similarly, in Kala's *Folie à Deux*, the protagonist and her family are forced into exile due to the violence they have witnessed. Their forced relocation amplifies her psychological distress, as she struggles to navigate an unfamiliar and unsettling.

In *The Unsafe Asylum* the dialogue between asylum inmates Rudla and Fattu highlights the irony of societal perceptions of madness. As they observe the brutal killings in the name of religion, they question whether the so-called "sane" people outside have actually lost their minds (Ann, 2022). Fattu remarks that while the asylum inmates are predictably irrational, the outsiders are dangerously unpredictable, killing people at an alarming rate. He suggests that the mental hospital's sign should be placed inside, implying that true insanity lies outside its walls (Michel, 2006). This conversation critiques communal violence and challenges conventional notions of sanity and madness.

Beyond *Toba Tek Singh*, Manto consistently explored insanity as a central motif, especially in the post-Partition era. Stephen Alter contends that insanity became a recurring theme in a substantial portion of Manto's fiction. For instance, in *Khol Do*, Manto's portrayal of Sakinah's dissociative state following her traumatic experience of rape is both unsettling and powerful.

The theme chaos and madness of the outside world rather than the mental asylums, are the pivotal point

in the stories of both the authors. In Kala's story, the term signifies how the supposed normalcy of society is upended, mirroring the inversion found in Manto's narrative. Just as Manto's asylum in *Toba Tek Singh* becomes a space of relative order amidst the chaos of Partition, Kala's depiction suggests that the true disorder exists beyond the hospital walls. This parallel underscore a shared thematic concern in both authors' works: the blurring of boundaries between sanity and insanity, civilization and anarchy, ultimately challenging conventional perceptions of mental illness and societal stability. According to Sloan they were "were diagnosed as epileptic, neurotic, or suffering from 'religious mania' (Mahone, 2006)

However, *The Unsafe Asylum* can be closely linked to Saadat Hasan Manto's short story *Toba Tek Singh*, as both narratives explore Partition through the lens of a mental institution. Mental illness emerges as a recurring theme in both works, which juxtapose the asylum's inmates with the outside world—where individuals, driven by religious and ethnic divisions, engage in irrational behaviour. In doing so, these stories challenge conventional notions of madness and sanity.

The Use of Memory as Therapeutic Tool

Kala and Manto, both proficiently expose the agonizing experiences of their main victims through the art of reminiscence. The protagonists' self-examination of traumatic incidents from their earlier days demonstrates how memory becomes a channel through which painful pasts resurface. This process of recollection forces characters to confront their buried emotions, allowing memory to act as both a lens and a burden.

In several instances, the characters recall violent and tormenting experiences, highlighting the inescapable nature of trauma. Memory, in this context, serves as a prism through which past suffering is refracted, influencing present emotions and future perceptions. The act of remembering, however, is not always linear or coherent; rather, it is fragmented, distorted, and at times, unreliable. This reflection of their tortured souls serves as a genuine attempt to portray their true traumatic experiences. Both Kala and Manto use their narratives to capture the psychological turmoil of individuals caught in the chaos of Partition, offering an unfiltered glimpse into their suffering. By doing so, they move beyond mere storytelling, presenting their characters' anguish as an authentic testament to the deep scars left by historical trauma. Through their recollections, they gradually uncover the layers of their suffering, thereby releasing pent-up emotions and initiating the healing process. This suggests that narrative techniques, when used as tools for self-expression,

can function as a form of therapy, offering a path toward personal well-being and rejuvenation.

One vivid example of this therapeutic narrative is found in Manto's short story *Toba Tek Singh*. The protagonist, Bishan Singh, is a patient in a psychiatric institution located near the border between India and Pakistan. The story encapsulates the madness that arises from forced displacement and the absurdity of the political partition that led to the separation of families and communities. In the final moments of the story, the illogicality and madness of the situation are revealed, exposing the devastating effects of trauma.

Conclusion

This research work has conducted a comparative analysis of partition-themed short stories by Anirudh Kala and Saadat Hasan Manto. It had examined themes of mental and physical disintegration, explored their portrayals of trauma, identity, and resilience. Symptoms akin to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were observed on a communal scale, reinforcing how Partition literature captures not just individual suffering, but the collective trauma endured by entire communities. They have penned the profound psychological and physical impact of the 1947 partition of British India, the immediate and long-term consequences of the upheaval, analysed in detail, how colonial policies and rising communal tensions contributed to the violence and disintegration that followed.

Manto was unafraid to strip away the veil concealing the harsh, inhumane realities that plagued society, searching into subjects deemed taboo by the broader social order. His candid portrayal of these uncomfortable truths earned him considerable hostility, both in Pakistan and within literary circles. Despite the animosity, he remained resolute, persistently "call it as he saw it" in his writing, undeterred by the backlash (Najmus-Sehr, 2015). Through unsentimental and ironic storytelling, Manto exposes the grotesque absurdity of Partition without romanticizing suffering or offering moral lessons. His razor-sharp micro-stories lay bare the cruelty of communal hatred, showing history not through grand narratives but through shattered individual lives. The title *Black Borders* symbolizes the obscured truths lurking at the margins of history. Beyond his literary contributions, Manto's personal struggles, exacerbated by Partition and alcoholism, shaped his raw and unfiltered narratives. His writing serves as both a record of historical trauma and a means of grappling with its psychological aftermath. By shedding light on the emotional and mental toll of displacement, Manto challenges society to acknowledge the deep scars of Partition, making his

work a crucial part of South Asian literary and historical discourse.

Whereas Anirudh Kala skilfully unveils the nuances of colonial ideologies through his depiction of madness, using the insanity of asylum inmates as a powerful metaphor for the chaos and brutality of Partition. Their suffering not only reflects the surrounding violence but also embodies the psychological torment and identity crises of the millions displaced during Partition. He intricately weaves the motif of madness into his text through four distinct dimensions: the madness of communal violence, the madness of asylum inmates, the psychological trauma of Partition as a form of madness, and the madness of individuals trapped in the shadows of their past. Through these layered portrayals, he subtly critiques the colonial regime's role in orchestrating Partition.

Through a detailed analysis of Manto and Kala's short stories, the paper highlights how these works illustrate the long-term psychological and emotional consequences of traumatic events, shaping not only the individual but also the broader cultural consciousness untouched by the historians and politicians of both the countries.

The article further explores the significance of literary masterpieces written by both the authors, able to present the traumatic experiences as a medium through which collective trauma can be processed and addressed. By analysing the narrative techniques employed by Manto and Kala, the article demonstrates how literature can reveal marginalized suffering, offering a platform for those who have been silenced or forgotten in mainstream historical accounts.

This study employs comparative analysis to examine partition-themed short stories by Anirudh Kala and Saadat Hasan Manto, offering fresh perspectives on literary interpretations. By juxtaposing their narratives, the research critically explores themes of mental and physical disintegration, highlighting their distinct yet intersecting portrayals of trauma, identity, and resilience. This comparative approach not only deepens our understanding of Partition literature but also underscores the enduring relevance of these narratives in reflecting the human cost of historical upheaval. By recognizing the complexities of trauma and memory, both have served, using their pen as a tool, for both personal and societal healing, highlighting the transformative potential of storytelling in challenging circumstances.

Kala and Manto's short stories depict a world where communication breaks down and established orders collapse. While Manto was among the first to capture the trauma of Partition in literature, Kala extends this tradition, drawing on similar imagery to explore its lasting impact. Both authors present their

narratives as testimonies rather than assigning blame or offering definitive explanations, allowing the chaos and suffering to speak for itself. This approach reinforces the complexity of Partition's legacy, emphasizing the human cost over political or ideological narratives.

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