



RESEARCH PAPER

Fear, Trauma, and Feared Lives in Manto's *Khuda Ki Kasm & Sharifan*: A Sara Ahmed Perspective on Partition

¹Hafiz Muhammad Qasim, ²Dr. Muhammad Iqbal and ³Dr. Muhammad Waleed Butt

1. Lecturer, Department of English, Grand Asian University, Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan

2. Professor, Department of English, Grand Asian University, Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan

3. Assistant Professor, Department of English, Grand Asian University, Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author Qasim.shaheen@gaus.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The present research aims to explore the aspect of fear by analyzing Manto's selected short stories, *Khuda ki Kasm* and *Sharifan*, in the context of Partition of the Subcontinent. Saadat Hasan Manto, an Indo-Pak writer, highlighted social, political, racial, economical, and religious issues. He has presented even minor details with keen observation to expose the reality of society. The study is based on Sara Ahmed's ideas, who has filtered the idea of fear under the title of *The Affective Politics of Fear*. In her theory, she discusses the function, periphery, object, and impact of fear in connection with culture. By interpreting Manto's selected works, the study presents instances of affected persons who suffered from fear and examines how fear impacts humans in these stories. It also investigates how anxiety-ridden persons lead their lives under the shadow of fear. Based on the context of Partition, the study captures a picture of brutality by analyzing different characters in *Khuda ki Kasm* and *Sharifan*. The study recommends further research on the portrayal of fear across Manto's broader Partition narratives.

KEYWORDS Fear, Feared Person, Partition, Manto

Introduction

In the twentieth century, the partition of the Subcontinent is one of the most important and historical events. Countless human beings were kidnapped, and many became paralyzed or mad. Progressive writers, storytellers, poets, dramatists, and novelists raised their issues and claimed to secure human basic rights. One of them is Saadat Hasan Manto, who highlighted aspects of life that were the need of hour. After the partition, he shifted in Pakistan and discussed the circumstances of brutal society with naked words.

Progressive, controversial, and undisputed storyteller Manto was born on May 11, 1912 in Shambala. He was affected by his father's behavior with his stepmother; that is why the major theme of his works revolves around feminism. He started to translate works; his first achievement was the translation of *Verge* written by Wilde (Hafiz, Hamid, & Ashraf, 2024). He wrote over 250 short stories. He also designed sketches, plays, essays, and letters, but he is renowned as a storyteller. In India, he joined APW and molded his work according to the rules of the organization. He was punished in cases of obscenity three times. His first collection of stories was published in 1940 in India. Due to excess addiction, he could not control his physical charming and breathed his last on 18 January 1955 in Lahore (Hasan, 2008).

His work is distinguished due to his outstanding style. Shaheen & Qadeer (2012) have discussed that in the beginning, Manto followed some Western writers and dramatists, but with time, he designed his unique style in Urdu literature. He has covered all and sundry aspects of life by portraying common characters like small workers, soldiers, prostitutes, pips, housewives, and mad persons. His motto was to eradicate the fundamental problems of society; he pinned characters with their tasks. Themes like challenge, dejection, cruelty, misery, misuse of religion, socio and domestic behavior, and brutality revolve around his works (Akram, Ali & Rathakrishnan, 2019). His uniqueness lies in the choice of words. His words give a sense of understanding the nature of the problem and painting characters' personalities. The sudden ending is his uniqueness. Every story ends with magic words that change the reader's mindset. Skipping cannot be applied in understanding the theme of his literature (Akhtar, 2014).

Khuda ki Kasm (Manto, 1953) is translated into English as *The Dutiful Daughter* (Hasan, 2008). The story is about an old lady who spends her life searching for her daughter. An officer tells the story to the writer. After her daughter was kidnapped, she searches in the streets. The officer meets her three times and informs her about her daughter's murder, but she rejects his news each time. She loses her power and is nearly blind but continues searching. In Amritsar, the old lady recognizes her daughter despite her blindness. Her daughter, wearing Avaya, passes with her friend but does not meet her mother. The old lady calls her daughter, but the officer swears she is murdered. After that, the old lady falls and breathes her last. The story is significant in the perspective of present research because due to fear, the abducted women and children do not agree to go back and live with their kin. They do not return because of fear from parents and society, as they know society and kin may look down upon them. At the time of partition, due to fear of humiliation, countless persons destroyed their lives. The picture of abducted women and children shows that due to fear of society, they conceal their identities so that they may not be recognized. Another short story named *Sharifan* was published in 1950 in Urdu (Manto, 1950). The story is about the post-partition environment. Qasim goes into society with an axe to take revenge for his faithful wife and daughter. He butchers three persons, including a Sikh. When he enters a Muslim area, he moves to another street where he finds a home with a young lady. He attacks her violently for the revenge of his daughter. Later, her father comes and finds him insane. The daughter has been raped and dies violently.

The rape of women in the story helps to understand the present research. Qasim's wife, daughter, three persons, and Bamla are feared persons. Their dead bodies are important because they convince the reader to accept them as subaltern. Based on religion, many persons lost their lives, as in this story, because Qasim's family belongs to Muslims while the others who were raped or butchered have different dogma. The actions of Sharifan and Bamla show how they become helpless and why they were raped. As a rioter attacks Bamla, she becomes unconscious and falls to the floor without screaming. Fear is dangerous. In front of fear, a human being cannot save dignity.

The selected literature is interpreted with Sara Ahmed's theory *The Culture Politics of Emotion*, focusing on *The Affective Politics of Fear*. She presents her theory in simple language, but the idea is meaningful. She explains the school of fear in social context. In the present research, the text gives the transcription of Partition. By taking help from her ideas, the text becomes powerful for readers and researchers to understand every part. Both the text and the theory explore fear in the social scenario. The theory is applied in the text to prove the aspect of fear and investigate the lives of feared persons.

Literature Review

The present research is directly linked to emotions and highlights their impact on affected communities. In English, approximately 550 words have been used to express the meaning and convey the broad idea of "emotion" (Zajonc, 1980). Researchers use various terms for emotions to conduct studies on the subject. Since emotions are connected to personal experience, scholars often create different terms and assign them different meanings. Some theorists, especially Merker (2007) and Panksepp (2005), have stated that feelings are part of emotions. In general, they view emotions and feelings as belonging to the same framework. They did not make a strict distinction between the two, though feelings are considered a part of emotions. Cacioppo and Berntson (1999) state that although feelings are part of emotions, a distinction exists between them. Emotions operate within the psychological system, involving biological reactions as well as mental states, whereas feelings are linked to the sensory system. Because the sensory system responds quickly, feelings are recognized and acted upon faster than emotions. Pettinelli (2008) summarizes the distinction using the concept of "reason". If the cause of an action is known, it is called a feeling; if unknown, it is considered an emotion. For example, when a person feels sad and knows the reason for their sadness, it is feeling; without a clear cause, it may be experienced simply as a negative emotion. Emotions and feelings have multiple interconnected dimensions, and overall, these innate experiences shape human thoughts, behaviors, and responses.

The present research explores fear in the context of the Partition of the Subcontinent, which is considered a major historical event. Aspects of human emotions such as fear, anxiety, love, disgust, happiness, sadness, and the brutality were expressed through the works of intellectuals, poets, novelists, and dramatists during a period when people were judged based on nationalism. In Urdu literature, the advent of modernity was initiated by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Altaf Hussain Hali, and Maulana Shibli Nomani. Within a short period, Allama Muhammad Iqbal introduced modernism through his poetry, enabling people to reshape their lives in accordance with modern ideals. Subsequently, Urdu literature was influenced by several national and international movements, such as the Progressive Movement, Cultural Movement, and the New Progressive Movement. (Kiran, 2012). Ahmad (2006) notes that the Progressive Writers' Association was established in April 1936. The formation of APWA in Lucknow was a significant step toward protecting humanism and was the need of the hour.

In APWA, writers such as Manto, Ahmad Ali, Sardar Jafri, Ismat Chughtai, Premchand, Krishan Chander, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Mulk Raj Anand contributed to the development of progressive literature. Their aim was to expose social injustices and highlight the cause of brutality. (Zaheer, 1944). Manto emerged at a time when bloodshed, murder, deprivation, social and moral conflict, and brutality were at their peak. No one was willing to portray the actual condition of society. The appalling reality was that governmental power also sought to suppress the peasant class. People had become hopeless, as they could neither attain education nor engage in productive activities due to widespread violence. In such critical circumstances, although many writers and poets were active, Manto was among those who most powerfully depicted the condition of society. (Paudel, 2018).

By exploring his humanism, Akram, Ali, and Rathakrishnan (2019) state that readers cannot restrain themselves from expressing appreciation for Manto's work. According to their research, Manto was one of the writers who devoted his life to humanism, striving to bring attention to the suffering of humanity. In this regard, he endured deep emotional and psychological strain due to his commitment to portraying harsh realities.

Another significant aspect of Manto's personality is his rationality. He did not make decisions based on emotions; rather, he critically examined issues and addressed their core. At a time of social confusion and unrest, it was difficult to depict events without exaggeration; however, Manto presented incidents with clarity and realism. Through his objective approach, he used language that closely reflected reality. In doing so, he often set aside conventional moral and ethical constraints, focusing instead on portraying the true nature of events. (Mehta, 2018). In her research paper, Ispahani (1988) points out that Manto's stories are neither overwrought nor fabricated, but firmly grounded in realism. His writing style, themes, and ideas are universal, which contributes to his enduring fame. Ranjan (2018) notes that many of his characters belong to marginalized and subaltern groups, such as pimps and street workers, who were deprived of their rights and whose freedom was suppressed by society. Overall, numerous researchers have contributed to the study of Partition literature and its writers. Manto stands out among them for his efforts to expose the cruel realities of society. Although his language may appear harsh, it reflects the true condition of society.

Material and Methods

By putting the centre attention on the content analysis of 2 selected short stories (*Khuda ki Kasm & Sharifan*), the present research is conducted in a qualitative paradigm with the help of taking a single aspect, The affective politics of fear of Sara Ahmed's theory, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*. The primary source of the research consists of the text of Manto's selected works, but internet, journal articles, relevant books, magazines as well as newspaper articles are used as the secondary sources.

Theoretical Framework

Sara Ahmed is considered one of the scholars who have discussed emotions from a social perspective. She presented the theory *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, in which she discusses emotions such as pain, hate, fear, love, and feminist attachment to society. She argues that emotions are directly linked with culture, shaping how individuals experience and respond to life. The theory helps the reader understand the connection between language, body, and emotion.

Sara Ahmed's *The Affective Politics of Fear* explains the effects of fear and how it is shaped by culture. She argues that people fear different objects based on their cultural context and identifies agencies such as religion, language, emotion, narrative, action, and the body as tools that create fear. Sara Ahmed notes that "fear signifies through language" (p. 62). These ideas are applied in the present research to analyze fear in Manto's selected literature.

In a nutshell, Sara Ahmed explains that fear binds the human body and affects a person's life. Different agencies shape the intensity of fear, some slowly, others quickly. Once fear enters the body, its effects remain. These points help in understanding the philosophy of fear.

Results and Discussion

Khuda Ki Kasm

A matchless short story, *Khuda Ki Kasam* (2008), highlights the socio-political problems of society and exposes the reality of partition. The aspect of fear is presented through language, characters' conditions, and the coherence of the story. In the beginning, the condition of people during partition is described: countless people are migrating from

one side to another in search of shelter. Despite migration, people continuously search for shelter so that they may reach their destination safe and sound. As refugees, everyone feels anxiety. Although there is neither open war nor visible cruelty, they still seek refuge due to the fear of butchering and awareness of the situation of society.

In the very beginning, the short story is delivering the concept of fear that even the reader gets afraid while reading the first paragraph. The reader's mind automatically draws attention to understand the different dimensions of fear and feared persons. In this context, Sara Ahmed's concept of fear is helping to understand why the reader gets afraid and horrified. She has explained that everybody gets afraid either by seeing feared things or by experience, but all and sundry get afraid in a different way. This idea is applied to investigate the beginning of the text: though the reader does not get involved in feared things nor takes any experience, he is only reading, yet his mind becomes stuck.

The storyteller is creating a new twist in his story by presenting the situation of recovering the environment in society. By creating a new taste in the story and portraying society, he has explained how guards and a group of young men are finding abducted and raped women. Besides this, he has described the condition of abducted and raped women at the time of recovering. While the story is representing the environment at the time of the Partition of India, where countless persons are murdered and butchered and many are kidnapped, it is thought to find abducted and raped women and children so that they may lead their previous life safe and sound. Even Saadat Hasan Manto's marvelous short story *Open It* is presenting the incident of finding kidnapped women and children.

At the time of recovering, the abducted women and children are showing a queer attitude in the sense that they either do not reveal their identity or refuse to go back to their homes. According to the writer, at the time of discovering, instead of returning, they are concealing their identities and are not ready to join their family members. The main point laid down in the text is that due to the behavior of society, the abducted women and children are not ready to return. They fear that society may look down upon them. Therefore, they decide to leave the place and shift themselves into another country.

In the rising action, the writer presents a story of two abducted women, belonging to Muslim families, who are refusing to go to Pakistan. Clear cut he has jotted down straight words describing their refusal. According to him, some are refusing to go to family, some are committing suicide, and few are losing their mental balance at the time of discovery. They are "afraid of facing their parents" (187). This fear is the main reason they are refusing and denying again and again. Fear of disrespect is another bad thing because a man goes to that place where he finds and attains respect. Further, the text is investigated by taking help from Sara Ahmed's ideas in her theory. She has explained that the object of fear is not constant but substituted. It means that the object of fear depends on the subject, because some get afraid of Negro and some do not. These ideas are showing the abducted women and children who have an excess of fear in their bodies and are not ready to join their families because of insult and disrespect. Some do not get afraid of disrespect, but those who are afraid of disrespect have their fear object.

The storyteller jots down another story in which an officer tells the writer about abducting the girl and her mother. Her mother pledges that she will not go to Pakistan until she finds her beautiful daughter and breathes her last in India. An investigator officer searches in each and every corner of India for her daughter but is unable to find any clue. The officer tells her, "Your daughter was killed" (189), but she is not ready to accept the death of her daughter because she believes her daughter is so pretty that no one can dare to murder or butcher her. Her reaction shows courage, as even when the officer repeats the

news, she replies, "You are lying" (189) and does not accept it. In the character of the old lady and the daughter, the writer wants to expose the life of feared persons, how they manage life in their periphery and how fear affects their lives. Their language is convincing, showing their language style, choice of words, and language fluency. Different actions of the old lady and a single glimpse of her daughter are clearing a true path to understand feared lives. When the officer informs her that the young lady has been butchered, she encounters his words strictly. Her words and actions are capturing the true and bared picture of the affected person, showing how they change in the shadow of fear.

Further, Sara Ahmed's idea regarding fear is helping to elaborate and expose the character of the old lady. According to her, "fear may also work as an effective economy" (64). Fear sometimes increases and sometimes decreases. In the character of the old lady, the intensity of fear is increasing day by day. Initially, she pronounces a normal sentence. Later, when the officer addresses her a second or third time, she repeats her sentences and is unaware of the sentences she is saying. She utters like mad people. Fear makes her insist on her sentences and is not ready to accept him.

When the story reaches the falling action, the old lady reacts at the sight of her daughter. Her reaction shows her fear and affection. She has fear of death about her daughter and cannot control her fear and dies. Though she sees a single glimpse of her daughter, she breathes her last on the road. Fear affects her severely; she leaves her country and denies going to Pakistan while searching for her daughter. She does not accept any home and leads her life on the roads to find any clue about her daughter. She searches again and again because, as a mother, she cannot bear the absence of her child. Her fear makes her show courage, and she sits in the street to find any clue and console herself by seeing even a single glimpse of her daughter.

Besides the character of the old lady, the character of her daughter is producing a new twist in the story. Her character is designed in the rising action. Though her action is in one paragraph, it is the nucleus of the short story. When her friend molds her attention to see her mother, she looks at her mother, suddenly turns her eyes, and says, "Let's get away from here" (190). In the fear of disrespect, she is not ready to go back. Her words and action seem like an exotic person. As she identifies her mother's old face, she pulls her friend and gets away hurriedly. She knows the atmosphere of the society and refuses to meet her mother. Due to the intensity of fear, she does not want to meet her mother, whereas her mother is thirsting to see her daughter. Her physical appearance shows the effect of fear. She is wearing a black chaddar and covering her face to conceal her identity because she does not want to go back or meet her family. She grabs her companion's hand and walks briskly so that people may not find any clue.

All in all, the short story is clearing a path to understand the concept of fear and helping to investigate how feared persons lead. By giving the background of the society and portraying different characters, the storyteller elaborates the feared person's life. The character of the old lady shows fear affecting the mind, and the affected person seems mad. In the falling action, the character of her daughter shows the effect of fear in her action. Her unexpected behavior with her mother creates a new twist at the end.

Sharifan

In another short story named "*Sharifan*," Manto highlights the environment at the time of the Partition of the Subcontinent. Like his other short stories, The story highlights the concept of fear and its effects upon human beings. In the very beginning, the reader knows the subject of the story, as the character of Qasim and his actions are depicted. The

action of Qasim is significant as it shows the brutal picture of society, and through this action, the reader knows the real picture of Partition. Till the falling action, the story helps to prove the nature of the present research, which is based on the concept of fear and fearful lives.

In the beginning of the story, when the story opens with the character of Qasim, his action prescribes the intensity of fear. When he enters his home, he feels that his leg is affected due to shooting, and he is limping. At the beginning of the story, his limping is not for a few moments but a wound for his entire life. However, as the reader goes ahead, it becomes clear that Qasim is not punished for his guilt. However, as the reader goes ahead, it becomes clear that Qasim is not punished for his guilt.

It is fact that his limping opens countless doors of thinking and pondering about the nature of fear and how fear affects the human body. For this sake, the writer has designed different kinds of characters with different stories so that most aspects of partition are discussed. Here, Qasim's entry into his home has massive significance, opening a door to explore the cruel time of Partition.

The character of Qasim portrays and explains the thoughts and dimensions of a feared person, as seen in his character when he initially suffers from limping. Besides his limping, when he sees his wife's dead body, his feelings change automatically, and he starts to think in a new way because he suffers from two dangerous conditions: one is limping and the other is his wife's dead body.

Both incidents produce new types of feelings and emotions in his body, and due to these incidents, he is mentally disturbed because of brutality. The actual thing is that his wife's dead body and his limping occur because of fear in his family. Sometimes fear works through other bodies, but the impacts shift from one person to another so that a person may get afraid of fearful things.

When he sees his wife's dead body, he wants to weep, but due to the intensity of fear, tears do not come but the eyes fill with blood. This incident highlights the strength of fear. Now, the running of the blood from his eyes establishes a new philosophy of fear and creates ambiguity in the story. By taking help from the ideas of Sara Ahmed regarding fear, it can be explained that the response of fear is "threat of violence" (69). Initially, Qasim becomes paralyzed after his wife is butchered. The idea of the theorist clarifies that the output of fear revolves around violence, making the feared person more anxious. When he goes into grief and misery, he wants to take revenge by murdering someone to reduce the intensity of fear. As he experiences violence in his home, he loses his mental power and tries to take the axe to murder the whole society. His mind is converted to show brutality toward society because of the violence in his own family. According to the theorist, violence is an output of fear; therefore, he adopts the behavior of a brutal person.

In the very first paragraph, he takes an axe and determines to butcher the whole society to take revenge for his wife. The reader feels anxious when he sees his brutal action. By taking help from the ideas of theorist Sara Ahmed, it can be explained that the response of fear calls for violence. It means that a feared person determines to show violence whenever he finds an opportunity, as seen in the character of Qasim. Initially he becomes ready to impose violence upon society. It presents a horrifying picture in which, instead of taking revenge on a particular person, he prepares to butcher the entire society, and people become like beasts at the time of partition. It presents a negative picture of society by portraying his character, particularly when he becomes ready to take up an axe so that he may cut human beings like beasts. This is a horrifying picture, as instead of taking revenge

on a particular person, he prepares himself for butchering the entire society. It reflects a monstrous situation at the time of partition, where people become like beasts.

The paragraph delivers a sudden, shocking twist. Qasim, ready to take revenge with axe, suddenly thinks of his daughter, Sharifan. He calls her name again and again, but there is no answer. When he pushes the door open, he sees her naked, lifeless body, and the horror of the moment overwhelms him. His mind goes blank, his body weakens, and he collapses. In his madness, he leaves without covering her. These events provoke the intensity of fear faced the persons at the time of partition. It is proved that Fear not only circles individually but also wraps the community through action, moving and words uttered by the affected people as the theorist, Sara Ahmed, discussed her theory.

Besides cruelty and brutality, the main focus is to understand the lives of feared persons and investigate their situations after living under the shadow of fear. In this short story, those who have been butchered, whether from a Muslim hamlet or another religion, are considered feared persons. Their actions in daily life are not described in detail; instead, the story shows how fear grips human beings. Their silent behavior shows that the feared person is deprived of the charm of life, and even personal pleasure is renounced. Consequently, the feared person loses the control and joy of living. All those who are murdered highlight the life of the feared, even though they cannot speak before the cruel person to save themselves, and often they fail despite trying.

In a nutshell, the story highlights the pros and cons of fear by prescribing different characters like Qasim, his wife, his daughter, and the abducted Sikh young lady. Out of all these prescribed characters, the character of Qasim is a multidimensional. Other characters are brutally killed in the name of religion by showing the dominancy of fear. The pin drop silence of the butchered characters shows that affected person lose their identity and even unable to speak a single word rather than offer themselves for butchering. When the story unfolds the ending statement, it is revealed that young lady becomes unconscious. Her reaction shows the hopelessness of feared persons, who cannot enjoy life freely and instead live under the constant shadow of fear. In this way, the story gives a vivid glimpse into the power of fear over human life.

Conclusion

After researching Manto's selected works, two short stories, it is revealed that emotions have central place in human life. Without emotions, human beings cannot survive. Intense emotions may ruin lives, but sometimes they bring twists and turns. Emotions are directly connected with society and culture. Emotions related to human life are sadness, fear, love, happiness, and affection. Every emotion has its scope and impact on human behaviors and leaves impression on human psyche. Fear is crucial in the history of mankind. It makes life miserable and does not let a person do anything freely. This research has carried out in the light of Sara Ahmed's ideas regarding fear politics. She has presented her theory according to the concept of emotions and related it with culture. Emotions are not only related to human mind, they also take impact from culture and environment. The emotions discussed in her theory are love, fear, disgust, and feminism, but the present research focuses only on fear. Fear is connected with the economy and prosperity of society. Its physical impacts are temporary, but it leaves psychological impressions. Sometimes the scared ones may commit actions like suicide. To sum up, this research revolves around fear and feared persons' lives. Two selected short stories, *Khuda ki Kasm* and *Sharifan*, have been analyzed in the light of Sara Ahmed's theory *The Culture Politics of Emotions*. Only the aspect of *The Affective Politics of Fear* has been used because it matches the topic and scope of this research. The research presents society at the time of

Partition because the texts were composed then. In *Khuda ki Kasm*, fear affects the mother and daughter and controls their lives, while in *Sharifan*, fear affects persons violently and destroys their dignity. The feared person cannot live freely and remains under the shadow of fear. Both stories show how fear controls human life and behavior.

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