

Identity Amid Partition: The Study Of A Time Of Madness: A Memoir Of Partition

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Abstract

The end of the British Raj in 1947 resulted in India's truncation, with Muslims and Hindus seeking different "homes". This catastrophic event was not only a religious event on the basis of the Two-Nation Theory for the inhabitants of both sides, but it also shattered the nation's cultural weave of plurality, that was painstakingly knitted over generations. The major factor identification and the ensuing violence that erupted across the country created a seismic zone of uncertainty. Men, women, and children were all victims of recurring violence at this time and experienced violence and terrible outcomes. The literary work in this research is Salman Rashid's memoir *A Time of Madness: A Memoir of Partition*. The research paper shall be divided into two sections: the first will be the critical study of the work, and the second will be an analysis of the segregation of 'self' and 'other' experienced by Rashid himself. The research shall be analysed through the lens of literary theories such as the Concept of Imagined Communities, Trauma theory and Erich Fromm's Psychoanalyze and Soziologie.

Keywords- Identity, Partition, Memoir, Self, Other

Introduction

The Britishers moulded the psychological structure of Indian society and its social character by the time when the proposal to Partition India was unveiled on June 3, 1947. According to Erich Fromm's *Psychoanalyze and Soziologie* (Erich Fromm, 2018), "Human beings do not have one individual psyche that functions when a person performs as an individual, and so becomes the object of psychoanalysis, contrasted to a completely separate mass psyche with all sorts of mass instincts." (Funk 217) Despite the fact that many people had been involved in innumerable negotiations and extended consultations leading up to the decision to Partition India, the proclamation to separate the country was disturbing to many. From both sides of the border, the history of partition attempted to validate what was to be the result of

Independence. Partition of India is now understood not only as an episode that reshaped control geography but also as an event that occurred at various levels, making it necessary to highlight the diversity of partition in terms of violence and bloodshed.

Salman Rashid's memoir "*A Time of Madness: A Memoir of Partition*" (Rashid, 2017) was first published in 2017. In this memoir, Rashid demonstrates humankind's inherent compassion, dehumanisation, and resilience during the time of Partition of Hindustan. He returns to his 'homeland' to demonstrate the humanism that has been questioned during the time of separation, stressing the agony that his family endured while being evacuated from Jalandhar and enduring for ages underneath the shadow of the horrific event preceding India's reconciliation. Salman Rashid argues that now

the partition resulted in not just the division of the terrain or geographical division of the two countries involved but also led to the division of states, inhabitants, groups, and even individuals.

Salman Rashid starts his memoir by mentioning that when he was nearly fifty-six years old, he arrived at his home for the first time. Despite having been born in a family that emigrated to Pakistan after the Partition, Salman constantly considered himself an Indian citizen. For Rashid, the "homeland" is the place wherein his forefathers decided to dwell rather than where they were compelled to reside by circumstances. This is a site that is both geographical and metaphorically entrenched in the memories of his family, resulting in enormous suffering and loss. He would be unable to maintain the identity prescribed by the Nation where he was born, one where he is intended to despise the adversary and in which he has learned to recognise as his home rather than the adversary. This became problematic for him until his sense of "self" is challenged and dismissed, as he loses his concept of identity inside the subjectivity of 'other'. This attempt to seek oneself through psychological and historical space is one that millions of other Rashids have gone through; their families are forced to abandon their own homeland and, as a result, leave their identity behind. While discussing the chronology of Pakistan's geographic area, he states, "If I am anything, I, a child of MahaSapta Sindhu, am the genuine Hindu," and emphasises that now the term "Hindu" was just not connected with both the denomination until about the Middle Ages (Rashid, 5). For him, it still refers to the Sindhu River basin.

Urvashi Butalia, in her prominent work *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Butalia, 2000) writes that Partition is important and relevant even today as the stories of the victims have resurfaced and exacerbated time and again in macabre programmes in 1984 Anti-Sikh riots, the Babri Masjid demolition, subsequent riots in 1992 and the Godhra riots in 2002 when flames of violence burnt India as a nation and the ghastly images of partition along with physical and psychological

trauma came alive again to the fore. Amidst the borders being burnt, plundered and mutilated, there had been deliberate silencing of voices and erasures of abducted women, children and even transgender people in the early narratives of the partition.

The research examines the extreme positions among the most pervasive and fundamental facets of Partition, its ramifications somewhat on the subcontinent, and the discrimination which may have sparked the upheaval in the first place; the political and historical occurrence of the memoir taken possess cultural significance by their contextual works, authoritarian record or eyewitness accounts, and an enormous spectral response of primaevial arguments which are all shrouded or perhaps restricted with innumerable maculate detailed information or alibi of this collectivistic state. The victims' disharmony, along with the political opinions of several of Pre-Partition India's politicians as well as the formation of a distinctively different group of individuals, the "refugees" provided yet again another basis for hostility. This incoherence is investigated in individual evidence and testimony and founded by idiomatic consciousness that separates the durations of Partition in the perception of executables in religious practice, ancestral home, culture or religion, and sometimes even gender; the gang that the public constructs in these critical times, punishing one splinter group for the other, would do nothing to encourage the normalcy and camaraderie which is anyway the requisite for a neighbourhood before these heinous moments.

The ambiguity that the term "Partition" carries, more often than not, whenever the term "Partition" is discussed, the other aspect or face of it is left unmentioned; researchers and historians in their historical documents surrounding the said Partition maintained this intentional indifference.

Benedict Anderson describes the nation as an Imagined community where everyone has a vision of how and why the members of these communities should behave (Benedict Anderson, 2016). The concept gets troublesome when a Radcliffe line is drawn on a sheet of parchment,

splitting these communities into two halves, each of which has a set of parameters about how the new nation between these two parts should be. Inhabitants who had lived previously as a single unit and presumed connections between one another are simultaneously given various identities and told to presume distinctions rather than commonalities. Salman Rashid, in his memoir *A Time of Madness: A Memoir of Partition* (Rashid, 2017) examines how Partition resulted in the lives of many.

All through the memoir, the father appears as a person caught among two selves: pre-partition and post-partition. Inhabitants like Rashid's father lost control of their authenticity as a result of the Partition, even though they managed to lose the significance of those who connected to different interactions with society generally—what we might call the different parameters those who were using to describe their identity, such as geographical location, homeland, and so on. That man who had already sacrificed everything and then had to start over had to take on the mantle of the house's secrecy, someone who has never smiled or grieved and who was always austere. This transpired not just to the father of the author but to his uncle. This silence was kept not just for the younger ancestors of the family, to protect the kids from the atrocities witnessed not just by the predecessor but also to protect individuals from having to relive similar atrocities. Rashid's uncle, affectionately known as Chan, only spoke about the history after his older sister, Zubeda, was assassinated by her own servant. "We lost two sisters in Jalandhar during the partition riots, and she who made it virtually from under the swords of rioters went to Pakistan only to be murdered in her own home by her servant," he said (45). Once when the family initially emigrated to Pakistan, they sacrificed the certainty of their life, and again when Zubeda was murdered. The selves of these people were shattered like mirrors, merely revealing bits of what had been. The confidence that because the land, as well the home they own, describe individuals and that these certainties would continue to offer purpose to their existence was forcibly stripped away by that of the 'Other,' the State, that had little meaning and purpose in life prior to Partition. Those who have been left

around were given hope by once again time that circumstances might get easier, as their existence would continue forward, just after the expenditure of your family members' blood, her own blood and flesh. Nevertheless, these aspirations were destroyed once more, pushing Chan to speak out about the catastrophe. Then begins the never-ending process of attempting to find the foundation that will allow one can be rooted. The family suffered 'trauma' which can be analysed through the lens of Trauma Theory by Cathy Caruth (Cathy Caruth, 2017). The recurrence and intrusions of the traumatic experience in everyday reality, according to Cathy Caruth's "Trauma Theory," indicate the manner such violent act was essentially being recognized in the first place but that plagues the survivors afterwards.

Throughout his travels, Rashid attempts to bring his grandparents and folks back to the real world; they had already previously existed in the form of a monochromatic photograph. Even though he progresses in life, this unified identity that has always been identified with his grandfather fades away right after Partition. Rashid uncovers how well the atmosphere of hostility impacted his grandfather, who has always been recognised as a kind man. Rashid doesn't comprehend how and why his grandfather, who is recognised for providing high-quality care to all of his service users irrespective of faith, will indeed request his companion to just not keep him awake from his nap to attend to the marriage of a Sikh guy, and why a man who disdains the flavours of curry will indeed request his friend not to wake him up.

When his quest progressed, he understood how the traditional concept of identity and its associations transforms in moments of crisis as Rashid encountered testimonies of those who witnessed the killing. Because identity will always be constituted in juxtaposition to something else, this has always been weak and incompetent. A crisis happens when one perspective about a particular aspect of identity is considered to be accurate, causing the perception to shift. That's why, even during Partition violence, people put their lives in danger for the sake of someone, whereas the offenders remained

silent and refrained from injuring anyone solely because victims called out for forgiveness.

A Time of Madness: A Story of Partition (Rashid, 2017) is an autobiography of broken 'selves' as well as a metaphoric voyage that parallels the author's geographical journey. This is really a voyage to find the history as well as a result of just that revelation, to re-discover, re-define, and actually make sense of his own existence. Rashid has already challenged not only the past as well as an understanding of the contemporary from the moment he left that Indian High Commission in Pakistan, eventually reaching the village of his predecessor and simply seeing his homestead, where he had been born and brought up. As just a result, he experienced as alienated as his predecessors whenever the commissioner of the Indian Embassy recommended Rashid withdraw his visa application. He fondly remembers the suffering of his family during the Partition since his identity is designated as somebody who doesn't recognise and is forbidden the ability to travel and should be at one which had his homeland. The journey not only reconnects Rashid with his past but also changes his perspective.

As a consequence, Salman Rashid could only empathise with the son of a lady who led the mobs which killed his grandparents and some other members of his family whenever he met him. It was toward the end of his journey that he unites with the communal suffering that forced him to conclude that forgiveness seems to be the only way forward and to find the tranquilly he seeks. He was able to break through the symbolic "Stone Curtain" of fury and retaliation, standing shoulder to shoulder with some other victims as he discovered the "I" ness of his I within the "We" of the agony. One can only hope to find the basis or certainty in being in the community rather than highlighting ego, as Rashid did.

In the year 1947, a dreadful slaughter occurred in the Punjabi city of Jalandhar during Partition. As a result of all this violence, Salman Rashid's ancestors were forced to leave Jalandhar for Pakistan, a newly established nation across the border. Nearly two million migrants were displaced from their homes as part of Europe's largest diaspora. In contrast to all of those who

departed, certain family members experienced a much more devastating fact: they were one of the approximately 1 million unfortunate persons who paid the ultimate price for India's division and the founding of Pakistan via their lives.

Salman Rashid returned to his hometown in 2008 to find the truth following decades of residency with both the myth of his family's tragedy. Rashid returned to Jalandhar in 2008 and 2010 to find his homeland and discovered what exactly transpired to his forefathers who inhabited India during the pre-partition period. He discovered the house to give it a tour, but he has also bumped into 'others' who recalled his grandfather, a well-known city doctor. He discovered details of his grandfather's past that his family either didn't know about it or refused to disclose. In his subsequent periods, he gravitated more and more towards the Muslim League, according to someone who knew him in Jalandhar.

Even more incredible, Rashid encountered the son of the mafia boss who'd already slain seven members of their servant, Eidu's family. Eidu's two-year-old son was the first to be hurled first from the terrace towards the yard below, dying instantly. Remarkably, the ultimate upshot of this interaction wasn't really motivated by hatred and retribution but instead by an apology from the rioter's son and reconciliation from the author's, resulting in chapters that were extremely poignant to examine. Rashid also discovered other people's tales while speaking with partition victims, primarily in the Jalandhar area.

Pakistan's greatest travel writer has written a memoir called *A Time of Madness: A Memoir of Partition*. It should be about his voyage back to India to learn much more about the place where his family left in 1947, during the subcontinent's partition. This may be a journey of discovery; nevertheless, seventy years since independence, it is still important to keep in mind that the 1947 bloodshed impacted many lives. It's also pointless to keep instilling mindless hate and cultivating a hostile and violent environment. It is necessary to keep in mind that all people living

on the mainland were once a single nation that had been viciously partitioned by the colonial overlords as both a pattern of acquiescence to the politicians, even though it was once a sovereign state that was viciously divided up by that of the British colonisers as a version of rapprochement to the party leaders.

Regrettably, it led to the improvement of political figures in the twentieth century to keep these communal values alive, resulting in the hardening positions of governments in the twenty-first century. Everything is terribly unfortunate. As a result, it's pleasant to read *A Time of Madness*, which expresses hope for a tempering position making of reparations in the nearish term. The writer belongs to a Muslim family that has origins in the remote native home of Ughi, not too far from Jalandhar, in pre-Partition unified Punjab. The catastrophe of Partition has wrecked their lives. The family is forced to run for her lives through a sea of blood, sweat and tears to the sanctuary as social flames blaze all around them.

Occasionally, there is indeed a whisper, a narrative, incident, or occurrence - reference of grandfather Badruddin, grandma, and their three kids left behind - however, the sole physical connection towards the past is indeed a 1940 image of Badruddin reclining inside an easy chair inside the garden of his Jalandhar residence! But on the other side, the writer overhears conversations from those other migrant families that, including his own, have passed Radcliffe's boundary and whose generally bogus stories of fame, prominence, and fortune contrast sharply with the family's possess distinctly middle-class circumstances. Rashid's desire to learn more about his ancestors is piqued, but the chance to do so comes forty years later.

In the year 2008, the writer treks "over Wagah on foot" through Jalandhar, Delhi, retracing his ancestors' footsteps. The adventure is overflowing with representations of Badruddin's house on Railway Road and his wife's a few carriageways away; the comfort and accommodation of his coordinators, who were always willing to help; the greet and

connectedness of the outsiders who already occupy these paces; and the conquest of good versus evil at Jassar Overpass, where even the railway line traverses the Ravi.

His Pakistani grandson was always troubled by the Badruddins' mysterious fate (the author). But, like a kind of transcendental event, the demon has finally been laid to rest. It is preferable to read everything in its entirety rather than in caricature.

In terms of outward features, the profusion of bottle shops and ladies riding motorcycles are notable observations. Aside from it, the countryside on both sides of the barrier is unremarkable and comparable. His Pakistani grandchild had always been troubled by the Badruddins' mysterious fate (the author). But, like some cathartic event, the demon has finally been laid to rest. It is preferable to read everything in its entirety rather than paraphrasing.

The narrative is interspersed with observations and comments with deeper connotations. The pervasive evil of communal savagery is juxtaposed against the innate goodness of a few courageous men of conscience. However, in a time of malevolence and madness, humanity and human kindness are also somewhere present. To heal the wound of Partition, each side, Muslim and Hindu, must recognise its guilt in that catastrophe and seek forgiveness from the other, just as the author and Mohinder Pratap have done on an individual level.

The story is peppered with deeper-meaning insights and comments. The community savagery's ubiquitous evil is contrasted with a few brave men of conscience's inherent kindness. Despite the fact that it is a time of evil and craziness, humanism and compassion remain present. To ease the suffering of Partition, every side, Hindus and Muslims, must accept responsibility again for the disaster and ask forgiveness. The ramifications of Partition in the travails of modern-day Pakistan are distinctive. This memoir is a brief and fascinating read. It's a

spruced-up autobiography, a genre that sets the writer apart.

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