Trauma And Its Consequences: Observe And Analysis

The objective of the proposed research is to observe and analyse trauma and its cultural consequences in literature of India and selected Middle East Countries. The project is based on the hypothesis that trauma sustained and witnessed by people can't be demarcated as easily and frivolously as borders are drawn by treaties and resolutions of Raj, French Empire or United Nations. Empire ruled over a number of countries either by establishing countries as the overseas colonies, protectorates and mandate territories. United India and Israel had once been part of Empire, were subsequently partitioned to India- Pakistan and Israel-Palestine in 1947 and 1948. Syria had been mandate of French Empire but it proclaimed Independence in 1946.

For the purpose of proposed research four texts have been selected dealing with Indian milieu and three texts dealing with Middle East milieu. These are Anis Kidwai's In Freedom's Shade (1949; translated from Urdu by Ayesha Kidwai 2011), Shahnaz Bashir's Scattered Souls(2016), Aanchal Malhotra's Remanants of a Separation (2017), Feroz Rather's The Night of Broken Glass (2018), Ari Shavit's My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel (2013), Wendy Pearlman's We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled (2017), Nadia Murad and Jenna Krajeski's The Last Girl (2017).

Onset of twentieth century witnessed withdrawal and fall of Raj, French Empire from many of their mandates, colonies leaving behind trail of nations grappling with problems of ethnic violence, socio-economic-political instability, migration, mass murders , just to name some of the problems. No accurate statistical data exists for the number of people who happened to be on wrong side of line when lines were drawn dividing nations which once were United, for example, India-Pakistan, Israel-Palestine, or Iraq- Syria.

Literature produced by formerly colonized countries counts is considered as Third World Literature. Impact of cataclysmic catastrophes which happened in twentieth century still echoes in the literature of Twenty-First century. Partition of 1947 between India-Pakistan, division of Israel and Palestine, Levant Crisis continues to haunt and distort the memory and reality of people. Trauma is palpable in literature. There is space for memories, introspection, retrospection. foreshadow, flashback and awful remembrance that is stained with pain, anguish and trauma.

The word trauma originally derives from the Greek trauma "a wound, a hurt". According to Freud, the term trauma is taken as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon mind. In his work Beyond the Pleasure Principle it suggests that the wound of the mind - the breach in the mind's experience of time, self and the world- is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that is experiences too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness.(*1).

Partition literature and impact of Partition on psyche of people had not been considered or discussed till the late 1970's as memory was haunting and dreary that people were not ready to acknowledge the atrocities committed and witnessed, Anis Kidwai's In Freedom's Shade written in 1949, the book did not appear until 1974 when it was first published. Pierre Nora's re-examining of relationship between 'memory' and 'history' made them two distinct entities. In

the concept of collective memory, Nora argued that memory remains in the state of ‘permanent evolution’ unconscious of its deformations. For him, history is ‘antithetical’ to memory. History’s goal is to annihilate the memory of event and suppress it to the point of annihilation. Michel Foucault in his essay “Nietzsche, Genealogy and History” speaks about the phenomenon which he terms ‘counter-memory’. He argues for a separation of history and memory. According to Foucault counter-memory is a strategy for displacing the hegemonic process of remembering. Memories from the margins, from the oppressed can be treated as counter-memories to mainstream memory. (Law 09) Later scholars have expanded the horizons of the term counter memory more as Jane Marie Law in her article argues-

A counter-memory is not the content of a memory itself, but rather the role a particular memory is playing in a larger construct of remembrance. A counter-memory can be fictive in nature, or it can be a form of excessive remembrance of one event at the expense of other events. It can be a memory whose job is to subvert the dominant memory, or it can dislodge the tenacity of the mainstream or obvious memory. And counter-memory can be a way of Re-remembering the past, through a lens forcing one to review one’s own past with a present agenda. (Law 09).

Anchal Malhotra’s Remnants of a Separation accounts for the counter-memory as in her book she has accounted her interviews of people who witnessed the Partition of 1947. She recreates the timeline of Partition through the stories of people and their memories with help of the ‘objects’ which accompanied and helped people to survive the biggest man-made calamity in South-Asian History. Partition Literature now focusses more on the re-creation of memories and moments which has now stories travelled to generations and continents. People have started voicing their pains and sorrows which had found themselves lodged in crevices of unconscious.

People are finally overcoming blanching of memory. Janet Coleman’s term refers to certain ascetic practices of erasing all unpleasant or forbidden images or memories from one’s imagination. counter-memory refers to the ‘other’ memories belonging to the minority group or the marginalized people by the dominant group or culture like the Yazidis of Syria. As River explains in his paper, The Repression of War Experience-

‘many of the most trying and distressing symptoms from which the subjects of war neurosis suffer are not the necessary result of the strains and shocks to which they have been exposed in the warfare, but are due to the attempt to banish from the mind distressing memories of warfare and painful affective states which have come into being as the result of their war experience’.(173)

Shahnaz Bashir’s Scattered Souls(2016) and Feroz Rather’s The Night of Broken Glass (2018) elucidates the concept of how memories keep haunting person even after the event has passed. Event finds its roots in psyche of people that unconsciously people starts acting as if past has not ended but rather it’s a recurring phenomenon. Characters undergo psychosis and never truly recovers from the trauma. Manto who is perhaps the most sardonic writer of Partition

times, in his short story, “Khol Do” portrays the ‘trauma’ of human mind when a young girl who was almost dead on a stretcher opens the strings of her trouser when she hears the words ‘khol do’ assuming she would be raped again though this time this utterance was simply said to open the windows. The notion of trauma like memory, observes Eyerman in “The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory”, has both individual and collective consciousness.

Initial course of literary trauma theory by popularizing the idea of trauma as an unrepresentable event. Scholars like Caruth, pioneered a psychoanalytic poststructural approach that suggests trauma is an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language. This Lacanian approach crafts a concept of trauma as a recurring sense of absence that sunders knowledge of the extreme experience, thus preventing linguistic value other than a referential expression. For Caruth's deconstructive criticism in particular, the model allows a special emphasis on linguistic indeterminacy ambiguous referentiality and aporia.The unspeakable void became the dominant concept in criticism for imagining trauma's function in literature. This classic model of trauma appealed to a range of critics working outside of poststructuralism as well due to the notion of trauma's irreversible damage to the psyche. The assumed inherent neurobiological features of trauma that refuse representation and cause dissociation were significant to arguments that sought to emphasize the extent of profound suffering from an external source, whether that source is an individual perpetrator or collective social practice.[30]

Cultural traumas are socially mediated processes that occur when groups endure horrific events that forever change their consciousness and identity. According to cultural sociologists, these traumas arise out of shocks to the routine or the taken for granted. Understanding such traumas is critical for developing solutions that can address group suffering. Neil Smelser offers a formal definition of cultural trauma. Smelser writes:

A memory accepted and publically given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is (a) laden with negative effect (b) 8represented as indelible and (c) regarded as threatening a society's (or group's) existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions. (Eyerman 161)

This proposal seeks to build on framework for understanding cultural trauma by highlighting how cultural trauma narratives can arise not only when the routine is disrupted but also when regularly expected occurrences—the matters that communities have come to know and take for granted—occur and in fact get reaffirmed in a public or official manner. A cultural trauma stems from a routine occurrence does not mean that a shock to some norm was completely absent from the construction of the trauma. Indeed, in cases where a routine occurrence develops into cultural trauma, a shocking or unique incident has usually preceded the routine injury. Frequently, these prior shocking incidents have helped generate one of the conditions that I contend enable a cultural trauma to emerge out of a routine harm: widespread publicity—whether regional, national, or international—that causes individuals to focus on and pay attention to the actual occurrence of the routine harm.

In fact, three elements must be present for a cultural trauma to materialize out of an expected, negative occurrence. First, there must be a long-standing history of the routine harm, a history that essentially leads the subordinated group to expect nothing other than the routine yet cultural trauma–inducing injury. Second, underlying facts related to the routine injury must have garnered the type of widespread media attention that makes a large audience, both within and outside the subordinated group, take notice of the routine occurrence. Usually, these underlying facts are shocking or at least halting or unique enough to inspire broad media coverage. Third and finally, there must be public discourse about the meaning of the routine harm, a harm that usually occurs in the form of governmental or legal affirmation of the subordinated group's marginal status. In such cases, the narrative of cultural trauma arises because a public or official sanctioning of the everyday denigration and subjugation of the subordinated group

reinforces that group’s historically supported view that neither they nor their rights are protected and respected in society. In this sense, the cultural trauma–inducing routine injury—here, the public or official sanctioning—reignites the subordinated group’s consciousness of its second-class citizenship and punctuates its already existing distress and suffering, thereby causing such tensions and pains to boil over and lay a foundation for the development of a cultural trauma narrative.

Cultural trauma or traumatize referred to a traumatic event which includes a solitary event or involvement; it comprises of the emotions and feelings. Moreover, trauma from psychoanalysis engrosses serious negative consequences in the long-term. Fundamentally, traumatic memories and past trauma disturb the character's mind. Insecurity and Confusion cause trauma; typical psychoanalysis trauma cases were sexual abuse, discrimination in employment, brutality by police, domestic violence, bullying, and particularly experiences in childhood. Considerably, trauma in childhood can tip to violent behavior. Psychoanalysis trauma was initiated by catastrophic events, treachery, war, sexual abuse and betrayed. Yet, the principal point was that various people will respond contrarily to similar events. Not every people who understand the similar disturbing experience will turn into psychoanalysis traumatized. The interdisciplinary, disturbance has a local relationship with the additional field like sociology, psychology, history, politic, war, and expressively literature.

It is misleading to suppose that the concepts of trauma and PTSD reflect timeless or global phenomena. Both are constructed categories, and their meaning and application are contingent on the social, cultural, political, economic, and historical conditions of the time. Such constructions cannot be separated from the ideologies, daily routines, technologies, institutional needs and so on which constitute cultural life. The highest priority regarding trauma health intervention is to develop culturally sensitive approaches. Different cultures and variable contexts of trauma require unique concepts and practices. Culture and context have to be considered on both population and individual levels.

Cathy Caruth’s concept of ‘Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder’ (PTSD) is a ‘symptom of history’. (PTSD) is defined as a ‘response to an event outside the range of usual human experience’ which could be due to shell shock, delayed stress syndrome as response to a human and natural catastrophe. The core issues which will put forward in the present analysis will be Caruth’s emphasis on latency and belatedness through dislocation and displacement; and whether the traumatized carry history or history occurs as a symptom. The unfathomable trauma suffered by common men and women during partition times and impact on their psyche will be understood through Caruth’s concept of ‘latency’ and ‘belatedness.’. Selected works includes the narratives from Middle East countries viz Israel, Syria and South Asian country - India, despite being so different in their language and culture both literatures shares the vein of sufferings, pains dealt to them by the Colonizers and the trauma of the past is still not gone or forgotten, for as Caruth says, ‘one’s own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another’(8,141)

To sum up the concept of my proposal, Arnold Mathews statement of Literatures resonates with my work -Everywhere there is connection, everywhere is illustration. No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literatures.