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**"Incongruity of Community, Traumatized Lives: Re-reading Jadein and Ravi Paar"**

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**ABSTRACT**

The collective existence that society provides which incentivises community by dispersing consequence into endurable packets. The unity that was witnessed in Partition was responsible for both, the chaos and the calm. The stories taken in this discourse speak of family, homeland and the inevitability of one's belongingness to the greater part, be it family, community and/or religion. Jadein, a story that speaks of homeland adhering to, Benedict Anderson's concept of Imagined Communities would be analysed through the story. Ravi Paar, a narrative that tells the struggle of a quotidian Sikh family to survive through the riots. Highlighting the solaced lives that one individual enslaves themselves with; grounded with bonds of family and society, highlight the ambivalence of community amid the times of Partition. Analysis of these works by breaking each aspect with the theory of Deconstruction, Orientalists perspectives on the events narrated, realising the devotion towards the communities by Communalism and contrasting the identity of women in both of these works by the concept of Différance by Saussure. The sense of belonging to one's homeland, shattered along with the Partition would be associated with "trauma theory" by Sigmund Freud.

The narrative of 1947 partition of British India as a horrific event of freedom from British empire signaled the catastrophic and traumatic fate of women in the nineteenth century. The sense of belongingness to a particular "*sarzamin*" comes from "*rootedness*" and to one's accord surroundings. The mutual culture and the communal interconnectedness often shared by these two sovereign factions which defines Pre-Partition India started to scatter with the coming of the Partition of India. Inhabitants of both sides of the new borders never imagined about leaving their "*sarzamin*". How does the traumatic fear of displacement from the "*jadein*"

menacingly disassemble their psychic equilibrium and the concept of homeland?

Unlike the other works set in the abominable times of Partition, *Jadein* is a heartwarming tale of human fellowship and the exploration of the unasked question of what constitutes calling a land as one's own country. In this context, Benedict Anderson's concept of "Imagined Communities" can be applied accurately for the people sharing the same territorial boundary having almost shared mutual cultures and ideologies; it is that which binds them together. The story begins with two families, a Hindu and another one Muslim, they were front door neighbours and were tangled with one another on every level. The both families lived in an area of Mewar which was preoccupied with Hindus, the families were aware of their faith but neither Ammi's Muslim nor Roopchand's Hindu family sanctioned Pakistan and Hindustan as mere subjects for political arguments, nothing more, nothing less than they appear to be in the interwoven lives of these two families. They discussed the partition as one does sport, with no lasting stakes or ill will towards one another, an opinion is an opinion, it does not change. Doctor Sahib or Abbu they shall remain what they were for one another before. Even after the death of the narrator's father, Doctor Sahib took up his responsibilities and tended to the family as his own "no important decision was made in the house without consulting him". Doctor Sahib was aware of what would be left at the wake of Abbu's death, it would be his family. Yet the discrepancies between the practitioners of two different faiths were starting to surface as the mass divide between the communities blighted them with distrust and corrupting their conception of each other. The politically passive families were now holstering the flags of the two sovereign nations who were one before, both the nation and the families. When a few leagues between the two doors became miles, the narrator's family decided to migrate to Pakistan but Ammi refused, the woman who would not be part of political debates, now stood alone against her family and argued what makes a country one's own. In this context, is it not the ground that bore you, a vicinity where you have lived all your life, a people who constitute as society and where you belong or a mere piece of land where everyone prays to the right god, a place where one just migrates to. It is the woman who reinforces societal norms, regardless of their ramifications, regardless of the relative right or the certain wrong that comes with everything. Perhaps it were the most memorable moments that were made in that place; nostalgia overshadows reason. Here Ammi rebels against both her obligations as a mother and a wife and as a woman in a community; this decision defies the notions of a mother and a woman who is a delegate of the society. The abominable times where women were defiled and abused, a woman, who happens to be aware of those abhorring atrocities, stood as never before, in solitary. Yet these times had a sliver of hope for humanity, faith in the fact that a small fraction of the benevolence that bore them would surface in these despicable creatures; hope in the conscience stricken Doctor Sahib, who rushes to the station to stop the migrating family and their return revives the old fellowship between the two families. The selflessness leaving a woman and substituted by a rational inquisition is a unique sight and one which was not explored, as the minds of the times were occupied by the obviousness of the society and possessed little patience for the subtle. It was perhaps this predicament that the story seemed out of place yet this was exactly what the society wanted to see, something that restores humanity

to its rightful place behind the curtains of the pseudo kindness and false camaraderie, that more often than not has an ulterior motive. Yet again the narrative limits one to venture further into argument however we ourselves can comprehend that the settings in the narrative is our very world and we, its people; granting us free reign over its realization that looms precariously close to a world which is our own. Hence one would merely have to look around to cognise the subtle 'why' for the fellowship and the overt 'what' of the homeland; why is a set of friendly encounters that became frequent and became a habit, whereas what is... Well it is what is, a certainty reinforced by the tradition of the people of yore.

The fear of cultural alienation highlights in its most digressive form that cultural trauma which severely affected them, adhering to the whole idea of "Trauma theory" by Sigmund Freud Trauma theory first emerged in the nineteenth century from vast areas of social concern: with the identification of the violence against women and children and recognition of post-traumatic stress that lead the disorder in the war of Vietnam; and awareness of the psychic scars inflicted by torture and genocide, mentioning with the horror of Holocaust.

Crauth points out that "the trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will" in her argument emphasising on psychological shocks that she labelled as "inherent belatedness" of trauma that affects the generations.

Apart from the fear of rootlessness and alienation, the story also records the outcome of the partition processes that damage the 'Ishmat Chughtai with her feminist movement, queuing many bidding feminist of the subcontinent in the process; speaking of female sexuality overtly, the patriarchal constraints on a woman, the consequence of homosexuality relegated onto the significant other; an insight into female sexuality, stating that women too needs bodily pleasures and the sense of identity that comes with the vicinity, the memories and the legacy's of ones ancestors. The quiet Ammi who chooses not to speak in the political matters of no consequence, solemnly takes a stand against her own family in the aegis of an inquisition, she accepts adversity of living in an area of Hindu majority, alone, leaving her family and child on their own wits. This rebellious act of sustaining autonomy is seldom seen in women as they are venerated as selfless beings, yet here a woman bound by motherhood, constrained with the predetermined notion of a woman in society, relinquishes both to seek the inquisition of her life. What makes one's homeland?

The whole discussion began with the issue of identity and belongingness in the lexicon of the Indian Partition highlights the poetics "zameen"- simply put, the place of yearning and longing. Amma's painful narrative associated with the wrenching account of displacement testifies to the resultant disintegration of a shared and collective identity that shapes one's existentiality. Her concept and whole idea associated with home was not merely the lump of earth in a particular geographical territory but a psychological necessity if it was cut off from her, she would be put into an ontological crisis. But eventually her belonging to the

geographical space aligned with a montage of memories did not shift into another plain of belonging. In order to get her a “renewed life”.

*Ravi Paar* is not unlike *Jadein* in its execution of partition as a backdrop. Yet Gulzar's account, these personalized narratives, that were meant to invoke the constant dread that the general population felt. Ravi Paar displays Gulzar's own scarred mind, the consequence of partition that the citizens suffered. The story begins with a Sikh family, Darshan Singh, his wife Sahni and his mother and father. The quaint Lyallpur was also affected by the stories of roits, arson and rape. Darshan would try to compel his father to move to gurdwara, to which Darshan was comforted by him, telling Darshan that none of the houses are attacked yet. One fateful day the cries of "*Jo Bole So Nihaal*" (58, Gulzar) came from the gurdwara, bhapa-ji went to inspect the roof, on his way back he fell and hit his head on an axe left in the courtyard. Among all the chaos after completing the last rites of bhapa-ji, the family made its way to the gurdwara. Sahni expected with her first labour, Darshan Singh and his mother, with all of their belongings stuffed in a pillowcase, found refuge in the gurdwara. The young volunteers helped the people assembled there with the little provisions that the families could collect from their homes. The kitchen regularly made meals for everyone, with provisions depleting they hoped that the government would help them. Yet after the english, which government would help? Among many discussions by the people assembled, be it about the then new term "*Sharanarhi*" (59, Gulzar) that was for refugees. Talks of a huge camp near railway station, being no place for anyone in the trains to India. At this time Sahni gave birth to two boys, one was too frail to live but she kept him alive with sheer will. Another news of a special train for refugees surfaces, a group of people murmured in content and a few more decided to leave for it. Sahni, though extremely weak from bearing two children, still accompanied Darshan Singh for the train. Darshan implores his mother to accompany them but she refuses, she asks him to take her grandsons and daughter in law instead. Some volunteers convinced Darshan Singh, saying that they would also cross the border one by one and would bring his mother across. Darshan Singh with his sons in a basket upon his head and carried his family to the railway station. There was no place in the train for anybody inside the train, seeing the sickly mother and her newborns, people pulled her on the roof of the train and made some space for her there. Frail Sahni tended to her sons, breastfeeding them one after another, as she was suckled dry after feeding two sons wrapped in rags. One of them did move his hands and legs while letting out a few cries often but the other one was still, Darshan inspected the child inside the rags to find that he was stone cold. He started to sob uncontrollably, the people around them understood. They tried to take the child away from Sahni but she had clasped the basket against her chest. She says coldly that no brother drinks the milk without the other, somehow justifying her reluctance to let go of her dead son. Regardless of others' pleas Sahni refuses to let go of the basket, trains make periodic stops and people grow more and more impatient. Consoling themselves by saying as soon as they reach Lahore, they would be close to the border and reach Hindustan in no time. People speculated in the dark, chanting "*Har Har Mahadev!*" (61, Gulzar) a cheer went throughout the congregation, as people exclaimed "*It is the Raavi! That means we have reached Lahore!*" (61, Gulzar) Among the sounds of celebration one voice whispered to Darshan, asking him to throw the son here,

telling him how he would find 'mukti' in the river Raavi. Darshan slowly took out the rags from the basket and chucked it into the river, with a faint 'wahe guru'. An infant's cry is heard in the dark, petrified Darshan looks at Sahni to find the dead son at her breast. A sound erupts with the revelation 'Hindustan Zindabad'.

From the beginning of the narrative it is apparent that familial ties are a recurrent theme. As this narrative was meant to relate with the middle class people, a group that is always bound or better yet is devoted to their families. It was one of the losses partition brought, along with many others; loss of identity, homeland and above all family. The Différance between the variety of loss among individuals can only be concluded by the theory of Deconstruction. This was a loss that many people could relate to, the story begins at an ordinary home. A home that many readers have, a father, a mother and a wife; the idea was to have someone to protect, it can be a little sibling or in this case a pregnant wife. Breaking the identity of a person into his many relationships and duties, displaying a dissonance of identity. All of the chaos was caused by a few delinquents in the aegis of a mob, yet it was the same notion on the defensive end. People found solace in each other's company, they united as one and came together as a community. Assembled at a gurudwara, a place of worship which is symbolic of the faith of the people. Darshan Singh implored bhapa-ji to go there irrespective of the times it was set on fire, the lines show the blind faith that people have of holy places, regardless of the times it is attacked it shall always remain a safe haven for every Sikh. While Darshan makes his case on why they should leave their home and go to the gurdwara, he himself questioned the idea of leaving for a place that had suffered attacks. However the gurdwara is merely a symbol of faith, it is a place of god as Darshan remarks that this is where everyone is close to Wahe Guru so no harm shall come to them. These lines describe themselves, it does not matter whether the gurudwara is attacked, it shall always remain a symbol of faith, peace and comfort. The blind devotion towards the sense of faith makes it evident that the conception of communalism comes into play. The same conception that makes a mob, that causes arson, roits and rape is the same that goes behind one's plight of ensuring safety. The dispersion of consequence among a group of people is one that can be observed on both the sides of the spectrum. Herd mentality comes with absence of accountability of one's actions, here the entire group is held accountable for a single act, be it safeguarding or something sinister. These familial ties bound people with a constant struggle of protecting the people they call their own and the ones who do not have such ties have the liberty to become the people who birth chaos.

Both the narratives have the setting of partition, yet true horror comes with the disparity of a father to throw his dead son in a dead river, comes with the determination of a mother to tend to her sons among all the horror and above everything else it comes from the revelation of how a father mistakenly throws the living son, while the dead one latches on to the mother's breast. It is in such gripping accounts that begin with the ordinariness of our homes and ends with prettifying circumstances that we cannot accept as the part of nonfiction.

The discourse is a declaration, a memory of what we urgently need to recount that we had failed to remember; the hatred of mankind when we surrender to our chaos, the barbarities we thoughtfully submit for the sake of a semblance of solace or even better vengeance, to perpetrate the very torture that were dispensed upon us by others. Nonetheless, it is anything but a particular person that is answerable for the said torture however the other group, those individuals. It was consistently them; who ask an alternate supplication, who preach an alternate god, who walk an alternate walk, who are not us. They and just they are blameworthy of living under an alternate faith, it is this philosophy that powers the fire of antagonism toward a fiendish degree, this aggression encourages in every last one of us however these seethes light just when they witness the hurricane of transformation. This tornado, which turns into a justification for the human to disclose their real essence, to show that the differentiation among creatures and us is simply the word 'social'. It is our temperament to be a piece of an option that could be greater than us, the possibility of working, living, enduring altogether is charming to us, as the adventure of endurance is not, at this point a battle to exist however ramifies into living.

The dual nature of femininity and society can be seen in both these narratives. Sahni's motherly devotion is contrasted with Ammi's obstinacy. Darshan's exploit to rationalize the Sahni's motherly devotion failed direly and cost the life of the living son. The same goes for Doctor Sahib while he neglects Abbu's family, acting on the vendetta or better yet a stigma against the other community he is remorseful and retrieves his family from the railway station after their expulsion from their home in a hindu region. Whereas one mob inflicts trauma, the other receives it. It could be between faith, gender and even class and in this discourse we have seen two. Yet again the Différance of many versions of trauma is understood only by an Oriental standpoint. The abrupt end of the narrative after the revelation of the death of the living son is indicative of the speechlessness that comes with trauma. The trauma theory further explores this petrification, as an incident that could not be processed. This sudden confrontation causes dissonance in emotional and intellectual means, a psychic partition between the identity or the consciousness which inevitably brings the horror and loss that has been prevalent in these narratives.

The life that these narratives depict are not far from our own but they stand on the fine line of fiction and truth. The setting and characters give merit to both of these words, providing integrity to the works in the minds of the common reader. While they relate to the characters' sufferings, they allow themselves to indulge a little further in the narrative. This invokes the horror that these works of partition demand from its readers, the requisite for a work of partition literature. The connection between the separation between the identity and consciousness is not different from the separation of one's homeland or people. Hence the obvious conflict between the variants of society and the people it comprises.

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