



**COLLECTIVE TRAUMA AND CHILD ABUSE IN AMIT
MAJMUDAR'S NOVEL, *PARTITIONS* USING CATHY CARUTH'S
TRAUMA LENS**

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Abstract:

*Across the Indian sub-continent, two communities had lived together for a millennium but in a terrifying outbreak of harsh violence, they attacked each other. This resulted in a mutual genocide and exclusive massacre. Partition was not only the time of happiness for people of Pakistan and India but an ordeal of loss of too many innocent lives on the both sides of the border. This study investigates the partition incidents with special reference to violence on children of both sides of the border through the use of Cathy Caruth's Collective trauma theory. The novel, *Partitions* by Amit Majmudar bears instances of child violence and embodied trauma. The research methodology for carrying out the research is Textual Analysis through Cathy Caruth's book, *Unclaimed Experience*. The Trauma Analysis focuses on quoting historical references from Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* in order to explain the trauma and violence through literature. The results indicate that through literature, one can deeply understand the effects of trauma during partition.*

Keywords: *Trauma, Partition, Child violence, Abuse, Collective trauma.*

1. Introduction:

Human beings undergo a variety of experiences on a daily basis. Experiences can be either good or bad. These experiences help a human being to grow in order to survive. The past can never be forgotten but it can only be accepted. If a soldier experiences multiple deaths around him, he might be watching everything in a numb state but later in repeated nightmares, he might respond to the past events because those past events and their effect hasn't worn off (Caruth, 1996). Physical and mental experiences are parallel to each other here. When in modern era, people take up the matter of history in the context of a free nation, they cannot ignore the time of partition. Pakistan got independence on 14th August, 1947 and India became an independent state on 15th August, 1947. Though Partition led to the independence, people on both sides of the border faced the unbearable consequences. Many things changed between the people of Pakistan and India (Khan, 2021). People of both nations are now living in a free country but at the cost of loss of lives of their forefathers (Mahmood, 2021). The novel *Partitions* is set in the context of partition time and will be analyzed with reference to trauma, violence against children and the after-effects of partition using the trauma theory. As the term has grabbed a lot of attention recently, only the people who had suffered losses or subjected to some kind of brutal violence are able to understand the concept of trauma (Khan, 2021).

Partition means separation between two areas but in this context, the research refers to the period of 1947 in which the sub-continent was separated. After the three-hundred-year extensive British rule in India, the sub-continent was divided into two states which were independent in their own language, religion, culture, traditions and customs (Kaur & Jaggi, 2023). Partition was the greatest mass migration in human history (Kaur & Jaggi, 2023).

The aftereffects during and after the partition period cannot be neglected at any cost. The people of sub-continent i.e. Hindu Muslims and Sikhs were going through a kind of trauma. Trauma can be physical, emotional or psychological (Gradus & Galea, 2022). Here, Trauma does not refer to any physical injury rather it is referring to the psychological and emotional injuries faced by the people during that historical period of 1947. Trauma is defined as a disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury (Blehm, 2024). The paper focuses on the children present in the subcontinent at that time who were the victims of collective trauma.

1.1. Collective Trauma in *Partitions*

As the term “Collective” indicates, not one individual but a whole group of people is passing through a certain phase. The term “Collective trauma” applies to any society, social category, class or ethnic group which has been directly subjected to extreme circumstances of traumatization such as technological catastrophies, genocide, murders in front of their own eyes, natural disasters and social, political, cultural, gender, religious or ethnic oppression (Saul, 2022). Trauma is shattering and violent event which affects a community and it has such a harsh impact on the minds of people that their psychological defense barrier is intruded and all they have left with them is fragility and an acute sense of vulnerability (Wirtz, 2021). Partition in this context refers specifically to the time period of 1947 when subcontinent was divided into two portions basically when sub-continent was “partitioned”. During partition, women and children were the main subject of distortion (Maheswary & Lourdusamy, 2022). Children suffered equally like the women during partition (Benigno, 2020). Child slavery was at its peak at that time and they were mostly beaten up by their “Masters” because of the “poor” work they had done. Mothers used to send their children of very young age in order to run their household. Even some cases included Child abuse, Child trafficking and selling of own children. Children were molested and killed in front of their own parents which is a proof that brutality on children was on the rise. The socio-political realities are highly embedded in the partitioned ground (Virdee, 2022).

1.2. Research Questions:

- How does child violence and embodied trauma play out in *Partitions*?
- How does *Partitions* highlight the plight of children during the partition?

1.3. Theoretical Framework:

Caruth’s model of Trauma theory explains that trauma is always there in the mind of the survivor and is suddenly ignited whenever a similar situation is faced by the survivor. Caruth’s book *Unclaimed Experience* describes the relation between historical events and traumatized past of the ones who had suffered. Caruth tells that how traumatic experience has a harsh effect on an individual’s whole life. The theory is best suited for the current study because the main epitome of research here is “trauma” and as “trauma” has multiple dimensions, the dimension “collective trauma” is highlighted and that too in the light of partition. The sections taken from Caruth’s book for Textual Analysis are first three chapters. The first chapter is *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the possibility of history* which explains that traumatic experiences are involuntary and not in the hands of a person. The person who is subjected to it might not respond to trauma at once but later when a similar situation comes (Caruth, 1996). The second chapter is *Literature and the enactment of memory* covers a film *Hiroshima mon amour* which is related with the exploration of the relation between history and body. The French actress meets a Japanese man and tells him about her traumatic past. The violence she faced after her lover’s death is saddening. The third chapter of *Unclaimed Experience* is *Traumatic Departures: Survival and History in Freud* explains that trauma is against a person’s will. It

may come back to haunt a person and mind is unable to avoid it. A man is totally in his senses when he experiences these flashbacks. The survivor of a train accident might not think about it but the memories of that traumatic experience haunt the person.

2. Research Methodology:

As the research is based on trauma study, the theoretical framework used in this study is "Trauma theory. The novel *Partitions* is analyzed according to theorizing on trauma in Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience*. The connection of the text with Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* provides an insight into trauma and violence. The meaning of texts is associated with the factual history which is evident in *Unclaimed Experience*.

The research is qualitative as it is taking an in-depth and holistic approach to the partition period and trauma. With the help of careful textual analysis, the related portions in the novel are highlighted which refer to the violence on children. In the Trauma Analysis of research, the chunks taken from Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* were related to the trauma of women and children in literary texts and it was explained that how selected literature has been helpful in providing an insight into history.

3. Partitions by Amit Majmudar: An embodiment of Collective Trauma

In *Partitions*, there are different characters with different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The novel is set in 1947. Simran Kaur is a sixteen-year old Sikh girl who runs away from her home after her life is at stake. Two Hindu twins, Keshav and Shankar are separated from their mother at a railway station. Dr Roshan Jaitly is a Muslim who saves Simran and the twins, despite his own bad condition. Literary novel, *Partitions* by Amit Majmudar contributes to history when it comes to issues like child trafficking and violence during the time of partition. As history is something which is unforgettable and at the same time it is difficult to remember, only the people who experienced the brutal happenings in front of their very own eyes can actually narrate what they faced or what kind of feelings they had. History tells the theoretical aspects of a specific incident but literature presents the readers with a comprehensive picture of what actually were the aspects of that time. The time of partition holds an immense significance for the two nations as the sub-continent was divided into two parts. According to Caruth (1996), "Freud describes a pattern of suffering that is inexplicably persistent in the lives of certain individuals" (p.14). Partition of Sub-continent was one such incident which is still preserved in people's minds. Literature has been quite successful in explaining the situation and depicting the state of that time period.

One can clearly assume the turmoil of the situation if one reads the literature of partition. The trauma of partition as reflected in the novel *Partitions* is picturized as if the reader himself is present in that time period and situation. Children are innocent and considered to be fragile and weak in a society. Caruth (1996) suggests "What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tells us, is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known" (p.19). Children suffered greatly which is evident in the literature of partition. The suffering of children had become so common that one need to question as Caruth (1996) says, "Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it? (p.20)".

The title *Partitions* embodies not only the partition of two states but the partition of families. The partition of a person from his/ her home, not only his/ her homeland. Not only parting ways from the homeland was arduous but parting ways unwillingly from one's own family was equally difficult. Majmudar clearly picturizes the feelings, emotions and intensity of the situation. The main characters in this novel: Twins Shankar and Keshav, Simran and Dr. Ibrahim Masud, all are facing the collective consequences of partition resulting in instability

of family, societal disruption and emotional turmoil. Watching all of them is the deceased Hindu doctor and father of the twins Dr. Roshan Jaitly. He is narrating the feelings and emotions of these characters while they are being subjected to the situation. The purpose of the narration of Dr Roshan Jaitly is to give a clear insight of attitude of all main characters. Dr. Jaitly calls the place as “infinite” and says that he only knows his own family in this infinite. The turmoil of the situation has greatly affected each and every Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. He introduces the readers to multiple flashbacks regarding his wife Sonia and twins. One of his Monologues in the first chapter is

“I am here because I am everywhere. I say I only know three people on the platform and in the trains, but in a sense I know all of them.” (Majmudar, 2011, p. 6)

He is visualizing everything in front of his own eyes and in this “infinite”, he indirectly knows everyone. This character indeed echoes the true feelings and conditions of each and every human in the vicinity. Keshav and Shankar being the youngest main characters in the novel are separated from their mother while boarding a train from Pakistan to Delhi. The situation in which they got stuck was like they either had to go with the flow or surrender themselves but what they chose to go with was their bravery and resistance. The twin’s greatest turmoil was their separation from their mother. They were pushed badly while boarding the train and as a result they fall from it. The train leaves them. Both of them are in shock as well as continuously looking at the direction in which the train had left both of them. The shock and fragility of the situation make them feel as though it was their fault as the narrator tells.

“I can see him wondering if they have made a mistake”. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 44)

The twins get kidnapped by a gang of kidnappers lead by a hooligan named Saif who earns money by illegal means. Taking the advantage of the situation, he deceives the twins by telling them that their mother is waiting for both of them and worried sick. What they find in front of them is an old Muslim widow Shanaaz Bibi who lives alone and is keen to adopt the twins. Her character in the novel is very limited but she takes care of the children. She continuously tells them that their mother will be arriving soon. Saif’s intention was to sell the twins to the old woman. Later the twins escape from the lady’s house and again wander into the open space of nothingness. Meanwhile, the readers are introduced to a brave Punjabi girl, Simran Kaur who has escaped from her house because of her father’s plan of killing her. She escapes and Saif kidnaps her to sell her into prostitution. She escapes from him too and with the help of Dr. Ibrahim Masud, she crosses the border. Dr Ibrahim Masud is an Indian Muslim whose clinic is destroyed as a result of chaos of the partition and he also discovers his role as a savior in the upcoming situations as he saves the twins and Simran. All of these characters in the end make it together to safety and a new life by helping each other.

These all characters are victim of sabotage and insecurity and they all have collectively been affected. What they are going through is a Collective Trauma.

3.1. Child abuse and violence in *Partitions*

Caruth in her book, “Unclaimed Experience” refers Freud stating about the traumatic encounters and situations as something unavoidable and haunting. According to Caruth (1996), “In the third chapter of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud describes a pattern of suffering that is inexplicably persistent in the lives of certain individuals (p.14).

The reason these sufferings are persistent is that when the individuals face a situation which is horrible, they get traumatized. If they encounter or visualize the same kind of situation again, they are petrified and memories of that previous incident haunts them because it was already present in their mind. In the current context, *Partitions* focuses on the violence on women and

children and also how the certain incidents had been imprinted in the minds of the people who encountered them.

Though Simran is fifteen years old but she feels that there is something suspicious going on in their house because her father, his elder brother and their two sons are discussing something in low voices and they didn't want to be overheard. They had forbidden the women in the house to come near the room and it seemed that they were making a plan. Simran's mother and Simran's sisters were equally curious about the strange situation. Even her mother forbids them to eavesdrop the conversation going on in the other room. Simran's mother knows that her curiosity can be dangerous for her. The mother is equally upset about the secret planning and she is fearing that something bad is about to happen. She is conscious about the future actions. Simran's mother is fearful to such an extent that she admits to herself that whatever her brother-in-law is uttering in the second room must not be heard because it might be something unpleasant. If by chance these women hear whatever is being planned in the next room, then it might accelerate the chances of practical implication of that certain horrific plan.

Here, at first, it is quite clear that as a consequence of partition, the violence had spread on both sides of the border. Muslims were killing Hindus and Hindus were finishing Muslim population mercilessly. Hence, her father thought that in order to avoid the future physical and sexual violence to which Simran and his other daughters might be subjected to, he must kill them himself. His insecurities were not wrong but the way of solving was very pathetic. Such was the trauma of partition that these insecurities had prevailed in the minds of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus. Simran's father could bear anything but conversion. He was aware that if his family went into the servitude of Muslims, they would force his daughters to forget Sikhism. He feared conversion because conversion into another religion meant following the values of that religion. He was also aware that his daughters would be subjected to physical and mental violence. He wanted to kill his daughters so that they remain pure. He did not care even if it involved sacrificing his own daughter's lives.

“Die now and they would die Sikhs, intact, pure in the eyes of the ten Gurus. Dying a Sikh: this must be the women's glory” (Majmudar, 2011, p.39)

The father has forgotten that the ones he is killing for his honor are his daughters, not stray girls. He is unaware of the fact that there would be no difference between himself and the Muslims who intend to rape and molest his wife and daughters. But what happens is that Simran comes to know about the cruel intentions of her father and escapes. The agitation in her father's voice and his suspicious actions made Simran uneasy and she kept wondering at it. The serving of milk to their family by her father in the early morning, his uneasiness and continuous fidgeting and the forceful attitude of her father made her wonder that what is the reason behind these odd circumstances. Her father knew that murdering her own daughters in the name of honor is “Annihilation” but he would rather embrace this “Annihilation” because for him, his own dignity mattered more than his family's life.

“For the first time, he is serving them. It looks odd to Simran, almost laughable, to see him doing this” (Majmudar, 2011, p. 48)

It is quite ironical that when Simran gets suspicious and goes towards the window to think about escape and saving her family, her mother asks her to move away from the window because it was “unsafe”. When the reality was that they were not safe in their own house. Simran's mother forbids her to stay near the window. Safety and danger were not different from each other here. Safety meant running away from the home and danger meant staying inside the house for Simran knew that whatever she had to do was dangerous and risky. Her mother's statement that because of the presence of her daughters, the stray dogs will be

attracted to the house is quite ironic because the ones which were present in her own house were not less than those stray dogs. She escapes trying to save her younger sister but eventually her sister gets shot by her cousin. She leaves her dead sister and flees from the house. She runs outside and away from her family. The situation was unknown to her and she did not know what was going to happen next. She didn't even want to look back to see if someone was following her from her house.

Simran, being a young girl has been subjected to a situation which is unacceptable for her. She was now on her own. Her childhood has been destroyed after passing through this harsh and threatening situation. She wants to run away from everything not caring about the fact that the world outside her house is unwelcoming. During this time when Indians, Sikhs and Muslims had become enemies, it was very risky for her to wander outside her house but the trauma through which she had passed was enough to drive her crazy. Her sister's death in front of her own eyes and the voice of gunshots had scared her but she recollected herself and ran away from her home. After leaving her house, she is still in a state of disbelief.

According to Caruth (1996), Freud was of the view that the repetition of events in mind are not in individual's control. Simran could not resist the situation. The murder of her sister was continuously being repeated in her mind.

Later in the third chapter of the book, "Dispersals", the readers see through the eyes of the deceased narrator, Dr. Roshan Jaitly that Simran is feeling shameful as evident from the following lines.

"She has abandoned him, she thinks. She has abandoned her mother and her sisters. From her eyes, I can tell she has been crying over this and is only now coming up for air"

She feels that she has done something wrong by leaving her family behind at the mercy of her father and uncle. The situation has harshly affected her and she is unable to absorb it. The continuous thoughts of safety of her mother and siblings is driving her mad. She is frightened and not in a good state to even think about what has happened. She thinks that if she would have tried harder, then she could have saved her mother and sister. She feels insecure at the thought of imagining her mother and sisters at the mercy of her father and uncle. She was remembering her little innocent brother and her heart was breaking. She is in a trauma because of what happened with her sister and what will happen with her mother and her remaining family in the future. One can feel empathy with Simran and her situation. She is aware that people are out there searching for her and she is running from these people. Simran is dragging herself to safety and meanwhile remembering her younger brother too. She is continuously thinking about Jasbir and her mother. She was remembering how her little brother Jasbir used to climb the tree and her mother used to worry for him. She was breaking down as she was getting flashbacks from her past and then relating it with the current events. In a way, Simran thinks that when she was trying to save Priya and she was shot dead, it shouldn't have to be her. The gun was aimed at her and she was the one who had to take that bullet, not her sister. Priya's bloodstains were on Simran's shirt and Simran thought that although she had dropped the body, the body had not dropped her still. Simran wanted to get rid of the guilt from which she is passing through. She thinks that she needs to be punished and do exactly what her father says. She is in a dilemma of what she needs to do and what she wants to do. In the above-mentioned lines of Majmudar's novel, Simran's feelings are depicted.

"Her dominant concern, stashed in this tree, is how she might kill herself when she needs to." (Majmudar, 2011, p. 71)



She wants to kill herself and she thinks about living the rest of her life on this tree. Continuously stuck between present, past and future she needs to take a decision but is unable to do so. She is in a great shock that she is not even sure of her own existence. According to her even if someone sees her, they will think of her as an owl. She wished to become someone “unnoticed” for the rest of her life. Childish thoughts kept passing from her mind. She thinks herself as a fragile creature and as she is on the run, she is comparing herself to the meat which is soft and tender. She considers herself as vulnerable creature. She is finding a quick method to kill herself before they reach her. Her innocence and the trauma she is being subjected to has put such a harsh blow on her head that she is thinking about the easiest and shortest way of killing herself. Finally, she decides to get loyal to her father and agrees with her father’s decision. She fears conversion as her father feared. She is expressing loyalty towards her norms, culture and values. She believes that,

“Conversion, in her mind, is lifelong captivity in forgetfulness” (Majmudar, 2011, p. 72)

She didn’t know what tomorrow or even the next moment is going to bring for her. She knew the life and fate of those girls who did not have a family so she dreaded the future moments. She later thinks again to go to her home back and finds a disturbing sight. Simran’s condition was just like the survivors of Vietnam who committed suicide to get rid of the traumatic displeasure.

What Simran was fearing and dreading was right in front of her. She met a painful sight. She went back home to find her family dead. By her family, she meant her mother and sisters. She found her mother and her sisters dead. She saw that they had been drugged with morphine and later shot dead. So, she had escaped her fate which was right in front of her eyes but her family became the victim. Now, Simran’s remorse and guilt has increased to a great level after seeing her family dead. She was continuously thinking that she could have saved her family from this merciless attitude of her father. For her it was a painful sight as well as the end. She also thought that her father had been still very merciful to her mother and sisters because he had drugged them first and put them into a sound sleep so that they may not face any kind of trouble dying. Simran thought that her father had risked his life while drugging his wife and daughters because this extra step might have caused delay in his fleeing from his home. Simran was thinking on all terms and aspects. The trauma encountered by Simran is quite related to Caruth’s stance on trauma in which she explains that trauma has an everlasting effect on an individual’s life. Even if the individual has escaped death, the aftereffects are more deadly in nature. It is obvious that violence through which Simran had gone through was deadly. Now she was fighting with the trauma in her head. This trauma is deadlier than the actual violence. She is thinking that if the situation had turned otherwise, what would have been her reaction.

She only wanted to sleep with her dead mother. She knew this is the place where she should have been right now so she tries to fit in this place. She is even thinking that the floor has absorbed her because this was the place where she actually belonged. Caruth reminds that the trauma can cause the person to die, or make him want to die. Being a young girl, Simran knows how to cook. She also knows the correct use of utensils in her house so she picks one knife for future safety and security. She doesn’t want to kill somebody but she wants to protect herself knowing that there is no one left to protect her now. She takes the knife with herself and sets off to an unknown destination.

Suffering from the aftereffects of violence, Simran is planning what to do next. She has lost everything now but she has to step out in the chaos if she wants to survive. The only way to survive was that she has to keep running amidst this chaos and save herself. She decides that

after the situation gets normal, she will go and earn money. She decides to live alone for the rest of her life. She also decides to pray during her work and during her whole life. Simran was so disheartened by the situation which she had encountered that she couldn't get back to normal life. She felt insecure about the males. Her very own father and uncle had killed her mother and almost killed her too but she was saved. She couldn't trust any male anymore.

Again, it is seen that Simran is being watched by the male society as she has stepped out of her house for the first time without her family. During the time of partition, children were victimized largely in this perspective. Qasim and Saif are two characters in the novel who kidnap young girls and force them into prostitution. They both are aware that this is the time of business where the women and girls from the house will come out themselves. They both wanted to take full advantage of this time. They both publicly humiliated women and used to kidnap women for pleasure.

Saif and Qasim are of the view that these stray girls are wishing someone would give them a house because their own men had left them. They both believe that kidnapping those women and selling them to someone rich was a way of providing women what they had lost in the first place. These both kidnappers also took women as a piece of joke by saying that women are only for pleasure. They do not possess any self-respect of their own. Both do not feel any kind of disgust or guilt while talking shamelessly about women. The protagonist of the novel, Simran is meanwhile on her way to fall prey to these both.

Caruth thinks that anyone who has escaped or is in a state of denial after a violent event, is still intact with the tragedy which he/she has encountered. Simran did not feel like crying at first when she had heard that her own father is plotting murder against her and her rest of the family women. She did not cry when she tried to save Priya and her sister got shot in return. She did not cry even when she was alone outside and she had run from her house. She also did not cry when she witnessed the dead bodies of her mother and her sisters.

Also, Caruth (1996) redefines trauma by saying that,

In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. (p.24)

When she came outside and stopped for a while near the tree, she started crying. It was but natural because after all she had to remove the emotional burden which she was carrying with herself for so long. The narrator, Dr Roshan Jaitly is watching his twins, Simran and Masud. He assumes that Masud will be safe but his twins and Simran are all by themselves. According to him, he is watching his twins, but he cannot do anything for them. As for Simran, she is alone but hasn't even got herself right now. Simran is wandering still and taking hold of her knife as well.

Caruth says,

I will argue in what follows that trauma is not simply an effect of destruction but also, fundamentally, an enigma of survival. (Caruth, 1996, p.71)

She wanted to become so composed that she didn't want to be seen. The narrator, Dr Jaitly understands her feelings. Where mothers died leaving their children alone, these children had no future. A large number of them were killed and remaining abducted. Some of them were even killed in front of their own siblings. In *Partitions*, two Indian twins, Keshav and Shankar are torn from their mother during boarding a train to Delhi, leaving them devastated. With no sense of ways and feeling of remorse, they set out to find their mother. Saif is following them and wants to abduct them so that he could sell them at a very good price. When the twins decide

to go to the next station and ask the stationmaster, Saif encounters them. He pretends that he is there to protect them. He tells them that,

‘There you are,’ he says. ‘Do you know your mother has been looking for you? Good thing she sent me out---she was worried you had left the station . . .’ (Majmudar, 2011, p. 74, 75)

He tries to be sympathetic towards the twins. When twins hear about their mother, innocent as they were, they agreed to go with him. Saif takes them to a widow, Shanaaz bibi and sells them. Shanaaz bibi feels happy to see little children. She tries to be tender and says,

‘Poor children, you must be in so much pain! And look how brave you are, not a tear.’ (Majmudar, 2011, p. 76)

Keshav and Shankar were expecting their mother. When they realized Saif’s deceit, they turn brave. There is anger and strength in Keshav’s voice, when he declares that they both are twins. Saif’s laughter tells the helplessness of both twins.

‘We’re twins.’ Keshav sounds almost angry. ‘Can’t you see?’. Saif Nasir laughs. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 78)

Saif demands money from the widow in return for twins. He also tells her that he can sell them to different places if she doesn’t take them. Selling children or using them for earning money was a common practice during partition days.

‘Shanaaz Bibi, it is getting late. Take them both for now. There are places that will take the one you don’t want. I’ll come back tomorrow morning. But before I go . . .’ (Majmudar, 2011, p. 78)

They escape from her after some time. Their trust has been destroyed. They cannot ask anyone about the way because it was an adult who had misguided them and instead of taking to their mother, he had misguided them. Now, both twins are finding someone their age to guide them. As they have never been to this part of city, they become lost.

The boys are lost. They have never been in this part of the city, and the part they know is nowhere near. After what happened, they don’t trust adults enough to ask the way to the tracks. They are waiting to find someone closer to this age. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 108)

Both twins witness a festival in which a Sikh named Prabhcharan was being tortured in front of the crowd. His turban is getting removed and his hair and beard is cut in order to humiliate. The Sikh is being tortured and humiliated. When Keshav and Shankar realize this, they shriek and beg the policemen to stop the humiliators. The policeman gets annoyed at both of them and behaves as if they are stray dogs.

The policewallah turns to Keshav with a look of murderous annoyance. Shankar emerges from the alley and pulls at his brother’s arm. ‘Haat!’ spits the officer, the word used for stray dogs. ‘But he’s---’ Shankar tugs harder. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 110)

The policeman scares them and tries to beat the twins when they ask for sparing the Sikh. It seemed as if the policemen enjoyed the show which involved public humiliation of a Sikh. Both twins get scared.

Dr Masud was a Muslim doctor who as a result of riots had to leave his clinic urgently. He was a generous doctor who even cares about the dog he found astray. During his journey, he finds the children who start walking with him. One of them was an orphan whose family had hid in a rice mill. When they were discovered, they all were killed except him because he pretended to be dead. Dr Masud treats his wound. Not all people like Dr Masud had the courage to help children during partition because violence on both women and children had become a fashion. The children who had lost their parents or seen the death of their siblings and parents in front of their own eyes were so frightened that they couldn’t even have the courage to cry. They

were petrified and scared. They didn't want anyone to see them. They were lost in a world of their own. The children of that era were too feeble to speak.

Both twins are lost. But Shankar's limping leg and bruises make it even worse. The narrator feels that he can't do anything for his twins. He is helpless.

The situation becomes tense. They know they can be abducted again if they soon don't find their mother. Shankar feels sick badly and Keshav looks at him in helplessness. He tries to make him remain calm in this situation.

The night doesn't get any cooler, nor Shankar's breathing any easier, no matter how often he folds his knees to his chest. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 135)

They both decide to stay strong and keep moving. They know they will not last long if they remained in one place. They decide to not ask help from anyone anymore.

They learn not to expect help. They learn to look for themselves and move on. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 136)

They reach the next station and look for their mother. There is no one at the ticket desk and they call to her repeatedly, but they couldn't hear any voice. Their desperation makes them weak. Those children who had lost their mother during riots were emotionally weak and strong at the same time.

He calls to her at the abandoned ticket desk, calls to her beside the station name painted in block English letters, calls to her over the empty tracks. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 136)

Both twins are happy that maybe the train hasn't arrived yet. They realize that their happiness is hollow. The tracks are broken. There are no lights on the station and the train is empty. There is no one on the roof. Their heart sinks. Soon they realize that the train had broken down. The narrator captures his twin's and his feeling in these lines,

There on the moonlit tracks, the three of us laugh a laughter that doesn't have any happiness in it. It's the same kind of mirth that sometimes shakes funeral-goers. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 137)

Meanwhile, Dr Masud is with the orphans who are too damaged to stay conscious. They both sleep in turns. They want to remain in sleep because they are aware that real world is dangerous.

The orphans lie nearby, interspersed among the strays. They sleep in shifts, like sentries. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 138)

In the camp, Dr Masud came across a Mullah who was addressing the Muslims. He refers the Pathan boy whose family was killed but he didn't convert to another religion. It is quite true that forced conversion was part of the violence and women and children were subjected to it.

Both Shankar and Keshav were alone in all this chaos and they had to take care of themselves.

Shankar and Keshav have no bodyguards. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 163)

The boys are searching for their mother but they couldn't find her. They try but all in vain. They stare at each arriving train.

The boys stare hardest then, eyes eager for whatever new reality the rear edge of the train unveils. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 163)

Keshav and Shankar see sixteen Hindu men burning the house of a Muslim Lawyer. They both get excited to see them and think that they will take them to the hospital. He was worried about Shankar but was relieved to see Hindus. He did not know that those Hindus were savage just like Saif and Qasim. Those Hindu men try to find jewellery in the burning house but couldn't find anything. The narrator knows his twins are innocent and can trust anyone easily. But he cannot do anything to refrain him. Keshav couldn't see the merciless attitude of Hindus and Narrator knew that worst was coming.

They found no jewellery. I found no mercy. I know what kind of human beings these are. And Keshav is running towards them. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 178)

Chanting “Hare Hare Mahadev”, one of them grabs Keshav and inquires his identity. He mistakes “Keshav” for “Kashif” and thinks that he is a Muslim. This is where Keshav realizes that these people are savage. These bandits think that they are Muslims and try to burn him alive.

Keshav shakes his head, afraid to speak. The hold on his collar has tightened, and the cloth cuts into his neck. (Majmudar, 2011, p. 178)

Keshav tries to explain that he isn't a Muslim and he is being mistaken for a Muslim but couldn't say a word because he was astonished to see their way of treatment. Shankar is alone, waiting for his brother. Shankar is ill and his breathing is becoming weak. Keshav on the other hand is fighting for his survival. Their dead father can't help them. The only thing his father can do is follow him wherever he runs. So, this is what he does. Keshav runs for his life. Keshav doesn't run to Shankar as he realizes that they would kill him too. He shifts his direction. The biggest form of violence the children suffered during partition was witnessing the murder of their siblings in front of their own eyes. Keshav's courage was great because he didn't give up. After all the running, he still feels so calm. He is still quite scared but he knows he is in safe hands now.

4. Conclusion

When a person faces the same situation again, he or she knows how to react to it because of the experience he or she had been subjected to in the past. With the passage of life every “Yesterday” becomes a part of the past. Amit Majmudar's *Partitions* explains the violence in light of the trauma theory of Caruth and encompasses all the relevant incidents which symbolized violence. The examples from the novel such as struggle of Shankar and Keshav, Simran's plight and Dr Roshan's helpful nature towards the victims portray that even though it was a difficult period, yet compassion was alive. Chunks from *Unclaimed Experience* and their relevancy with the novel show that history can never be forgotten. Children were the easy target because of their vulnerability and innocence.

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