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Broken Selves: Identifying Relativity in *Lihaaf* and *Jaadein*

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Abstract

The Partition of British India into Pakistan and India is one of the most heinous manifestations of humanity on the subcontinent. Women suffered the most in the name of vengeance against another community or nation which led to Social Inclusion that is the denial of rights. The revelation of the relativity of reality is too just and crudely honest that more often than not, the act of realizing such subtleties becomes deliberately incomprehensible to the quotidian human being. Such ambivalence in perspective, circumstance, conventions, and binaries, surfaces through the common denominator, which is time. This study explores the relativity in the times of partition, affirming the statement by the assimilation of two of the works of Ismat Chughtai, pre-partition to modernity, "*Lihaaf*" and "*Jadein*", highlighting the prerequisites for femininity in the pre-partition times, and cognizing the taboo, to the tolerable, finally to the approved.

Furthermore, the segregation of women and society by *différance* has made deconstruction theory viable in analysis. It was a bewildering time where one's loss of motherland, their kin, and their identity surmised into this perpetual state of disarray that dominated the post-partition minds.

Keywords: Partition, Femininity, Ambivalence, Communal Harmony, Societal Norms.

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Within South Asia, the 1947 Partition is remembered as a painful event, fueled by personal memories of violence, exile, movement, and resettlement. Following the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, ethnic and communal violence increased dramatically. A partition is a cataclysmic catastrophic occurrence that causes millions of people to lose everything they own, and these people become victims of humankind's stark brutality. Our interpretations are limited to the environment in which we find ourselves; we homo sapiens have a desperate need, an insatiable thirst to be a part of something greater than ourselves, as it was in the ancient days when it was the herd, in which every individual worked in perfect harmony to obtain a specified goal and distribute their wealth and resources to attain the bare absolute or appropriate for survival; however, when the same situation is faced in cohesion, the repercussions are significantly different.

Despite the fact that we do not face the hardships that our forefathers had, they completed their duty and propagated, sustaining the then-infant concept of society. However, in today's culture, there are conventions that must be followed by every member of this congregation; these customs, known as patriarchal heterosexuality, are the gospel for humanity. Those who fail to live up to these norms or comply with these faulty concepts are regarded as outliers in society, and their favor is withheld so that it can be spent on mindless devotees who proudly practice this abhorrence. Remains unknown to the rest, this small fraction with their unusual perception and reason to create the sensible, the commendable deliberate relinquishment of their position in the community to break conventions and re-establish the definition of quotidian life, rationality, merit, virtue, and sin. Realizing functioning for the next of kin, for the heir of oddity who would turn these intrinsically imperfect possibilities into a creed for the remarkable to follow.

Before Literary Criticism, there were few pillars of common viewpoints that were unanimously agreed upon by the writer or creator, and it was *Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author"* that born the unique opinion and placed it among the universal ones. The reader was not just a recipient of the work; he or she was also not a necessary component for the meaning to be achieved. The inconsistencies between the realizations were not only lauded but underlined as a new work, complete in itself, with its own flaws and brilliance, which, like the work that generated it, is open for dialogue after Barthes' discourse. These following renderings, which were embellished with a plethora of ideas, were constantly reinvented by many fine distinctions that shaped the minds of readers of a particular era, resulting in fresh realizations of the same book in succession, as each succeeding era introduced its own ideas. Each succeeding epoch introduced its own ideas, bringing together new minds to address an issue that had been solved for centuries yet looked to have room for improvement. The subcontinent's greatest feminist writers of the late post-colonial and early modern eras of Indian English literature were once denounced during partition, penalized for depicting female sexuality, and rejected for the "obscenity" of homosexuality.

Ismat Chughtai was the author, and the chastised work was her story "lihaaf"(Chughtai,1942). The story opens with the narrator's adopted aunt, Begam Jaan, who was able to marry Nawab Sahib, "who (Begam Jaan) seems to be of "ripe years"(Chughtai,1942) because he (Nawab) was very virtuous" but very little was done to achieve this union, as stated in the story, as Nawab Sahib "tucked her (Begum Jaan) away in the residence with his other personal belongings and promptly forgot her," placing her In his own haveli, Nawab offered schooling for "young, fair, and slender-waisted" boys, working himself in the process, but Begam Jaan "wasted away in painful loneliness."Rabhu, who "rescued her from the fall,"(Chughtai,1942) found a remedy for an itch that no Hakim could. Begam would find relief from the itch in Rabhu's long body rubs when imprisoned in the Zenana. "Shortly after these rubs, Begam's slim physique began to fill out," says the author.

Her cheeks started to gleam and radiate, and she flowered." Later, Rabbu's son, who was under Nawab's guidance, fled away, leaving the narrator with little choice but to conclude that the youngster was "ungrateful."(Chughtai,1942)

Begam lost all joy and fell into yet another melancholic state of yearning for her itch to do tend, to which she found the narrator, to whom she lost her wits and managed to make the writer carrion of her sexual urges, however during time Rabbu had to leave to make an effort to find her son, during which time Begam lost all joy and fell into yet another melancholic state of longing for her itch to be tended, to which she found Rabbu did not eat anything throughout the night and was enjoying a supper under the lihaaf on Begam's bed, which cast elephantine shadows on the wall, according to the conclusion later in the narrative following Rabbu's return. Female sexuality was never openly expressed, observed, or discussed in society in pre-partition India or British India. Women were supposed to be meek, coy, and unselfish; the irony of female sexuality is that it was once a man's hidden pride and now it's an open humiliation. Begam's homosexuality was not innately hers but was induced by Nawab's, it was his act of not consummating, leaving the raw sexuality idly by for it to find comfort in Rabbu; Begam's homosexuality was not innately hers but was induced by Nawab's, it was his act of not consummating, leaving the raw sexuality idly by for it to find comfort in Rabbu.

Certainly, Begam's sexual conquest had to be accomplished in the apparent lack of Rabbu, within which Begam discovered yet again another transitional beneficiary in the narrator, Begam was the victim of Nawab's indifference to female sexuality, but that does not give Begam free reign to sexually assault a child, and Nawab's repugnant progressions on Rabbu's son also fall into the same category; under no circumstances would these horrendous crimes be substantiated. This homosexuality in Begam was created by the Nawab's inherent homosexuality; despite its demotion to the Zenana and Haveli, it was still prevalent. There are

conventions that must be followed by every member of this community; these customs, known as patriarchal heterosexuality, are the gospel for humanity. Those who fail to live up to these standards or adapt to these faulty notions are regarded as outliers in society, and their benefits are withheld so that they can be spent on the senseless followers who proudly exercise this detestation.

This small fraction unbeknownst to the rest with their unconventional perception and reason to conceive the rational, the commendable deliberate relinquishment of their position in the community to break norms and re-establishing the definition of quotidian life, rationality, merit, virtue, and sin. Realizing functionality anew for the next of kin, for the heir of anomaly who would cognize these inherently flawed prospects into a dogma for the exemplary to stand beside.

The subcontinent's greatest feminist writers of the late post-colonial and early modern eras of Indian English literature were once denounced during partition, penalized for depicting female sexuality, and rejected for the "obscenity" of homosexuality. Ismat Chughtai was the author, and the chastised work was her story "*Lihaaf*." (Chughtai, 1942)

The dominant and the subordinates, the colonizer and the colonized, master and slave, man and woman, one half of the human race against the other, unconscious submissiveness, brough ambivalence, reluctant loyalty, and the abominable plight against the order, functionality, norm, convention, and above all faith in the concept of society are all binaries in the world. The daily neglect that a woman faces is witnessed firsthand by her parents, as evidenced by the fact that Begam Jaan was married off to a Nawab at a young age in order for her family to appear normal in the prejudiced eyes of society, in the hopes of maintaining their social status in the insignificant eyes of strangers who pass on insignificant judgments on their family and Begam Jaan's chastity.

Unfortunately, her desertion did not end when she left her family; it had only just begun, as a woman's misery is prevalent in every bond that they have created. Another radical portrayal of femininity that drew unwanted attention was in her story "*Jaadein*," set in the midst of partition and its atrocities, where humanity revealed its true, primal colors, under the aegis of faith, religion, and creed, believing themselves to be victims of the atrocities committed by the other faction, pray the wrong prayer and live under the false faith, and above all, the ones who preach the wrong gospel. Individuals in the birth community, who are the embodiment of beauty and generosity, were undoubtedly the victims of these atrocities; it was women.

Men used the communal unrest as an alibi to give in to primal lust, blurring the lines between humanity and barbarism, further affirming that humans and animals are separated by the one word "social," once the façade of the civilized fades, they reveal their abhorrent visage. In a time like this, an extraordinary story of human solidarity and goodwill between two families from opposing sides was a revelation.

The story of "*Jaadein*" follows a Muslim family living in a Hindu-majority neighborhood and their front-door neighbors, who gradually became their friend and confidant. Roopchand's two households were Doctor Sahib's Hindu family and Narrator's own Muslim family; no evidence exists that these two families were the epitome of the everyday Hindu and Muslim families, although their religious conventions were not hidden in any way.

The two families' daily lives were connected, and there were frequent conversations about communal unrest throughout the pre-partition period, demonstrating that these two families did not avoid potentially dangerous conflicts since they knew that such a ramification would never occur between them. Furthermore, because the foundation of the companionship between the families is strong, the beliefs and opinions expressed were of little consequence to their family and were treated as such, relegating them to the same category as trivialities

like sports and other individual preferences, such preferences or affiliation did not shake their faith in each other." Ammi and Chachi would stay clear of politics," implying the patriarchal belief that women had no participation in men's disputes, relegating them to their inferior status. Following the death of the narrator's father, the Hindu Doctor Sahib assumed the obligations of his deceased friend and tended to his family as if it were his own; "no significant decision was made in the house without consulting him." Yet, over time, these families succumbed to the same hatred that had previously warped many souls, resulting in communal riots and other tragedies.

The distance between the two households progressively grew, the border battle was taking its toll on these two families, and the families who stayed disconnected from the collective notion were suddenly holstering badges of various sovereign states. "The distance between the two houses seemed to crawl with velocities," as depicted by the houses, once one and now divided by a few leagues that infinitely increase every day and every day traversing the distance becomes more treacherous than the last, "the distance between the two houses seemed to crawl with venomous snakes". The narrator's family decided to leave to move after this experience, and Ammi was the only one who objected, questioning the veracity of such concepts as homeland and belonging. Furthermore, Ammi's defiant deposition astounded many readers of the time, as this was the same woman who had previously remained silent in hypothetical arguments, but now finds herself in a situation where she has complete control over her life and has ruled out any possibility that she could not stand behind. Ammi relinquishes her identities as a mother and a member of society at this time, and in doing so, she stands in solidarity with the place she chooses to call home, remaining firmly planted in the same grounds that gave birth to her and deciding to live in the same neighborhood where she herself became a woman. Doctor Sahib was filled with sorrow after his front door neighbors left; ashamed, he went to the train station to fetch them back; they were back in the same fellowship as before, possibly even better than before;

having been restored to her homeland, Ammi was also restored in sentiment. In the midst of such savagery, a ray of light might be found in these acts of kindness and fraternity, as well as the regret for not practicing such benevolence, all of which were demonstrated by Doctor Sahib.

Both stories show the hardship of womanhood: one becomes submissive to a man because he has control over her chastity, while the other succumbs to the popular notion of the motherland. Both of them defy convention by obtaining what they desire in the hopes of discovering the answer to their fundamental inquisition. They have been too dependent on those who have mistreated, oppressed, and molested them for eons to solve an inquisition that has been subconsciously within them and whose solution they possess the virtue of deducing. It is their subordination that prevents them from passing judgment, leaving the decision to those who rule over them. As a result, there was the woman whose neglected chastity gave rise to homosexuality within her, the woman whose resolve was based on her separation from everything she had built.

These women, who were formerly considered outsiders and abnormalities in their eras and civilizations, are now renowned as radical feminists who are urged and respected. There were many differences between the times, but these people avoided them. The traditions faded away, and these women became the embodiment of femininity. Their conception was not irrational or erratic; their plight was meticulously analyzed in the hopes of cognizing their existence now, since the inception of conventions that were made to restrain them in the construct of society, to protect them from the reality of human behavior, to avoid their physical defilement and welcome their emotional torment. They were purposefully excluded from the society that they had created, dividing it into two sections; Zenana's placement is an example of a fictitious community created for women to lead them away from the actual one, giving them a sense of false socialization to discourage them from speaking with other males.

A controlled exposure to the fictitious community, with strict controls on the information they have access to and the knowledge they are allowed to know, oppresses women in ways that go beyond physical methods. Following such oppression, a few brave souls would undoubtedly start an insurrection, since it is predicted that creation will revolt against its creator. As a result, the impertinence of the past has now become an insurgency.



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