Colonization as an Emasculating Experience: The Symbolic Castration of the Colonized Men in Pre/Partition Fiction

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The colonizing powers have always been viewed as forces which render the colonized powerless. In the sub-continent also, colonization acted as an agent ofvanquishing the male power, and at the same time of damaging the myth of the male figure as a symbol of power. Thus puncturing the image of the male as all-powerful, the men of the sub-continent were reduced to diminutives and pigmies who may be viewed as notfar different from the cringing and crawling shadows one finds in Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad. This chapter aims to discuss selected male characters in Pre / Partition fiction who were castrated (symbolically, if not otherwise) and divested of allsort of power, be it identity, faith or any other source of deriving strength. The research intends to read this castration as a kind of victimization which left the men not only incapacitated in the face of Partition's violence but also left them boggled, weak, fearful, indecisive, and drained of all the positive attributes. So if the country, as a motherland, was considered to be raped through the process of colonization, as a fatherland, it was castrated. Castration meant the ripping out of all the spring of power and giving it away to someone else i.e. the colonizer. in other words, the country as a mother figure was raped because as a father figure it was castrated and thus rendered impotent and thereby incapable of protecting its honour, religion, communities, families and even its own self.

There is a lot of evidence of male characters in Pre / Partition fiction who became victims of the emasculating colonizing powers in the sub-continent. One such example is the character of Mir Nihal in Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*. Throughout the novel, Mir Nihal can be seen as having fears of death and extinction in the backdrop of colonial existence which he had to bear with. The "impotent anger" (Ali 138) which he feels during the coronation scene qualifies his insignificant existence in a colonized state.

Though he feels enraged against the British who are ruling them, yet is unable to do anything about it. The helplessness and impotence seen in his character is similar to Okonkowo's character in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Both the characters are true reflections of men who once were representations of power in a patriarchal society and have now entered a state of subjugation under the colonial rule and thus can be viewed as the victims of political changes. Frantz Omar Fanon reads this powerlessness in his book *Black Skins White Masks* by looking at the Negroes as castrated. "The penis, the symbol of manhood, is annihilated, which is to say that it is denied." (Fanon 125). The Negro, according to him, is irrupted in his "corporeality" (126). Literally as well as metaphorically, the colonized men can be studied as men who are emasculated or castrated.

Colonization was an emasculating experience for the Indian native men in different ways. Hegemonic forces do not always control people through power but also through mind. In the process of Colonization, people are policed in a way so as to serve the purpose of only the empowering party. Mir Nihal, who has the potential to kill as great an enemy as a snake, cannot counter his British enemies. He feels impotent in the face of the power the British have acquired in the sub-continent and also in the face of the English manners exhibitant in his own son Asghar. Asghar's mannerism makes him confront the limits of "colonial alienation" (Bhabha Foreword x) which denies the individual his original self. Asghar can be seen in the novel walking around in his English shoes or English dressing gown, "the White man's artifice inscribed on the Black man's body" (Bhabha Foreword xvi). He has decorated his house with sofas, chairs and tables of English fashion and feels happy when these English accessories attract the attention of the people around him. The economic dependence, sense of inferiority and a complex for English language, education and manners, and a colour of lesser significance all came together to incapacitate the men of the sub-continent.

The economic dependence had raised the status of the British in the eyes of these native men. They had started seeing the British government as their god. Siddiq, the bania tells his friends, "'For it is through it [the British Government] that we are getting all this.'" (Ali 136). These men reduce themselves to the level of subjugation quite naturally. Siddiq reprimands his friends on being ungrateful to the English and for himself he says, "I am just dying to see my gracious king…" (136). The Indians even joined the British army to fight for the British. Ahmed Ali brings out the irony of the

situation, “Those who had been conquered were going to fight for the conquerors, lay down their lives for twelve or eighteen rupees a month.” (208). The ones who hated the rule of the British reacted to this kind of subjugatory behavior only in form of sighs, curses or silent anger. “But the older residents … were stricken dumb, or cursed the Farangis at home…” (137). Even the loss of the British cannot bring out an open response from them. When the pavilion got burnt down, “Mir Nihal and Habibuddin felt sectretly happy.” (137). Theirs is a life of slavery in which, though they are not exactly claimed and shackled, yet are unable to say anything let alone do something. Their condition is none better than their women who are powerless and thus can only curse the British. One curses only when one cannot do anything else. So when Begum Nihal curses the Frangis, “‘May they be destroyed for what they have done to Hindustan. May God’sscourage fall on them.’” (137), she seems to be representing Mir Nihal’s feelings, “… and they all burned with rage and impotent anger, for they could do nothing.” (138).

Their condition is also a result of the impotence of the Indian rulers who could not counter the British manipulations and easily lost their homeland to the British colonizers. Habibuddin discusses the causes of the downfall of Delhi and regrets the kingship of Bahadur Shah Zafar who preferred to lay down his weapons and hand over his kingdom to the British instead of fighting them back. Habibuddin says about Bahadur Shah Zafar, “He loved to be looked upon as a martyr, and was too fond of a sufistic and easy life.” (Ali 141). So this is how Bahadur Shah Zafar lets the English empower him. He lets himself go into the passive condition. Habibuddin says, “He allowed himself to be deceived by that traitor, MirzaElahiBaksh, who was an English spy and had sold himself to them.” (141). The passive response of these rulers is quite evident here. Unable to do anything, they presented themselves and their people to be mistreated and looted. The ultimate condition of these rulers is reflected in the form of a creeping, crawling beggar i.e. MirzaNasirulMulk, the youngest son of Bahadur Shah Zafar. “A beggar emerged from a by-lane, lifting himself up on his hands and dragging his legs along the floor; and a bag was hanging round his neck.” (149). The physical condition of this man tells a lot upon the disempowered state of the native men.

Mir Nihal is too much conscious of the slavery the Indians are subjected to. He is extremely annoyed to see all the excitement the inhabitants of Delhi exhibited on the coronation ceremony of the English

king. He is filled with rage to see the native *rajahs* and *nawabs* following the English procession. "And Mir Nihal thought of their slavishness and their treacherous acceptance of the foreign yoke, he was filled with shame and disgust." (Ali 144). It is quite distasteful for him to think that these princes have been winning concessions for themselves by betraying their own people. He questions the "empire[s] …" (144) these princes have established for themselves. The word 'empire' is used ironically here for no power is vested in these so-called princes by the original rulers i.e. the English. No reaction or revolt is possible for the rule is quite established and is backed by powerful and forceful threats. During the coronation ceremony, in the forefront the procession goes on and "in the background were the guns booming, threatening the subdued people of Hindustan." (144). The very presence of too many soldiers and the show of power is enough to intimidate the Indians. So the "once mighty Hindustan" (145) is reduced to a languished existence. "Already they had put the iron chains of slavery round their once unbending necks." (145)

The subjugation has marred the spirits of not only the political leadership but also that of the religious representations. The Jama Masjid had been "vulgarly decorated with a garland of golden writing containing slavish greetings" (Ali 145) for the new English king. Gone are the days when the Muslim men had the courage to defend their mosques against any British invasion. Mir Nihal reminisces the time when the same mosque was invaded by the British but only to confront a powerful resistance from the yet empowered Muslims. In those times "… it was better to die like men…" (146). In the present scenario, according to Mir Nihal, the manliness of the Muslim men can be seen nowhere. Mir Nihal himself cannot do anything against this kind of emasculation and rages futilely on the cowardice of this new kind of men who are "… chicken-hearted and happy in their disgrace." (147). He himself is nothing better than them for he can see the disgrace but just like all of them can do nothing about it butonly weep "dry tears of blood" (147). "He was filled with shame and grief, until the tears of helplessness came into his eyes and he wiped them from his cheeks." (147). He mourns upon the miseries of those "who see and suffer and can do nothing." (147). He laments their impotence and reflects upon their condition, "A fire burns within their breasts; but the flames do not shoot up." (147). Their souls are deadened for "Only the soul is consumed by the internal heat and they feel dead, so dead, alas…" (147). A deadened and defeated Mir Nihal finds himself void of the power to challenge the mighty British. He, therefore, vests the responsibility upon the youngest one in the

family i.e. Nasim. He believes Nasim and his generation would be brave enough to drive the British out of their country. Towards the end of the novel, Mir Nihal can be seen reduced to an incapacitated being. “he was weary and tired, limp like a shaken hand. His world had fallen to pieces all around him, smothered by indifference and death. Yet he was still alive to mope like an owl, and count his days, at the mercy of Time and Fate.” (275).

Under the colonial stress not only the communal, national and religious identity of the men was suppressed, but also the masculine identity of the Indian men underwent a serious turmoil. This emasculation figured in three ways. Firstly the colonial education and manners mimicked by these men turned them into nothing better than apes. Secondly, the suppression of their identity for such a long time resulted in an outburst of a violent assertion of their identity when the colonizers finally decided to leave. As a reaction, these men wanted to harm or even annihilate the ones who were opposites of their identity in terms of religion, community or sex. This violent assertion of identity came out with a force even greater than that by which it was suppressed. The cases of violence thus became the cases of ‘displaced aggression’ (Freud). Thirdly, the feelings of helplessness, powerlessness and impotence during the colonial regime made these men psychologically unstable. Never again were these men able to rise above the lines drawn out by their colonial masters. Pre / Partition fiction provides a consolidated ground for the making up of the psyche of these men who had been rendered powerless by a more than hundred years of colonial rule. The superiority of the colonizers is asserted through their colour, demeanor, education and the power position which they had acquired in the sub-continent. A common man, assailed by all these factors, was reduced to a non-significant position. Men, who were supposed to have power in a patriarchal set up of India, felt dwarfed by the intimidating presence of the colonizers. Many a characters felt this impotent rage in their characters.

The instances of men emotionally harassed and psychologically destroyed are many in Pre / Partition fiction.The protagonist, LalaFateh Chand, in PremChand’s story “The Resignation” is a hero in the eyes of his wife but the same hero becomes an insignificant being when he acts in front of his white boss. He is one of the many men whom the British have drained of all the energy and honour in working for them. Like Satya, Lala’s wife also instigates him to react. She asks him “Why don’t you refuse?” (Chand 318) and “Why don’t you say you can’t come?” (318). The

fear, servility and humility he feels in front of his boss are marked upon his personality. He has to hurry back to his office when he is called by his boss right after he had just returned home after a long day's work. He appears in front of his boss apologetic and ashamed of what he does not know what. He "tottered in and gave the Sahib a low bow" (319). On Sahib's reprimand, Fateh Chand's "blood froze" (319) with fear. He behaves "sheepishly" and talks "inaudibly" (319) in front of his white master. Though he was weak, yet he hated it when his boss insulted him by asking him to beg forgiveness by holding ears.His pride and manliness are greatly hurt because of the humiliating behavior of his white boss. His race, position and status, however, render him defenceless.

To keep up the image of a macho man in front of his wife, he tells lies to her. He claims to have done what he can only dream of. He tells her that he thrashed his boss for having insulted him. Sharda, his wife, is thrilled to learn that and appreciates him by exclaiming, "Bravo" (Chand 321). She seems to act braver than him and reminds him the status of a man in their society and also in her eyes. According to her, if a man is not able to protect his honour, he has no right over his family or other social spaces. She declares, "If you hadn't retaliated, I would have been thoroughly ashamed of you… Now I am proud of you. Whatever the consequences I shall face them joyfully…" (322). It is important to note here that Sharda can keep believing in the ideals of bravery, honour and pride for she is not in direct contact with her colonial masters. She is utterly unaware of the psychological complexities of her husband's mental make up. She, quite unconsciously, burdens him with the ideals which he has long lost in his life as a colonial subject. The lesson on honour, bravery and pride given by his wife encourages LalaFateh Chand and give him an extra-ordinary vigour and a resolve to teach his white master a lesson. Charged with the confidence which his wife has in him, he goes and beats his white boss up for which, however, he has to lose his job. It is, however, important for him that both of these actions i.e. of beating his boss and of resigning are taken by he himself. The incident, on the one hand, helps him in reconciling his fate with his name, Fateh Chand which means "the moon of victory" (317) and in realizing the ideals of his wife.But on the other hand, it takes away his job, his way of living and places him in an economically insecure position.

The men have to pay a heavy price if they dare to express their hatred for the British. UstadMangu in "The New Constitution" by

SaadatHasanManto, hates the British. He hates them for they were ruling over India against the will of the Indians who could do nothing to overthrow them. UstadMangu is, however, helpless for he cannot do anything against the British. He curses them to his heart's content and has to content with that. "He would deliver himself of a heavyweight curse, shake his head …" (Manto 207) and continue grumbling against the whites. He used to remain depressed for many days after being humiliated by any one of the Englishmen. He could not give way to the inner anger while talking to a gora. That is why when he encounters a gora on 1st April, "His entire face was laughing, but inside his chest roared a fire ready to consume the gora." (213). Fanon writes in The Wretched of the Earth:

> In the Colonial world, the emotional sensitivity of the native is kept on the surface of his skin like an open sore which flinches from the caustic agent; and the psyche shrinks back, obliterates itself and finds outlet in muscular demonstrations which have caused certain very wise men to say that the native is a hysterical type. (Fanon WOE 44)

This hysteria is the outcome of suppressing the hatred against the British because of the helpless and powerless position of these men. UstadMangu gives vent to his pent up anger and rage he has been nursing for such a long time by bearing with the humiliation from his colonial masters and beats up the gora. He, however, is duly punished and imprisoned for this show of confidence and manliness in front of his masters. In all these cases, the men have been long under the subjugation of the British and retained their anger for such a long time that it has harmed them in many ways.The lava of anger, when it comes out, hurts them more than it does anyone else.

The greatest outcome of the colonial suppression is indecisiveness. Hukum Chand's character in *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh is presented as almost always quite indecisive in nature. He is a government official and thus could not even try to help his loved ones even when he wanted to do so. The standards of masculinity have become so low for these colonized men that the one who is more servile to the white masters is regarded as more virile. Hukum Chand is defined as a 'naradmi' by the people around him because he knows how to please the authorities in rule. Meet Singh describes him as thus"Now Hukum Chand is a *naradmi*… He always kept the sahibs pleased and they gave him one promotion after

another." (Singh 39). The reality is that his manliness is totally crushed under the weight of his job under his white masters. His *dharma* requires him to help his people but his duty towards his white masters steers him towards another direction. He finds himself torn between the two obligations. His beloved, the dancing girl named Hassena's prides in him being a powerful man. The truth is that this "… big powerful magistrate…" (91) is rendered helpless by his seemingly powerful position. He cannot take sides with his people. He relies on false hopes and expect other people to save what he himself cannot. His helplessness is visible in the scene in which he gets to know that Haseena would be boarding the same train which the Sikhs plan to attack. "Hukum Chand clutched the arms of his chair convulsively… Hukum Chand sank back in his chair. He covered his face with his hands. He beat his forehead gently with his clenched fist. He tugged at his hair as if he could pull ideas out of his brain." (138). He, seen as a 'naradmi' among his people, appears in this scene as the most helpless creature on Earth, may be even more helpless than the women like Haseena, for they have the confidence in the powers of their men and remain fearless.

Iqbal Singh is another such character in *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh. The influence of the British has reached him indirectly i.e. through the English education and philosophy. The English life style has taken away his own cultural "differentiae of manliness: aggression, achievement, control, competition and power." (Nandy9). He eats English food and tries to deal with the issues around him in his own English ways. Life with the British has taken away his belief in his religion. He can eat fish with head, eyes, and tail all but is disgusted to inhale the smell of purified butter. He is so immersed in the English lifestyle he has learnt during the years of his education that he is unable to get mixed up with the rest of his race. The result is that his own people feel detached from him and rather fear him because of his English demeanor. When the local policemen come to arrest him, they are over-awed by his English paraphernalia. "The young man's accent, the rubber pillows and mattress and all the other things they had seen in the room, and above all, his aggressive attitude made them uneasy." (Singh 47).His Englishness evokes fear in them for they have long remained slaves to the English rulers. Iqbal is conscious of this effect and tries it to earn a position of benefit among his people. Once he is arrested, he intends to impress the magistrate with his British accent. "He would let him have it in English __ the accent would make him squirm." (55).Though he, like Sardarji, has learnt English

language to help his people and country, yet this "mock learning" (Macaulay 125) has had only superficial effects upon him.

The concept of knowing English among the Indians is associated with being educated and powerful. Even a scoundrel like Jaggat Singhwants to learn English. He requests Iqbal, "Teach me some *gitmit* like "good morning". Will you Babuji-sahib?" (Singh 95). Iqbal is a *babuji*and a *sahib* at the same time for he has the power of English language. It is ironic that though Iqbal wants to impress the people around him with his English, he preaches the other Indians to get rid of it. He asks Jagga, "'What will you do with English?' Iqbal asked. 'The sahibs have left. You should learn your own language.'" (95). The disappointment, however, comes when one comes to know that the English education and British training has done no good to Iqbal. It has rather taken away from him what even an illiterate Sikh like Juggat Singh has. This kind of education has made him selfish and he evolves new ideals: "In a state of chaos self-preservation is the supreme duty." (147). No Sikh would have believed in such a selfish motif.

Iqbal Singh believes that religion is not important and cannot help man in his civil matters. He is boggled by the religious classification of the people of the sub-continent. In an attempt to erase the barriers of religion, Iqbal shows a complete disbelief in the common identity markers. He refuses to use a surname for himself. In his opinion, a surname would give him a religious identity, which he does not need. Despite being a Sikh, he has got himself circumcised as a Muslim would do. His great ideals, however, get crashed when he confronts the real life situations. He himself is not ready to bear the consequences of the ideals preached by him. For instance, he claims to be fighting against inequality, injustice and discrimination, yet when he is put in jail, he expects a better treatment from the policemen than the other prisoners. He feels himself as far removed from his people as the English have been. Being a member of a sectionalized system and thus a minute-man, he very easily comes to believe that "Iqbal was A-class. Jugga was the rock-bottom C." (Singh 64). Iqbal and his likes are thus removed not only from their own people but also from his British ideals who never owned him.

Iqbal comes to the village Mano Majrawith great ideas in his mind. He wants to play a role to stop people from engaging themselves in communal and religious violence. He is, however, as coward as to be disturbed on knowing about Ram Lal, the moneylender's murder. Meet

Singh says, "Why, Babu Sahib, you have come to stop killing and you are upset by one murder." (Singh 35). Smilingly, he adds, "I thought you had come to stop such things, Babu Sahib." (35).Iqbal's "Anglicized way of looking at things" (38) is quite baffling for the ones around him. The sub-Inspector laughs at his English ideals, "It seems you have been living in foreign lands too long, Mr. Iqbal." (66). Before Iqbal meets the people of the village of *Mano Majra*, his meeting with Meet Singh had established the fact that "…he did not belong" (38). Both the parties are unable to understand each other. This breach created by the English Education has rendered people like Iqbal useless to the society.The definitions of masculinity are different for both these groups. Manliness, according to the Punjabi's (specifically the Sikhs) code of moral behavior meant something more than truth, honour and integrity. Human relationship and fellowship is more important to them than any other value. Their definition of a "*naradmi*" is "_ a he-man who had defied authority (magistrates and police) and religion (oath on the scripture) but proved true to friendship." (38).

Though Iqbal argues a lot against violence during the course of the novel yet is unable to perform even a single action to avoid the same. In his real life situations, his education fails him. Also, he cannot revert back to his Sikh self for he has gone too far away from his origin. So helpless is he that he requests Meet Singh, an old man, to take some action to improve the prevailing conditions. He asks Meet Singh, "Bhaiji, can't you stop it?" (Singh 146). Consciously or unconsciously, he is relying upon religion here. But his own theories regarding religion come in contradiction to his present pleas to Meet Singh for action. Meet Singh tells him squarely about his incapacity and tells Iqbal "These are bad times, Iqbal Singhji, very bad times. There is no faith or religion." (146). His sermon to Meet Singh brings out the irony of his own situation. When he tells Meet Singh that he "must" (146) do something, Meet Singh reminds him his aim in coming to Mano Majra. Iqbal, however, has almost forgotten to recognize his duty and snaps back at Meet Singh " 'Me? Why me?' asked Iqbal with a startled innocence. 'What have I to do with it? I do not know these people." (146). Iqbalproves to be as helpless as Meet Singh. Meet Singh says, "I thought you with your European ideas had some other remedy." (147). It seems as if the education has paralyzed him more than anyone else. It has incapacitated him to be able to help his community.

The time for the only action that he can take against violence is superfluously wasted by him in weighing the pros and cons of the sacrifice

that he is supposed to make. Instead of helping the situation, he finds fault with the people of India (as if he is not one of them). He reflects, "India is constipated with a lot of humbug." (Singh 148). The analysis helps him to remain detached and unaffected by the impending catastrophe. He looks at the situation in a new way. "A few subhuman species were going to slaughter some of their own kind__ a mild setback to the annual increase of four million." (147). In his opinion, it is the attitude of Indians towards Religion, art, music, and life in general that fails to create the awareness of good and evil and the difference between them. He laments the lack of reason in the Eastern people. "We are of the mysterious East. No proof, just faith. No reason; just faith. Thought, which should be the *sine qua non* of a philosophical code, is dispensed with." (149). It is ironic that the reason or thought which, in Iqbal's opinion, is missing in the Indians desists his own self from taking the right action. Reason decapacitates him. On the other hand,it is from religion that Jugga seeks help to do what is right i.e. to save thousands of Muslims from being killed. Jugga is not concerned if his sacrifice would be recognized or not. He simply goes to the gurduwara and absorbs enough strength from there to do what is right and detains people from doing what is wrong. The reality remains that it is Jugga, an unruly,an uneducated thug, untainted by the British way of life who sacrifices his life to let the train reach safely to Pakistan.

Men who try to come out of the humiliating subjugation by seeking strength from their religious, communal and masculine symbols remain unable to do so. In *I Shall not hear the Nightingale* by Khushwant Singh, Sher Singh is a true lion in his own social circle but in front of Mr. Taylor, the sahib bahadur, his stature and his intentions all seem to be insignificant even to his own self. Though he claims to fight "to redeem the Indian's masculinity by defeating the British." (Nandy9), yet he discovers his own emasculated and emaciated position in the face of the power of the colonizer. The ideal to help his people is over shadowed by his fear of the white masters and thus compels him to remain a "secret sympathizer" (Singh 285) to the cause of his own people. The secured position earned to him by his father depends upon the Englishmen whom his father has been serving for a long time and also through the wars. He dreams to become a hero of his own people without losing this security. His ambivalent character drives him to wish for "the best of the two worlds" (175). This ambivalence not only requires them to become servile sycophants to the British but also renders them weak and impotent. Most of them attempt to align themselves with their British masters thus removing them far from

their own people. When Buta Singh referred to the Indians and their bad habits, he excludes his own self from them. "When Buta Singh made such statements he excepted himself." (224). That is why when he is talking about the characterless Indians who butter and flatter the English, he refers to the magistrates other than him.

Even when they know the problem, these men remain unable to solve it. While tracing the reasons for "servile mentality" (Singh 225) of the people Buta Singh regards the long lasted slavery of the British as the primary reason. "All these magistrates are great lions in their own homes. When it comes to facing the sahib, you should see them: each anxious to push the other in front. When Taylor is there, they can't utter a squeak." (225). He then goes on to glorify his meeting with Mr. Taylor forgetting his apologetic and servile begging and assuming a "… generous and patronizing" (225) tone. He brags and compares his powers with the Sikh heroes of their past i.e. RanaPratap, Sivaji or their Guru, Govind Singh.This lack of realization leads to a misunderstood belief "We eat their salt" (227) when the reality is as Sher Singh says that "They suck our blood" (227). The truth is that Buta Singh flatters Mr. Taylor to the extent of being mean. It is for this reason that when Buta Singh shows his faith for the British Raj and persists in its continuity in India, he feels guilty. "Buta Singh felt mean. There were limits beyond which flattery should not go; his frequently did." (308). No matter how much Buta Singh brags in front of others, the reality remains that he crawls in front of his masters as nothing more than an insect. The people around him also know this fact. The sub-inspector angrily tells Sher Singh the reasons for which he is receiving favours. He says, "It is because your father has been rubbing his nose at Mr. Taylor's threshold every day that you are being given this opportunity!" (322). The insult, humiliation and indignity experienced by these men represent their true condition.

The men, however, fail to see it as a weakness and assume a fake heroism in front of their families. Sher Singh's fatherButa Singhtells his family that "Our sahib was scared" (Singh 206). Buta Singh, who is very submissive and full of gratitude in front of Mr. Taylor, talks in "a lordly way" (206) infront of his family. To ease off the feeling of their own fear, it seems fun that they dislocate this fear and blame it on someone else in front of the ones who believe in their strength and bravery.Buta Singh chooses not to relate the facts about his apologetic behavior in front of the sahib for it may hurt his powerful position in the family. He, rather, fakes it about

Mr. Taylor by telling the family again and again "Then he started apologizing." (205) and "He apologized himself… he had to rely on me. He also tried to bribe me…" (206). He further fakes his indifference towards the white sahib's repeated apologies and favours. All these attempts show the real positions these Indian have acquired i.e. one of humility, subjugation and falsity. Furthermore, Mr. John Taylor knows how to keep these people in their places. "He had a repertoire of little tricks by which he put subordinates, who tried to be familiar, in their places." (213).

Mr. John Taylor is also able to see the confusion of the selves these Indian men contain within themselves. He has a very clear picture of Buta Singh's family tree. His grandfather fought against the British, whereas his father served the British with loyalty. Buta Singh himself is a loyal servant of the British whereas his son Sher Singh claims to be fighting for the Indians against the British. According to Mr. Taylor, the confusion can be spotted both within the father and the son. He tells his wife about Buta Singh, "The English are his Mai-bap, Father-Mother when they are about; when they are not, he is more himself." (Singh 338). He can see that Buta Singh's behavior is not fake, it is rather the result of a complication which a too long British presence has caused. He recognizes that "Poor Buta Singh is split between the past and the future; that is why he appears so muddled in the present." (338). He counters an equally muddled mind in Sher Singh. "The boy in the police lock-up is in as much of a muddle as his father." (338). He explained it with the help of an example. He referred to the name Sher Singh has given to his Alsatian dog. The name Dyer reminds one of General Dyer who had once killed several hundred of people in Sher Singh's own city. Sher Singh's hate for this name and his love for the dog whom he had given this name express his contradictory feelings for the English. For Mr. Taylor, "… it is all a bit muddled." (338). It is for this reason that Sher Singh, apparently a freedom fighter, is incapable of showing any signs of courage in front of the British.

A single meeting with the white master shatters all of Sher Singh's confidence. The very first talk he had with the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Tylor. "Sher Singh's English crumbled to a breathless stutter punctuated with many 'sirs'." (Singh 240). He is rather surprised by the fact that the very powers he has been defying as a revolutionist have a strange impact on his person when he comes in direct contact with them. He is "ordered" (240) by the deputy commissioner to come and see him. The "ordeal" (241) of waiting for his meeting brings out his true humiliated position to which

he was perhapsoblivious till now. He greets Mr. Tylor four times giving way to his nervousness. Very soon, the lines between fear and hate blurred in the way Sher Singh talks to Taylor. His own voice becomes strange to him. He becomes one with his British masters and emphasizes upon the importance of remaining "… united and strong" (242). He no more sees the British as his enemy and looks at the enemies of the British as their own common enemy. He calls his own activities misguided and idealizes the activities of the British. As a compensation Mr. Taylor recognizes the "loyalty" (242) of the Sikh community. These tricks work well on the psyche of the natives. Fanon rationalizes it as thus, "The native is so starved for anything, anything at all that will turn him into a human being, any bone of humanity flung to him, that his hunger is incoercible, and these poor scraps of charity may, here and there, overwhelm him." (Fanon WOE 112). This loyalty was in turn bargained by certain "… titles that the British had invented for the Indians" (Singh334). It is in this way that they are all reduced simply to the puppets in the hands of the British. ManoharLal in *Tamas*by BhishamSahni lets off his anger against all such people, "All the toadies have gathered here. Flatterers, sycophants all!" (Sahni 306). The natives are rightly called 'toadies' here for they have abased themselves to a sub-human level in front of the colonizers.

Sher Singh comes out of his meeting having strange feelings. The whole experience leaves him "angry, humiliated, and frightened." (Singh 243). The most dominant feeling is that of helplessness. His sitting posture qualifies his position. He sits with "his head between his knees" (243) trying to weep but no tears came to his eyes. "He sat like that for a long time till the anger and humiliation receded to the background and only fear remained." (243). It is at this point that he realizes the full scope of the position he is caught up into. The fear brings him close to his own religion and community. For "For the first time in many years, Sher Singh went to the big temple in the city to pray." (243). The word 'big' is important here. To cope with the big powers, and to erase their fear, he needs a greater and a bigger power. The holy Granth has always provided him solace and comfort and also at the same time a relief from fear. He receives the reassurance from the verses "It is as a king asleep on the royal couch / Dreams he is a beggar and grieves;" (179). The fakeness of the fear of the British may be waived off by the verses like "Or as a rope mistaken for a serpent causeth panic / Such are delusion and fear." (179).But this does not happen.

Sher Singh remains unable to get rid of this fear. When the policemen along with some British come to arrest him at his home, even the little courage he had leaves him. He stammers and stutters and talks "… through the spittle that clogged his throat" (Singh 304). The white sergeant gives him a sound thrashing which he receives without any complaints. "Sher Singh's turban came off and fell on the ground;" (304). The white sergeant calls him a "nigger" (304) and calls him other names yet finds no retaliation from him. Sher Singh's dog, however, gives the white man a tough fight. "Dyer leapt at him with savage fury and knocked him down. He tore the collar off the white man's coat and went for his throat." (304). The dog gets badly injured in the fight but teaches the white man a lesson. "His coat was torn, his face scratched and bitten."(305). The dog was so fierce and angry that "It took two constables with their long bamboo poles to keep the battered Alsatian at bay." (305). Sher Singh's condition becomes worse with it, he crumbles down and starts weeping the tears of helplessness. He was insulted and beaten in front of his family and the servants and he could do nothing about it. He realizes that he has become even worse than his dog. "Even his dog had shown more fight." (305). Though his "eyes were inflamed with hate and humiliation" (305), yet he could not muster up the courage to even stand up. The head constable tells him to "Be a man. Don't degrade yourself before these white bastards." (305).

Throughout the novel Sher Singh has been mustering up the courage to be a strong man. Foreseeing his political career, he assumes that he is strong and brags, "India can only be ruled by strong men." (346).He can be seen,during the course of the novel, as believing in "The worship of tough men and love for symbols of strength, like swords crossed over a shield." (317). It is quite visible in his case that through such practices he is actually trying to rid himself of the image of a weak and physically inadequate man especially to impress his wife Champak. The kind of power and strength he acquired out of such a behavior was fake for "He did not realize that strength was not a natural development of his own personality but nurtured behind the protection provided by his father's position as a senior magistrate and a respected citizen." (317). When put in front of his true powerful masters "his bluster and self-confidence withered" (317) leaving his original weak and incapacitated self. So Sher Singh continued crying in jail also. "He had wept from fear; he had wept in anger; he had wept in hate." (318). As after his first meeting with Taylor, this time also anger, hate and sense of humiliation disappeared and only fear remained. Tears of

helplessness are, however, the only action these men can perform. Mrs. Taylor's reaction to Buta Singh crying on his son's arrest is very ironic. She says, "I was told the Sikhs were brave people! This is not being very brave, is it?" (309-310).

The female characters are braver than the male ones. One of the two Gandhian orderings read: "Nāritva > Purusatva > Kāpurusatva. That is, the essence of femininity is superior to that of masculinity, which in turn is better than cowardice or, as the Sanskrit expression would have it, failure of masculinity." (Nandy53). There may be many reasons behind this. One of the reasons may be that women have a very strong faith untainted by a direct contact with the English. For instance, Sabhrai, Buta Singh's wife, has blind and quite pure belief in the Guru. She has no confused notions in her mind and remains purified of any English influence upon her life. In times of crisis she turns to the Guru and finds the answer to almost any problem she or her family has. But Singh, on the other hand, looks at the English as his patrons. "In the crisis, the Englishman seemed to have become Buta Singh's only hope." (Singh 334). Sabhraihas acquired this sixth sense which alarms her about anything untoward that may happen to her family. ButaSingh, however, remains oblivious to all what is happening under his nose i.e. the activities of his son Sher Singh and his daughter Beena or even his daughter-in-law Champak. He is, rather, all the time reflecting upon what can make Taylor happy and what may offend him. He flatters Mr. Taylor by saying, "I am for the British Raj. If it goes, there will be chaos in this country as there was chaos before the British came." (308). Even when he thinks of building a memorial for his late wife, he is thinking all the time to please the Taylors. If he builds something which would please his late wife only, "The object of the charity would be lost." (359) in his opinion. All this reduces him simply to a flatterer who can never dare to voice his own opinion for he is too much obsessed with saving his image in front of his white masters.

The colonial experience left the men with no courage to be able to play the role which a common Indian man was required to perform. They became weaklings with no power or courage to protect their communities or even their families in the wake of the riots taking place during Partition. The stories of helplessness of such families are related with a focus also on the psychological traumas of the men who had to go through the horrors of mass suicides of their families before they put an end to their own lives. A further cut in the powers of men was made by the ruling colonizers by

waking the Indians to their differences. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims became all the more powerless when they got segregated in different religious and communal groups. In this way, the men became puppets in the hands of their white masters doing only what the British wanted them to do.

In short, the colonial suppression crushed the positive attributes of masculinity i.e., bravery, courage and nobility and brought out the negative ones such as fear, hate, weakness, and cowardice. In most of the cases, the pent up feelings and emotions against the British erupted in the form of aggression, violence and brutality directed against different religious and communal parties during Partition. All this further enhanced the idea of these men of the sub-continent as mindless barbarians as interpreted and planned by their colonial masters.

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