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## Remembering and Forgetting: Trauma in Sunanda Sikdar's *Dayamoyeer Katha*

**Sayan Parial**

MA in English, University of Gour Banga, Malda

The author is an MA in English. His areas of interest are Gender Studies, Science Fiction, Memory and Trauma studies. His paper “Decanonizing Cultural Myths: A Reading of Sanjukta Dasgupta's *Lakshmi Unbound: A Soliloquy*” has been published by *Litfinite* journal. He has participated in several national and international seminars and webinars.

### Abstract

Re-investigation of the memories of the Bengal partition has unleashed not only geopolitical repercussions of that territorial split, but also explored the unlocated avenues of trauma in the individual or collective consciousness and, at the same time traced a dialogic negotiation between remembering and forgetting. A huge migration, in the succeeding years of 1947, from East Pakistan to West Bengal has reconfigured and politicized individual and collective Bengali identities. This paper excavates in the discourse of memory and trauma studies to revisit the slow agonizing trauma of Bengal partition in Sunanda Sikdar's memoir *Dayamoyeer Katha* (translated as *A Life Long Ago*). It critiques the centralization of scholarly attention to more on pathological violence of partition in the Punjab region and peripheralization of the psychological trauma of displacement and dislocation in the Bengal region. It exhibits how the memoirist is encapsulating her victimized self's cognition of the inescapability of the belated psychological impact of traumatic past and how she is confronting with the “real” after the breakdown of “active forgetting”. The memoirist deconstructs the silence of her dislocated self by penning down her suppressed loss saturated in nostalgia and translates her traumatic memory of rootlessness into narrative memory. The victim in dealing with her inner holocaust constructs the individual consciousness through the process of perception, interpretation, and representation of trauma. The first person narration of the memoir familiarizes the psychological wound of the refugees of the Bengal partition and breaks down the traditional definition of “home”. This paper sheds light on how these memories of partition are being transgressed across generations imposing responsibility of this cataclysmic experience of the past upon the shoulders of present and future generations. Finally, it highlights the deconstruction and reconstruction of individual subjectivities through “postmemorial work” without being captivated by the traumatic past.

### Keywords

memory, postmemory, trauma, memoir, partition

The partition of Bengal has been the reservoir of many subsequent tragic narratives. The partition resulted into a huge migration, in the succeeding years of 1947, from East Pakistan to West Bengal after a deliberate geopolitical cleaving has re-created and politicized individual and collective Bengali identities. This cataclysmic historical phenomenon has been imposing its delayed psychological consequences on the consciousness of the victims of Bengal partition and at the same on the subsequent generations to come. The trauma of partition invokes a crisis of inescapability from the traumatic past and is “bound to referential return” (Caruth 7) through the workings of memory. Partition of India mostly affected the Punjab and Bengal region. These two provinces were divided on the basis of religion that creates an unimaginable refugee crisis. Many people lost their lives and ten to twelve million people lost their home. The partition of Bengal has witnessed a greater psychological impact rather than the pathological violence faced by the people of Punjab. The partition of India, which was once regarded as “historical necessity” is not a mere spatial division but it also divided the individual and collective consciousness. A reluctant uprooting of a group of people and then relocating in a foreign land has redefined their preconceived worldview and reshaped their identities. Many critics have questioned the grand narrative of historiography as the documented loss during displacement and dislocation outweighs the other aspects of the partition of Bengal. In the context of partition, narratives of loss have been fictionalized and historicized but, a dearth of a canon or a body of such narratives has been hindering the path of adequate critical excavation of the psychological intricacies experienced by the victims of Bengal’s partition. The discourse of historiography has documented several historical events followed by the partition of India and also registered a huge loss of lives during migration and riots, repercussions of economic crisis, and political agitation but failed to locate the inner holocaust that has shattered individual and collective subjectivities, slowly but effectively.

Traditional and political documentation of history is not an ample way to reevaluate and scale the human suffering in the aftermath of partition. Urvasi Butalia in her book *The Other Side Of Silence* has attacked the discourse of historiography with some grueling pertinent questions: “Why had historians not even attempted to explore what I saw as the ‘underside’ of this history – the feelings, the emotions, the pain and anguish, the trauma, the sense of loss, the silences in which it lay shrouded?” (347). Many voices remain muted as it is difficult for them to recollect the traumatic past. They try to assimilate with the new environment through constructing new identities, new family ties in the process of becoming. They try to suppress their hidden agony by neutralizing and naturalizing their traumatic past and practice forgetting as an anodyne for their dislocated self. But even then, the sudden shift in status from a proper citizen to a refugee is hard to accept. A displaced self’s cognition of homeland as a desired land, a land of childhood memories haunts the self’s relocated present and unmasks the act of forgetting as the memories of the past appear like a living dead. Act of recollection after the breakdown of an act of forgetting not only unsettles the traumatized self but also prescribes the avenues to release and negotiate with their suppressed agony. Still, the conflictual binaries – pain and healing, remembering and forgetting, silence and speech – question “is it better to be silent or to speak?” (Butalia 356). Now the question is, is it, at all, possible to voice

trauma? Krishna, a writer, and a refugee once expressed that it is very hard to forget partition and even harder to remember it. (Butalia 357). It is paradoxical to encapsulate that trauma's nature of unspeakability demands articulations. Butalia instead of distinguishing between remembering and forgetting provides a ground of negotiation. She observes, "while it may be dangerous to remember, it is essential to do so – not only so that we can come to terms with it, but also because unlocking memory and remembering is an essential part of beginning the process of resolving, perhaps even of forgetting" (357). Identities are forged in the dialectical relationship between remembering and forgetting. Reinvestigation or reinterrogation of the memories of the Bengal partition has unleashed not only the geo-political repercussion of the infelicitous spatial split but also has paved the ways to explore the psyche of the traumatized victims of the partition of Bengal. Recent studies have included with the critical exploration of the "high politics" and the geopolitical consequences of partition, the "human dimension" of trauma saturated in the psyche of the victimized subjects. Despite different facets of exploration of this catastrophic historical phenomenon, the tragic narratives of the region of Punjab remain the foci of scholarly discussions. The sense of centralization of the pathological violence during the Punjab partition and peripheralization of psychological violence of Bengal partition has limited the reinvestigation of the aftermath of partition.

Scanty focus on the partition of Bengal has also reinforced a perception that questions the very existence of an adequate body of Bengal literature. Many critics have advocated against the scholarly othering of the narratives of Bengal's partition and critiqued the inadequate analytical discourse to re-evaluate these narratives. Jashodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta have voted against the claim of the inadequate body of works of partition of Bengal: "quite a few Scholars and creative writers have claimed that the traumatic division of Bengal in 1947 has not been adequately reflected in contemporary literature, which has emerged from both East and West Bengal...Bengali writers on both sides did not ignore Partition" (Leonard 4). Essentialization of the narratives of Punjab and exclusion of the sizable body of narratives of Bengal in the canon of India's partition literature has raised an immediate objection. The reason for regional specificity in the canon of partition literature is that the pathological violence in Punjab is much more dramatic than the more private, silent, psychological violence of Bengal's partition. Another reason for this bias is the "availability of vernacular work in English translation, or the existence of a sizable body of Anglophone writings—has come to define Partition literature" (Leonard, 5). Specific attention should be given to study and record the aftermath of the Bengal partition. The partition of Bengal evokes a sense of trauma, a slow agonizing terror embedded in the narratives of Bengal's partition. The narratives of this region deal with a delayed psychological impact of partition across time and space. Bashabi Fraser has pointed out "What is unique about the Bengal Partition is that unlike the massive exchange of populations in 1947-48 and till 1950 on the western border, the influx of refugees across the Bengal border has never stopped, to date. It has sometimes swollen to a deluge and sometimes been reduced to a trickle, but it has never dried up" (5). Punjab partition constitutes the focus more on the "body" as the brutalities, riots, religious persecution are associated with it, but on the other hand Bengal partition is

more focused on the mind of the victims as the psychological impact of spatial dislocation on the subjectivities of the migrants is associated with it.

Workings of the memories of traumatic past and a sense of loss saturated in nostalgia for a glorious past are very much evident in the narratives and testimonials of Bengal partition. Bengali writings are concerned with the displacement and dislocation and represented how the spatial split cuts across personal. The terminology of “udbastu” (refugee) holds much gravity in the discourse of Bengal partition as it solicits a crisis of rootlessness and a sense of alienation. The identity crisis of the refugees after the relocation in West Bengal has been fracturing their subjectivities and imposing a foreign environment with its strangeness upon the self’s consciousness. In the fabrication of individual or collective identity, geographical or physical space plays a pivotal part. The complex relationship between space and identity lies in the unsettling notion of identity as identity consists of mobility from one space to another. In the process of “becoming” identities are deconstructed and reconstructed in an intricate interplay between remembered past and present. Dispossession of the citizens of East Bengal has destabilized the ties between one’s own geographical space and individual identity. A displaced self attests a sense of belonging to the landscapes, rivers, different natural objects of homeland left behind and reclaims the past through memorialization. So, memory, geography, and identity are interrelated with each other in the process of “becoming”. Memory is the vehicle through which past is remembered. It is an act of recollection of something related to the past but that recollection occurs in present. The body of the narratives of the Bengal partition comprises several memoirs that forge a site of negotiation between the private and public worlds.

As a genre, a memoir is a subcategory of autobiography but it differs from it as memoir “subordinates the author’s personal life to the public events in which he or she has participated” (Quinn 256). A memoir records a personal experience and observation of a historical phenomenon where a certain occasion or incident in the memoirist’s life holds much significance. Sohini Sen in her essay “Recollections: Role of Memory in Sunanda Sikdar’s *Dayamoyeer Katha*” remarks that the structure of the memoirs is “defined by a very personal tone as well as logic, and the world view is so intensely individualistic that they almost appropriate the status of the ultimate truth, and the sense of nostalgia only adds to it”. The individualized subjective tone of the memoirs becomes the ground of the public gaze to register the formations of individual identities. Memoirs have documented the private loss of the uprooted individuals, attested the sense of nostalgia for a place of no return, and also voiced the ambivalence in the articulation of trauma. Memoirs provide a channel to explore the psychological aspects of the victims but also pose a threat as they are immersed in personalized vision charged with strong emotions and a sense of root. Too much sensitivity hinders the way of viewing things in a proper light. A memoir incorporates a private space where the recollections of the memories take place. Memory is something beyond what the mind can consciously remember. Memory questions the registered violence in history. Memory and trauma, both are interconnected. Narratives of partition in Bengal put much emphasis on the “silence” that surrounds the partition of Bengal. The memoirs of the Bengal partition are

the testimonials of trauma. These testimonials interrogate the “silence”, the unspeakable nature of trauma to precipitate meaningful articulation.

Sunanda Sikdar’s *Dayamoyeer Katha*, translated as *A Life Long Ago* by Anchita Ghatak is a memoir of partition that deals with the trauma of a dislocated victim. It is a story of a little girl Daya who lives in a small village Dighpait, East Pakistan during the 1950s with her Pishima (aunt). She was also taken care of by their family retainer Majam. Daya addressed him as Dada (brother) and built up a strong emotional bond with him. Daya as a child saw a huge change during those years in her village Dighpait. Daya experienced a great migration from East Pakistan towards India leaving behind all belongings. Daya was shocked at her sudden shift from her land of near and dear ones to an unknown land. The incident was so awful for Daya that she failed to gauge its reverberations. This traumatic event made her promise to hide all her memories inside the locked chamber of her consciousness. In the nineties, she received the news of the death of his Majam Dada that tore apart her concealed pain and expressed all that she had been camouflaging for many years. This memoir deals with the trauma of partition. The memoirist encapsulates her victimized self’s cognition of the impossibility to escape from her traumatic past. Like other memoirs, Anchita Ghatak’s translation *A Life Long Ago* revolves around a particular historical event that has shattered her preconceived notion about her self’s subjectivity, threatened her perception of seeing the world, and reshaped her identity. The narrator Daya, was brought up in East Pakistan for a certain period, and then suddenly she was shifted India. The sudden change in little Daya’s life petrifies her consciousness. She exercises the act of forgetting as an aid to heal the wound of rootlessness. But memories of her past haunt her back and trigger traumatic outburst. She releases her suppressed agony, breaks the silence to articulate traumatic outburst through her writing. Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay *Remembered Villages* talks about two kinds of memory: “the sentiment of nostalgia and the sense of trauma, and their contradictory relationship to the question of the past” (2143). In *A Life Long Ago*, Daya suffers from a sentiment of nostalgia for her ‘Desh’ and experiences trauma in the recollections of the memories of her reluctant departure from her homeland. The concept of Desh for the refugees is more concrete than the perception of nation which is an abstract entity. Desh is revisited in memories. The spatial concreteness of Desh lies in its inheritance of loss. It is not possible to erase the presence of Desh even after adopting a new land. Daya, with a new name Sunanda accepts a strange land but the change of name or place cannot obliterate the hidden wound. Daya or Sunanda attains specific identities. Her sense of detachment does not baffle her progress in a new strange land. This adoption is the signifier of the distortion of ‘Desh’. Loss of Desh becomes trauma in the archives of memories.

The memoir begins with the news of the death of Daya’s Dada (brother), Majam Dada. The news acts as a signifier to unfold the immense pain and anguish latent within Daya. After thirty years of deliberate forgetting, Daya faces a strange but familiar emotional outburst that melts away the “frozen tears inside” (Ghatak 1)<sup>1</sup>. She has been performing an act of “active forgetting” to erase the memories of ten years (1951-1961)

<sup>1</sup> All subsequent quotations from the text are from this book: Anchita Ghatak’s *A Life Long Ago*.

of her life in East Pakistan. Ultimately, the grief comes out and she pens down her suppressed angst and anxiety. German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in the second essay of *Untimely Meditations* observes the animals' instinct of forgetting and discovers that animals can live happily as they have a poor capacity to remember things. But humans suffer from their inability to forget things. In relation to trauma, Nietzsche uses this phrase "active forgetting" to cope up with the traumatic past. This "active forgetting" is a liberating force that can stabilize the victim's consciousness. This active power of forgetting can lead one to secure a happy, healthy life and build a new future. Active forgetting is not about complete forgetting as it is possible to live without remembering things but it is impossible to forget everything. It advocates a selective remembering. It naturalizes and neutralizes the past and eliminates the memories of certain events that are irrelevant and harmful to the future. The partition of Bengal has invoked many symptoms like emotional or spatial loss, sadness, anxiety, anger, guilt, grief, fatigue, pain, despair. Daya, a victim of partition also plunges into enormous confusion and uncertainty to see a sudden transformation in her village. She ceases all her painful memories of the past after settling in West Bengal to lead her future life peacefully. Nietzsche said active forgetting can lead to silence. Active forgetting is about the deliberate eradication of troubling past and accepting relevant knowledge for the benefit of the future. Daya also blocks the way of remembering things related to the past and finds "a way of surviving" (1). She takes Rabindranath as her refuge. She starts overlooking every single thing related to East Pakistan. She stops seeing the news regarding the freedom movement in East Pakistan in the newspaper. She reluctantly dismisses all memories associated with East Pakistan, attains a new identity, and starts living peacefully. She pretends to have "no memories of the ten years before 1961". She is "completely unwilling to acknowledge the years between 1951 and 1960" (2). Daya wilfully gets rid of the memories of past to save her from discontinuity and harmful effects of the traumatic past and engages herself in certain activities to find solace. Nietzsche propounds that, as complete forgetting is not possible, selective remembering can save one from the chaos of consciousness. Daya's act reminds us of Nietzsche's notion to a certain extent, but in the case of "selective remembering", which is about recognizing beneficial past forms of knowledge, Daya does something different. She tries to eliminate her past and selects her new identity in a new land as her new journey of life. Nietzsche prefers a balance between forgetting and remembering but Daya's endeavour to eliminate the past completely banishes the ground of negotiation between forgetting and remembering. The incessant suppression of her deep despair and nostalgia, finally, alarms her in the form of the news regarding her Dada's death. The news dismantles her pretension, disorganizes her psyche, and unsettles her defence mechanism to confront her traumatic past. News of the loss of Dada unfastens the locked chamber of the memories of all losses. This hurls her into the mayhem of consciousness. She experiences trauma. In an utter maze, she decides to write to release her pain. Writing is an exercise to heal the psychological wound but it does not erase the traumatic past rather it helps to negotiate with the traumatic past to perceive traumatic events and to cope up with the loss.

Sigmund Freud, one of the major early theorists on trauma studies questions the limits of language that annihilates the meaningful articulation. So the trauma is

unrepresentable. But in the subsequent waves of trauma theory, critics point out that trauma, although unspeakable finds expression in its very unspeakability. Unspeakability of trauma is a kind of response to past events rather than its definite feature. Freud and Breuer in *Studies In Hysteria*(1895) say that an original past event that causes trauma in present is not a traumatic event in itself as trauma comes to life through remembrance of that original event. A victim experiences trauma in its belated impact after a period of inaction. It is the return of the repressed that comes out of a contemporary event. In Day's life, the arrival of the news of Dada's death is that contemporary event that causes the traumatic experience unbars the flow of recollection of the memories of the past. According to Freud, trauma occurs in suddenness when the victim is psychologically unprepared to take this. Unexpected occurrence breaks the outer layer of the mind and intrudes into the external layer and hampers the defense mechanism. Freudian model of trauma that talks about trauma as an unrepresentable event, points out the contradictions within language and experience. Retaining Freud's definition of trauma, French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan adds certain dimensions and says that trauma makes what we are. According to him, facing the trauma means facing the "real". In the 1990s Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Geoffrey Hartman and others extend the Freudian model of trauma. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996), Caruth mentions that trauma damages the psyche, disrupts the language, and raptures the ability to understand and represent trauma. Caruth encapsulates that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance— returns to haunt the survivor later on" (4). Caruth focuses on the paradoxical nature of trauma. One who experiences trauma desires to perceive the incident but fails to comprehend it. Traumatic memory is different from normal memory and it also enters into the psyche in a specific manner. As the memory is different the narrative recalling is also not normal. It remains outside the normal recollection and provides an absence. This absence in the individual consciousness is hard to organize in language. Partition narratives face the crisis of representation of trauma as it obscures language and destabilizes the symmetry of mind. The traditional definition of literature as a mode of expression is somehow subverted as language breaks down. Voice of trauma is mostly uttered through the metaphorical language. This linguistic disorder is the outcome of a conflict between deliberate forgetting and excessive desire to outburst as Judith Herman says the conflict lies "between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud"(Goarzin 1). There is a notion of ambivalence that lies in the individual consciousness as the extremity of the traumatic wound can be articulated through a lack of meaningful foundation or form. Trauma theory gives a clue to grasping the trauma's nature of unspeakabilities. Trauma distorts the traditional linguistic structure of the expression. Trauma theory allows revisiting the traumatic events to reflect on the complexities of mind and language. It does not provide a universal framework to voice the traumatic silences, rather propounds the significance to reflect the void of knowledge caused by trauma in lacking narratives forms. The necessity of articulation arises from the impossibility of articulation. The transformation of traumatic memory into narrative memory assists the story of trauma to be assimilated. Bengal partition narratives are the

testimonials of trauma that are communicating verbally across generations, to cope up with the traumatic past. This interpersonal venture can alleviate the wound of trauma.

Daya's sense of nostalgia for her loss gives rise to traumatic articulation. She recollects the memories of spatial belongings: the landscape, the rivers, the trees, etc. Each of them is held very dear to Daya. Her reminiscences of the past include the river "Bansa", names of villages like "Sontia", "Haridrata", "Gajipara", mango, jamun, jackfruit trees, etc. She is used to "stroll by the river Bansa perched on Dada's shoulder" (5). But suddenly in her "familiar world" everything gets changed. Palu da, Kanai, Balai, Biswas Thakuma, Khuki Pishima all leave East Pakistan for Hindustan. Her mother exclaims with sorrow, "The Dignipait does not exist anymore, Daya" (14). "Home" is not only a physical space; it is also an emotional space. Daya's longing for her homeland is jeopardized when her mother tells her that they will settle in India. She expresses her anger and frustration: "We are happy here, in our home. You are the one who wants to die on the banks of the Ganga" (23). In West Bengal, the memoirist feels alienated as she finds herself in a strange, unknown place. Even after spending forty years, she feels like an "interloper". She acknowledges her camouflage as she feels "unreal". She has been masking her real self under the new identity. Through her memorialization of the past, she locates the silenced avenues of her dislocated self. The memoirist also portrays the attachment towards home in other characters. Sudhir, who becomes the butt of ridicule and social abuse, was "too timid to even imagine leaving the village" (64). Modi bhabhi advises Daya, "forgetting your village is like forgetting your mother" (82). Daya comes to India but feels a kind of detachment. She can't share her private world with anyone. She locks everything inside her. Daya promises not to speak ever about her "Desh":

I looked at Ma's face that day and promised myself that I would never speak of home – of desh, our land. Ma and I never spoke of desh again with each other. This is one promise I was able to keep, and till the day that Ma died I didn't say a word about home – about desh, our land. (172)

The partition of Bengal not only has dislocated millions of lives physically but at the same time psychologically and emotionally. This crisis of spatial and psychological rootlessness inflicted a sempiternal wound in the individual and collective consciousness. Displacement and dislocation question the definition of "home". Memories of the past continue to haunt generation after generation as William Faulkner says, "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (Amritjit xvii). These memories and postmemories of traumatized past refurbish the present.

The ontological analysis of the term "refugee" requires much critical engagement because of its transgression from political implication towards an existential sense of root and psychological dislocation. Victims face an existential crisis in maintaining an intricate negotiation between belonging and estrangement. In *Dignipait* the immigrant Muslims were addressed as "ripuchi" a distortion of "refugee". Daya was unaware of the meaning of either the word "refugee" or "ripuchi". She arrived at the meaning of "ripuchi": "'ripu' was a Bengali word for enemy. In the *Ramayana*, they told us that Rama and Ravana were enemies or 'ripu'" (12). This practice of stigmatization and peripheralization of the refugees cause a sense of dissatisfaction and alienation in a strange land and evoke a sense of nostalgia for "home". The same thing happened with

Daya and her mother when their status gets changed into a refugee in West Bengal. Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay *Remembered Villages: Representation of Hindu-Bengali Memories in the Aftermath of the Partition* deconstructs the word “refugee”. According to him there are two Bengali words for “refugee”, “sharanartha” means someone who seeks protection or shelter, and “udvastu” means someone who has no home. The word “home” becomes very important. The word “vastu” in “udvastu” means home and the word “vastu” is mostly associated with the word “bhita”. Both imply a sense of foundation as even the word “bhita” has its origin in a Sanskrit word “bhitti” means foundation. “Vastuvita” then implies that how one’s dwelling is associated with a concept of foundation. “One’s permanent home is where one’s ‘foundation’ is” (Chakrabarty 2144). In the Bengali language, there is a distinction between “basha” and “bari”. “Basha” is a place where one lives temporarily but “bari” contains a notion of permanence. It is a place where one’s ancestors have resided from generation to generation. The word “bari” is synonymous with one’s native land. So, the prefix “ut” in “udvastu” means outside. Someone who has lost one’s foundation has come to take shelter in a strange or unknown land. During the nationalistic movement concept of “motherland” extended the meaning of “home”. So, to “become an udvastu was thus to be under some kind of an extreme curse” (2145). For the refugees the ancestral homeland or their “desh” becomes a “place of tranquillity, of an accustomed way of life, topography, and ecology which were theirs” (Leonard, 117). Self is associated with space with all its linguistic, cultural, social practices. Partition has assaulted a huge blow to this attachment and caused an annihilation of self. The echoes of the traumatic past reverberate in present. A traumatic event is central to identity. Identity is constructed with different aims and values that an individual attains to lead a life. Traumatic events or experience question these roles and re-evaluate identity at the individual level and social level as well.

*Doyamoyer Kotha* attests to a subjective view of the trauma of the displaced. The memoirist’s subjectivity is a part of a historical phenomenon that has precipitated similar traumatic articulations in other Bengali partition narratives. This historical phenomenon has been transmitting its after-effects across generations and imposing responsibility of the past events upon the shoulder present and future generation. The present is in the prison-house of past. Questions can be raised inquiring about the limitation of the transmission of past deeds. Despite some exceptions, some historical events cannot be erased from the individual or collective memory. Marianne Hirsch voices for a “postmemorial work” instead of being captivated by the past. Postmemory blurs the binarization between a victim or testifier who has gone through a horrible historical event and the respondent who is witnessing and responding to the testimony. There is no fixity in these positions as these positions can be interchanged – a witness can feel trauma and on the other hand, the testifier can feel that this experience belongs to others. Anchita Ghatak’s translation of *Dayamayer Katha* can be seen as a reworking of trauma. Translation in Anglophonic language is a postmemorial transition that can make one compelled to deconstruct the boundary between self-consciousness and the traumatized psyche of the other, and inhale the trauma within self-consciousness. In other words, one can be influenced by another’s state of mind. According to Marianne Hirsch, “Postmemory” describes the relationship that the “generation after” bears to the personal,

collective and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experiences they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection and creation” (Frosh 10). So, the memoirs though consist of private emotions and memories of the past, hold no authority over its circulation to the mass. The memory of a traumatic historical event is not private. *A Life Long Ago* attains the public gaze and provides an opportunity to revisit partition. Postmemory talks about the transference of memory across generations. In that exercise of transmission, memory is defined. Reworking with the memories of partition is the only way of dealing with the trauma of partition.

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