



## SILENCED BODIES, SUPPRESSED VOICES: EXPLORING GENDERED TRAUMA AND CULTURAL TABOO IN MANTO'S KHOL DO

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### Abstract

*This article discusses the idea of female injury and the cultural and social silence surrounding it in Saadat Hasan Manto's story Khol Do. Set against the backdrop of the Partition of India, the story reflects the psychological and physical violence inflicted on women and criticizes the social, cultural, and patriarchal forces that suppress their voices. Through the character of Sakina, Manto reveals how women's pain is often overlooked, reduced to physical survival without emotional acknowledgment. The story's minimalist historical style, the absence of a female voice, and the emotionally charged final image highlight how trauma embedded in cultural norms and perpetuated through silence. Women portrayed primarily as bearers of family and communal honor. Drawing on the themes of injury and feminist literary criticism, this article analyzes how Khol Do exposes the failure of family, medicine, and society to recognize or respond to sexual violence. Manto's narrative resists closure, forcing readers to confront the harsh realities of trauma. Within broader discussions of Partition literature and gender studies, the story underscores the urgent need to revisit historical and literary portrayals of violence against women and to break the long-standing cultural silence surrounding their suffering.*

### Key words

Saadat Hasan Manto, Khol Do, Partition of India, Sexual violence, Cultural silence, Patriarchy, Feminist criticism, Trauma

### Introduction

The simple story of Saadat Hassan Manto's *Holus* is one of the most powerful literary images of human costs, emphasizing sexual violence faced by women during this trauma. Compared to the background of Indian and Pakistan in 1947, this story faces the terrible results of violence in society, but with more ghosts, it reveals the amazing silence of women's trauma socially and culturally. Kille describes the cruel cruelty of a young Muslim girl Sakina, a victim of sexual violence, as graphic. However, at the same time criticizes how such pain overlooked or normalized in patriarchal societies. Thanks to the sharp and unstable realism, Manto will reveal how the woman's body is a battlefield during the conflict, but their suffering remains in a state of silence. In this story, Sakin's injuries do not return to their fathers or doctors, symbolizing greater social inability to recognize or resist women's pain. During separation, the cultural silence of women's injuries comes from collective figures and fears, as well as patriarchal norms that value humanity. Women often changed into common pride or irregular symbols. Their voices suppressed to preserve the family or community as "dignity." *HOLUS* forced readers to resist this deletion, showing how such silence inhuman survivors and perpetuates violent cycles. This article aims to study how Holler challenges this social and cultural intimacy, wondering why women's trauma hidden and this concealment reveals our collective conscience. Thanks to reading this story thoroughly, we will criticize

Manto's social indifference and consider how his work is unstable in modern discussions on the field, violence and memory.

### **Research statement**

"In Khol Do, Saadat Hasan Manto exposes the deep-rooted social and cultural silence surrounding female trauma during the Partition of India, revealing how patriarchal norms, communal ideologies, and the obsession with honor contribute to the erasure of women's voices and the normalization of their suffering."

### **Research Questions**

1. How does Khol Do portray female trauma, and in what ways it silenced or ignored by the characters and society within the narrative?
2. What role do patriarchal norms and cultural notions of 'honor' play in shaping the response to Sakina is suffering?
3. How does Manto use literary techniques to expose the psychological and physical trauma experienced by women during Partition?

### **Research Methodology**

This article accepts the high quality of interpreting literary analysis based on literary analysis in order to explore the topic of social and cultural silence on women's injuries in the story of Saadat Hassan Manto Hol. The research methodology focuses on the use of cautious text analysis, contextual research and theoretical injuries in order to understand how MANTO formulates women's suffering and understand ways without pain through the general social and cultural structure. The main analysis analyzed by Holus Do originally written in Uda and then translated into English. This story will considered with the help of close reading, focusing on language, story structure, characteristics and symbols. Especially paying attention to the image of Sakina's personality, her physical silence and the injury of male characters. These elements will analyzed to show how Manto criticizes the social norms that alienated and suppressed by women's voices. In addition to literary analysis, this study based on historical and social political contexts, especially sexual violence during the division of 1947. The scientific source of literary separation, the historical story of women's experience, and the feminist criticism of violence based on honor will used to determine history in a wider cultural structure. This two -dimensional will help to reflect the wider system of women's injuries, not an isolated story element. This study also interacts with the concepts presented by theorists such as Katie Katy and Judith Herman to explore the psychological aspects of injury theory, especially Sakina's experience. Injury theory provides a lens that can understand the influence of violence on memory, language and identity, especially when the victim does not want to formalize pain due to fear, shame or social pressure. Lastly, this study interviews the patriarchal value of women's value to identify women's value in sexual purity and sexual violence using feminist literature criticism. This lens reads the hills, and this article stresses the experience of injuries by emphasizing how social expectations for silence are the form of secondary violence. Thanks to this multi -layered methodology, this article, like HOLUS, opposes the cultural muffler rings of women's injuries, which I want to disclose an important text to understand sexual violence after Colo's literature.

### **Literature review**

In 1947, the separation of India caused a wide range of literature and historical scholarship, most of which focuses on violence, exercise and general tension that characterize the times. Nevertheless, he surrounds women's specific experiences, especially the injuries of sexual violence, and social silence. In recent decades, scientists have changed more and more

interest in these forgotten dimensions, emphasizing how literature acts as an important space against the sexual heritage of separation. Saadat Hassan Manto's *S. Hul* is widely known as one of the most ghostly and provocative stories that arise in separation. Scientists, such as Allol Bhalla (2001) and Rakshanda Jalil (2012), did not meet their realism and did not fulfill his rejection of romance or disinfection violence. BKHALLA claims that Manto's power is composed of the power of human suffering, not relying on moral binary files. In the hall, this approach is especially strong. MANTO represents the story of Sakina, a young girl who raped during the chaos of migration, and does not provide any opinion and only provides the cruel reality of her experience. Scientists -Feminists interviewed the gender level of this silence. Urvashi Bhaty is the opposite of silence (1998) and the "life and words" of wine DAS (2007) are basic texts in this discourse. Bhaty records the stories of women's shoes, forced or voluntary in stigma associated with kidnapping, rape and sexual violence. These works, especially when the victim is a woman, shows that the story of the state and shared often is the priority of collective honor. This closely related to the hole recognized only through her body only through her voice or willingness. Emphasizes a wider social failure that considered as a woman's pain. The Manto image of the injury investigated through the prism of injury theory. Scientists like Kavita Diya are Holler D.E. Sakina's physical condition can read as a concrete text of memory that becomes a place of historical inscription. The end of the story is a powerful symbol of a way that violence changes identity when she instinctively opens her *chalbar*, and blurs the boundary between survival and in humanization. This view supported by Katie Kouty's theory of injuries and the trauma experience opposed by direct stories and transmitted by repetition, silence or sculpture. Some scientists also criticized for Manto's patriarchal norms. In the story, *sukeshi camer* argues that Manto uses irony and minimalism to identify moral hypocrisy of nationalists and traditionalists who ignore the cost of violence against women in ideological goals. Sirajuddin, the father of Sakina, becomes a tragic figure on her daughter's recovery, but cannot protect or understand the depth of injury. This tension reflects the great cultural plan of men's protection and covers a deeper social competition in the silence of women. Moreover, KHOL DO compared with other stories of sections such as Tamasy Bhashama Sakhni and Pingjara Amrita and Pritam. Pretem focuses on women's subjectivity and resistance, but the mantle focuses on the result of injury, focusing on erasing social indifference to voice and women's pain. This contrast emphasizes various literary reactions to separation and the need to read hills as stable criticism of social and cultural rejection as well as historical documents. In general, the existing literature around HOL shows that Manto's work plays an important role in revealing injuries that women cannot express during division. Nevertheless, the silence that seeps into the story of Sakina reflected in the silence of her community continues to challenge readers and scientists to withstand the long-term results of historical violence and sex oppression.

### Literary analysis

Saadat Hassan Manto's *S. Hul* is widely known as one of the most amazing stories in the literature of Indian separation in 1947. Despite the short and written story in a simple story style, this story provides strong criticism of social and cultural mechanisms in women's trauma. Thanks to the essence of Sakina and the behavior of the people around you, Manto talked to erase the voices of confused women due to patriarchal values, communal ideology and collective indifference. This analysis is often invisible through silence, not only physical pain but also psychological and social phenomena. Based on the hall, the character of a young Muslim girl Sakina separated from her father, Sira Jude Dean, who was confused. Finding Sirajuddin when her daughter is full of pain, as soon as she finds her, this is especially a kind of investigation of emotional or physical condition. The structure of history

made for the final and painful image. Sakina, who is currently in the hospital bed, once mechanically opened her Shaalvar series with her attack and responded to “Hollow”? This closed gesture, which visits a doctor and interprets it, as a sign of life, is a destructive sign of an internalized injury. MANTO uses this moment to reveal how deeply the spirit of sexual violence has pointed out, and her body now reflected in a signal related to abuse. The minimalist manto style improves the emotional impact of this injury. He stimulates clear opinions or dramatic fairs. Instead, it represents an event in a sharp and almost clinical way, and fear can appear through sentences and meaning. This redemption is intentional. This reflects the silence of society imposed on women's injuries. Sakina does not say. She does not cry and talks about the test or formulates any kind of feelings. Her proximity is not only the result of injury, but also a symbol of how women express pain. Manto criticizes a society that thinks that violence against women is not too terrible but too embarrassing to admit. Sirajuddin and volunteers who are looking for a man of this story, especially Sakin, serves as a vehicle to study the limitations of patriarchal empathy. Sirajuddin described as a sympathetic mourning father, but his anxiety is very attractive. He wants to find a daughter but wants to be the return of a pure daughter who not damaged. When he finally finds her, he unconsciously lies in the hospital, and his joy drawn to an amazing lack of perception. He is not wondering how she came there or what happened to her. The silence surrounding her test also maintained by those closer to her. This contest reflects a wider cultural reality while separating. Women often considered a carrier of honor in family and community. Their bodies became a symbol of pride or shame, and violations considered collective humiliation. In this context, talking about sexual violence was not a taboo to protect the victims, but a taboo that maintained male dignity. Manto reveals this hypocrisy and shows the burden of Sakina's injuries, not her secret, but rejecting her society with her. Her silence is a product of social deletion as well as personal pain. When you install a hole, creating a landscape of refugees after participation improves the atmosphere of dislocation and abandonment. During the chaos of mass migration and community violence, people become the name of the numbers, lists, or lost organs in a separate department. This in humanization is particularly spreading to women who considered secondary in state formation to political stories. MANTO confronts the reality that women's injuries are not only widespread in this section, but also to read the victims and forgotten figures. MANTO also uses irony as a thin but powerful literary device. The scary irony is in the last history line. If the doctor screams, "Yes!" To check whether sakina is alive, she sees the mechanical weakness of her clothes to see the vitality, but reveals her complete psychological devastation. This phrase, which represents revival and hope, instead becomes a marker of persecution of violation. This double meaning reflects the central paradox of history. Manto refuses to regard Sakina's salvation as a successful conclusion. Instead, he claims to be able to survive in a society that ignores the psychological scars of violence. It is also important that there is no woman's story or interior in history. MANTO did not speak or report to Sakina indirectly. This can considered a limit, but it is an intentional choice to reflect the reality of the silence of women. Sakina's silence is not a difference in history. This is a story. It is a specification of the story of how society erased by the uncomfortable truth. At the same time, Manto is an emotional or moral center that weakens the traditional role of female characters. Sakin does not allow this institution to formalize her injuries, but the silence surrounding her becomes a silent mirror. From the point of view of injuries, this silence is also a characteristic of the fact that scientists like Katie Katrut described as expressive injuries. In terms of Karu, injuries are often opposed to direct expressions, and instead occur through repetition, sculpture or involuntary answers. At the end of the story, Sakina's behavior can understood as a conscious decision in this light, but as an injured repetitive and body memory, which changed to the memory of the cause or

perception. This reading suggests that it can better known than what remains silent, adding depth to describing Manto's injuries.

In addition, the Chinese criticized the state story of colonies after South Asia, often alienated with women's experience in favor of heroic or atonement of independence. Manto refuses to close or atonement offerings and readers recognize the unresolved and continuous characteristics of women's injuries. It suggests that true healing is impossible until society does not resist the history of hidden violence against women. The simplicity and simplicity of history believe in emotional and political complexity. Manto's genius is the ability to collect several pages of field, violence and cultural silence. His image of his Sakina is not for sympathy, but for anger. He belongs to the fact that the reader refuses to see what society see. The cost of honor, pride and ideology is often silent, and this silence is not natural. In conclusion, *HOLUS* -this is not a story about a lost girl. This is a burning prosecution for social and cultural systems that can cause women's injuries. Without forgetting Sakina's quiet pain and people around you, Manto shows that society cannot protect, recognize or recognize the pain of the most vulnerable members. Its story is tragically relevant in the world, and even after violence, women's voices often oppressed. In order to face this silence, Manto restores dignity and gives a voice that history has forgotten for a long time.

Saadat Hasan Manto *Khol Do* analyzes deep opinions on how women's trauma is silent, social, and cultural frames, especially during political clashes, such as separation of India. History is not only physical, but also worsening by psychological, social, and culture, which is not only physical, but is the dignity of honor, male and national identity compared to women's suffering. One of the main conclusions is that Manto intentionally denies Sakin, a central female character, a voice or a story agency. Her silence not only is a personal response to injuries, but also reflects the wider public oppression of women's experience. *MANTO* reflects how to listen to or record the testimonies of women who have often survived violence without having to talk and understand the inner world. Sakina's injuries can only seen in her body, especially in the last scene, and the involuntary behavior of the phrase "hole" represents a long psychological imprint of her attack. This moment will summarize the tragic internalization of violence and the normalization of abuse under the appearance of survival. Another important discovery is the role of patriarchy in the formation of a reaction to Sakina's injuries. Caring for her father is sincere, but limited by her recovery, and she does not understand her experience. Male volunteers and doctors look useful, but they are not interested in their experiences or outside the body. This reflects the cultural thinking that women's bodies protected by property, but their suffering is never completely recognized. Their injuries especially contraindicated when they include sexual violence. It is because it threatens the honor of the community that intended to be a patriarchal society and challenges the image of moral authority. History also criticizes nationalism and common ideologies that sacrifice individual suffering, especially for wider political or religious goals. Violence in this section described as unclear, but women are suffering from the second -class violence. Sakina's injury is not a personal tragedy, but an uncomfortable truth that violates heroic stories of salvation, return and recovery, often related to discourse after participation. History also improves injuries theory, especially the main ideas of concepts, and often leads to direct achievements. Sakina's silence and her unconscious behavior function as traumatic symptoms, showing how survivors can do their best to handle or formulate their experiences. This creates injury personally and systematically because there is no partial support space for healing or expression. In general, *KHOL DO* provides a sharp explanation of how social structure is the silence of women's injuries. *MANTO*'s history requires readers to resist this silence and reevaluate how history, literature and group memory related to sexual violence. His work reminds me that the true value of conflict often heard.

## Discussion

The study of *Khol Do* by Saadat Hasan Manto reveals how the narrative captures not only the fear and physical vulnerability of women during the Partition of 1947, but also comments on the institutional and patriarchal systems that failed to protect them. Manto presents a disturbing image of Sakina, a young girl whose trauma expressed not through words but through silence and an involuntary bodily reaction. Her quietness and mechanical gesture—loosening her shalwar when prompted by the male voice—symbolize a deeper psychological wound and reflect a cultural silence surrounding sexual violence. The story does not allow for redemption, healing, or catharsis. Instead, it forces the reader to face the brutal consequences of silence and dehumanization.

The injuries faced by women during the Partition must be viewed within a wider socio-cultural context of honor, shame, and patriarchal control. As Menon and Bhasin (1998) argue, during this time, women's bodies were seen as carriers of community honor, and any violation was perceived not just as a personal loss but also as a communal dishonor. Manto uses Sakina's silence to analyze these cultural norms. Her trauma was not explored emotionally, nor her voice heard; instead, her body speaks through a gesture that has been conditioned by repeated violation. This highlights how violence alters behavior and identity, reflecting what Caruth (1996) terms "the unspeakability of trauma."

The character of Sirajuddin, Sakina's father, represents a patriarchal concern focused on recovery and purity rather than emotional or psychological understanding. His sorrow is portrayed as genuine, but his lack of introspection about Sakina's mental state reflects the cultural tendency to value women through their physical purity. The recovery of Sakina is treated as symbolic restitution, not as a recognition of her trauma. Butalia (1998) also emphasizes that during Partition, women were often "rescued" not for their well-being, but to restore familial or community honor.

The institutions in the story—particularly the hospital—are also portrayed as inadequate. Rather than being spaces of safety or healing, they become sites of continued objectification. The doctor's response to Sakina's gesture, which he sees as a sign of life, fails to acknowledge its deeper psychological meaning. This reflects a systemic inability to understand or respond to trauma beyond the physical. Sakina's lack of voice is not a narrative absence; it is a commentary on the social, medical, and political silencing of female victims.

Manto's *Khol Do* analyzes both the violence of Partition and the broader mechanisms of cultural silence. It illustrates how patriarchal and institutional frameworks often fail to recognize the depth of female pain. By withholding a clear resolution, Manto resists allowing the reader to disengage. Sakina's silence demands attention—it is a powerful critique of how stories of violence are heard, told, and too often ignored.

## Conclusion

Saadat Hasan Manto's *Khol Do* is a sharp yet confused reflection of the social and cultural silence surrounding women suffering during the Partition of India. Through the tragic character of Sakina, Manto uncovers not only the physical violence inflicted on women but also a deeper, more dangerous form of violence—the silence, neglect, and societal indifference that surround these injuries. History clearly shows how women's pain often becomes invisible under the weight of patriarchal ideals of honor, national identity, and pride. Manto's refusal to give voice or resolution to Sakina is not a limitation of the story, but a powerful criticism of a society that refuses to acknowledge women's trauma. Sakina's mechanical response at the end, a result of the brutal violation she endured, reflects the lasting psychological damage caused by personal violence and collective apathy. Manto

challenges his readers to confront the harsh reality of such injuries, often expressed through silence and fragmented action. Khol Do becomes a loud reminder of the cultural structures that silence women and ignore their suffering. It stresses the urgent need to hear, record, and recognize women's pain, especially in times of national crisis, when their voices are most at risk of erased.

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