Chapter 5

Stigmatexts of Patriarchy:

Female Body as the Site of Violence

in Saadat Hasan Manto’s Partition Narratives

According to Michel Foucault, the body manifests the stigmata of past experiences as the inscribed surface of events, the locus of a disassociated self, and a volume in perpetual disintegration (“Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” 148). He describes human body as the space where cultural hierarchies are inscribed and reinforced. He states that the essential components belonging to the domain of history such as desires, failings, and errors efface each other or combine and express themselves in the body. In fact, the entire mechanism of power, Foucault argues, becomes successfully operative only after it comes to be written on the bodies of individuals.

For the same reason, the oppressive functions carried out by the power-knowledge relationship can be exteriorized with the help of genealogical analysis. Here the genealogist focusses on exposing the “hazardous play of dominations” involved in the process of history’s destruction of the body (148). However, Foucault says that an exposé of these violent developments on the body is a futile endeavour if one considers discourse to be an exercise carried out in uninterrupted continuity; on the other hand, these developments need to be viewed and analyzed as individual episodes in a series of subjugations. This requires focussing on subtle, singular and sub-individual marks on the body denied expression in a dominant
discourse, thereby forming a network that is difficult to unravel. Here Foucault echoes Jacques Derrida’s idea of an individual’s disassociation from the authorized, dogmatic and phallocentric discourse in order to highlight a history filled with “paradoxical laws, non-dialectizable discontinuities, absolutely heterogeneous islands, irreducible singularities, unheard-of, and incalculable sexual differences” for the specific purpose of re-appropriation of the essence of the repressed other (“Choreographies” 67).

Moreover, Derrida terms this phenomenon as deconstruction which, according to him, involves deliberate disambiguation of the structural unity supposed to underline the philosophical and literary texts to reveal the oppressive ideology that is morphed into reality and presented as the truth. He states that deconstruction always takes place at the level of writing where the absence of any authorial interpretation, forces the individual reader to recreate, negotiate, and translate the meaning of the text. In the appendix to History of Madness entitled “My Body, This Paper, This Fire,” Foucault criticizes Derrida’s limited explanation of deconstruction and further elaborates the concept by pointing out that no text can or should be interpreted without taking into consideration the various external factors, such as historical, ideological, biographical, material etc. which contribute to its production (573). However, both the reader and the academic need to be aware that all these factors are historically contingent and must not be viewed as the immutable facts of human existence. An analysis of the views of Derrida and Foucault on deconstruction thus highlights that this particular concept needs to be understood as an intellectual’s attempt to account for those heterogeneous varieties of seemingly insignificant and illogical contradictions that form
fissures in an otherwise structured and homogeneous discourse. Moreover, both Derrida and Foucault insist that these insights need to be extended to the reading of literature.

Literature is, according to Jean Paul Sartre, the most effective form of social action (What is Literature? xiv). Sartre envisages literature as an important means for guiding man towards the path of freedom and consciousness. In his view, a literary work is never dead or finished because its meaning changes whenever the world changes. Hence, for the purpose of locating the relevance of the written word in a given age, the author and the reader need to make a collective endeavour to deconstruct, clean up and reinvigorate language. Both Derrida and Foucault, in fact, stress on the critical analysis of literary texts by way of deconstruction. In Derrida’s view, knowledge, identity, truth, meaning — all established concepts of western literary thought — achieve their status by overlooking or repressing other elements in their derivation. Derrida states that the aim of a literary analyst is to reveal the “metaphysics of presence” that prevails in literature in order to represent certain ‘lack’ as well as the supposed fullness of logos, thereby exposing and deposing the logic that lays claim to reality (Of Grammatology 131). On the other hand, Foucault views the critical analysis of literary texts as “problem[at]ization by thought” (The Foucault Reader 388). Foucault defines thought as a motion by which one “detaches oneself from action, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem” (388). In fact, this problem[at]ization of thought motivates researchers to combine varying discourses of literature, law and dominant culture in order to illuminate the
violence that underlies the intersection of the multiple axes of power operative in society.

The American philosopher Richard Rorty adds another dimension to the concept of deconstruction. In his paper entitled “Feminism, Ideology and Deconstruction: A Pragmatist View,” he weighs the usefulness of deconstruction in relation to feminist philosophy. In his view, feminist studies need to be more pragmatist than reformist while appropriating deconstructionism in their critique of theory and literature. Feminists, Rorty argues, need to disassociate deconstruction from the critique of distortion and “anti-representationalism” by the prevalent masculinist ideology in philosophical and literary texts (230).

This chapter shall employ Foucault’s idea of problematization of thought and Rorty’s counsel to take a pragmatist view of philosophical and literary tradition in reading Saadat Hassan Manto’s partition narratives. It shall endeavour to form new insights into the violence that Manto tries to capture and represent in these narratives as experienced by Indian women at the time of Partition. This chapter shall try to argue that the image of the tortured body of woman in Manto’s fictional narratives presents varied forms taken by violence. In fact, the representations of the ravaged body of the female in Manto’s partition stories signify the ‘stigmata’ of violent experiences in a phallocentric society.

Manto wrote during the era of modern Indian history fraught with religious/communal tensions which resulted in the bifurcation of national politics. In Manto’s view, literature is the pulse of community – literature gives news about the nation, the community to which it belongs, its health, its
illness” (Bhalla 72). His writings are realistic and satirical observations on violence-laced cultural inscriptions that manifest in the blood-thirsty behaviour of a large number of people in the Indian subcontinent. He explores the controversial themes of love, sex, incest, prostitution, rape, murder, patriarchy, etc. in the specific context of the dismal socio-cultural climate of the Partition. In his fiction, Manto reveals the suffering of individuals who bore the brunt of communal violence during Partition. Prominent among Manto’s account of these individuals is his portrayal of the plight of woman. Here the author does not highlight woman as the symbol as well as the means to avenge national honour. On the contrary, he seeks to show that this aggressive jingoistic fervour was simply a façade meant to give free rein to the power ascribed to the phallic subject by the dominant ideology. Moreover, Manto places the violence directed against women at the heart of his Partition narratives, thereby indicating that it is in these acts of deliberate and conscious brutality that violence in its entirety becomes visible. He explores the manner in which Partition is inscribed and enacted upon human bodies. Indeed, the victim may remain mute but her body becomes the signifier of the various forms of violence inflicted upon her. This chapter critically analyzes Khalid Hassan’s English translations of Manto’s three Partition narratives.

In the essay “Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation,” Louis Althusser states that ideology insinuates itself into the lives of individuals and transforms them into subjects against their will. He equates ideology to “misrecognition” for it makes them submit freely to their subjection (196). In the postscript to the aforementioned essay, Althusser hints at a solution to the problem posed by ideology: an in-depth
analysis of class struggle in order to understand the functioning of ideology in society. In *The Plague of Fantasies*, however, Slavoj Žižek presents a new approach to interpreting the ideological apparatuses that operate in society. Contrary to Althusser’s concept of ideology, Žižek states that revelation of the oppressive social operations does not herald an individual’s freedom from or resistance to ideology. He argues that ideology’s crucial mystifying move is its own demystification. In other words, the essential paradox of ideology today is that it maintains its misrecognizing power over subjects by exposing its own operations. In return, the ideological subject reacts to ideology’s demystification according to the fetishistic logic of disavowal (137). It means that the individuals realize their actions to be meaningless; nevertheless, they persist in indulging in them. One can say that, it is this fetishistic logic of disavowal that is highlighted by Manto in his account of the riots that ensued Partition. In his short stories revolving around the communal riots, Manto unfailingly mentions that his protagonist participates in wreaking violence upon others not because he is driven by religious or nationalistic fervour but by the need to indulge his desire for meaningless violence. One of the stories in which this happens is “Colder Than Ice.”

5.1 “Colder Than Ice”

In the story, Ishwar Singh – the protagonist – decides to take advantage of the golden opportunity that communal riots have provided to every hot-blooded man: to kidnap and rape any girl of his choice. First, he joins the gangs in looting shops and houses, after which he goes back home to present the spoils to his mistress Kalwant Kaur. Then during the night, he leaves her house to
prowl the deserted streets in search of some beautiful girl to satisfy his sexual fantasies and perversions. Ishwar Singh finally enters a house where he murders six men, makes a grab for a young pretty girl and carries her some distance for the purpose of raping her at a deserted place. It is only after penetrating the prostrate girl’s body that Ishwar Singh realizes that he has committed rape on a dead girl. In this short story, the lifeless body of the dead girl can be seen as what Žižek calls the “real.” Here the “real” is not reality but refers to something constitutively absent from reality, that is, to the impossibility of anything being fully itself. The dead body of the girl is, in fact, a self-obfuscating “screen” meant to function as an obstacle that prevents the direct and violent access of a subject (*The Puppet and the Dwarf* 77).

Moreover, the corpse serves as a sign of resistance against the extremity of violence directed at woman by the phallocentric male subject. Ishwar Singh is a Žižekian pervert who craves for excess in every aspect of life. The pervert, Žižek argues, is a man obsessed with sexuality more than is natural; moreover, he follows drives with an excess far beyond natural; and, this excess of drive has to be “gentrified” as second nature through the mediation of man-made institutions (*The Plague* 135).

In *The Plague of Fantasies*, Žižek states that the confrontation with the real that eludes one’s grasp poses the threat of symbolic castration for the perverse patriarchal subject. This causes him to stage a “disavowal of castration” primarily as a defense against the motif of death and sexuality (34). Consequently, he enacts a universe in which a human being can survive any catastrophe; and, in which sexuality is reduced to a game. Ishwar Singh too
tries to grapple with the *jouissance* that has been introduced into his subjectivity through his encounter with the “real” *other* in the form of the dead girl. He goes back to Kalwant Kaur’s house, indulges in flirtatious banter with her where they both refer to sexual foreplay as a game of cards. Ishwar Singh then proceeds to be sexually aggressive with his mistress (something which the author indicates is a common occurrence between them). Kalwant Kaur admonishes him for physically hurting her. Ishwar Singh, however, warns her to be prepared for there is going to be “a lot of brutality” that night (Manto 26). In fact, Ishwar Singh is not able to disassociate violence from his actions. Patriarchy, that is to say, survives on the torture of another being. Here the protagonist is a patriarchal subject whose previous attempt to possess the defenseless *other* has been thwarted because the victim turned out to be already dead, thereby escaping her subjection to violence. As a result, Ishwar Singh finds himself floundering from his confident stance as an aggressor. Hence he seeks to escape this feeling of inadequacy by transferring his violent intentions towards his mistress, Kalwant Kaur: another *other*.

He ogles Kalwant lasciviously, kisses her roughly, pinches her black and blue, and tries to forcibly penetrate her. And all the while, Kalwant Kaur allows herself to be subjected to his brutal ministrations. Here the bestial treatment meted out by Ishwar Singh to the two women suggests that for the patriarchal subject every woman is an object, that is, the passive recipient of his sexual objectification. In *The Parallax View*, however, Żižek states that the

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8In his work titled *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* Jacques Lacan presents his concept of the opposition of *jouissance* and pleasure. In his view, the subject continuously tries to transgress the prohibitions on his enjoyment. However, the consequence of these transgressions is not more pleasure but pain since the subject can take in only a limited amount of gratification. Beyond this limit, Lacan argues, pleasure transforms into pain. And, he calls this pain *jouissance*. 

fundamental mode of an object’s passive presence is that it annoys, disturbs and traumatizes the subject (17). This disruption of the smooth running of the subject’s life by the objection of the object (at its most radical) calls for a reversal in their positions, whereby the subject needs to be viewed as passive and the object as active. In the above-mentioned short story, Ishwar Singh – mortified by the radicalized form of resistance reflected in the corpse of the raped girl – indulges in “false activity,” where he tries to fake sexual ardour with his mistress (*The Plague* 115). However, he is unable to consummate the act because the image of the immobile, frozen girl comes alive as an apparition before his eyes. This image – which stands as a frozen point of immobility in Ishwar Singh’s field of visibility – is so potent that it renders him impotent. This angers his mistress who, upon hearing his confession about his deliberate infidelity, plunges his *Kirpan* (a phallic symbol of power, justice and truth) in his neck. Hence, Ishwar Singh becomes doubly the victim of his own phallus – for it causes the symbolic death of his sexuality and, later, his physical death. The character of Ishwar Singh thus represents the phallocentric self who always depends on violence to assert his subjectivity. On the other hand, the bodies of the two women, the corpse and Kalwant Kaur, become the agency through which Ishwar Singh supplements his subjectivity. Suffice it to say that the conventional notion of the phallus as the siege of aggressive, penetrative, essentially masculine, potency power is, in actuality, contingent upon the terror that is evoked in the gaze of the other. The moment that the decentered other (the corpse) offers resistance to the terror induced by the violence of the phallic subject, the entire fetish crumbles to reveal that the spontaneous, natural power of the phallus is, in fact, an “artificial prosthetic
element” (*The Plague* 36). Hence, analysis of “Colder Than Ice” reveals that the existence of phallocentric male relies on violation of the body of the *other* woman to maintain its illusion of power.

### 5.2 “The Woman in the Red Raincoat”

“The Woman in the Red Raincoat” illustrates that violence need not only be physical to make woman a victim of its wrath. In this fictional account, Manto narrates the experience of his friend during the violent upheaval of the partition. Here the author does not assign a name to the protagonist, preferring to call him ‘S’. He introduces ‘S’ as an ordinary, average, aesthetically inclined, innocuous young man. However, Manto’s further delineation of the character of ‘S’ shows that the protagonist is essentially a paradox. ‘S’ is fond of games but hates sports; he is not cruel by nature but cannot resist being the first person to get into an argument or fight; he never plays fair but is an honest fighter; he is interested in arts but willingly opens a bicycle shop. Manto’s contradictory representation of the nature of ‘S’ suggests that reality can never be grasped in entirety, for everything construed as an evidence of authenticity is essentially a delusive masquerade. In the aforementioned story, the protagonist’s shop is burned down. And so with nothing constructive to do, he decides to join the same band of arsonists and looters who have snatched the means of his livelihood. The narrator is, however, quick to assure the reader that ‘S’ indulges in plundering houses and shops not because he is driven by the thought of communal revenge but because he is looking for diversion as an escape from the miasma of violence. In fact, there is so much violence in the atmosphere that his sensibility has been totally numbed.
Manto sketches out a scene of brutal chaos in the story: frequent occurrences of murder, arson and rapes, houses set on fire, streets littered with corpses, stench of death in the air, a large pile of looted goods collected and stored by ‘S’ in his house. And against it, the author presents the image of the protagonist – calmly smoking a cigarette on his balcony. ‘S’ seems to be comfortable with the dry and barren silence that surrounds him. He feels no anger towards the arsonists who destroyed his shop because he knows that expressing frustration in the face of absurdity is futile (The Rebel 5). In fact, ‘S’ seems to be comfortable with the notion that the world is a foreign, strange and an inhumane place. In the course of the story, Manto portrays ‘S’ as the paradoxical absurd man: amoral but with a hint of integrity, embracing the notion of freedom to act by choice which is always directed towards the constructive goal of enjoying life. ‘S’ – the absurd man, however, reveals himself to be a patriarchal subject who is willing to resort to any tactic to lure and deceive the other.

In the above-mentioned short story, dazed by the meaningless violence taking place around him, ‘S’ is struck by the idea of picking up a girl. The narrator, however, does not elaborate the protagonist’s real intentions for kidnapping. After loitering through the deserted streets, ‘S’ comes across a crashed car and immediately kidnaps the woman driver emerging from it. He drags the hysterical and terrified woman back to his darkened house where he proceeds to comfort her with soothing words. He does not employ any physical force to overpower the kidnapped woman and bend her according to his will. Instead, he seduces her with words, thereby revealing himself to be a sophisticated but nevertheless predatory and manipulative man. Control is not
exercised merely through the use of brute force. The extreme kind of victimization and manipulative control may be achieved through discourse also – the typical vector for patriarchal ideology. Moreover, patriarchy is primarily a paradox. It shows itself as normalcy whereas its sole purpose is to sustain violence. The phallocentric subject thus carries out the ruse to successfully perform the phallic function of living up to the ideal-ego of masculinity that battles the accusations of the suppression of the other for the sustenance of his subjectivity. ‘S’ finally manages to triumph over the denial and resistance of the hysterical woman.

In his essay “Woman is One of the Names-of-the-Father,” Žižek states that theorists should discard their clichéd interpretations of hysteria such as the view that the feminine hysterical subject is a confused babbler unable to confront reality, or the false interpretation of hysteria as a protest, through woman’s body language, against male domination. Hysteria, Žižek argues, needs to be comprehended in the complexity of its strategy as a radically ambiguous protest against the Master's interpolation which, simultaneously, bears witness to the fact that the “hysterical subject needs a Master, that she cannot do without a Master”. In the story, the kidnapped woman is Miss ‘M’ – respected art teacher and a self-proclaimed man-hater (57). However, this hatred towards men is just a masquerade as it becomes evident through her passionate and almost suppliant stance towards ‘S’. However, Miss ‘M’ is ready to submit to ‘S’ only when he concedes to her request of making love to her in the dark. The reason is that Miss ‘M’ is actually an old woman. Jacques Lacan states that “it is for what she [woman] is not that she expects to be desired as well as loved” (Écrits 221). Miss M’s projection of hatred and
indifference towards the male species is, in reality, a farce. She has finally been presented with the chance of being accepted despite her physical shortcomings. However, her offer is rejected by ‘S’ when he gets a glimpse of the ‘real’ Miss M – wrinkled and white haired. In *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, Judith Butler states that *other* is the “real” of abjection, that is, exclusion. The notion of abjection, in fact, designates a “degraded or cast out status within the terms of sociality” (243). After taking a good look at Miss M, ‘S’ refuses to look at her again and tells her that she is no longer his captive. The old art teacher reluctantly leaves his house only to be killed outside in an accident. Manto insinuates himself into the fiction at its conclusion to label his friend ‘S’ as the culprit who carried out dual murders the night he kidnapped Miss M. According to the narrator, ‘S’ murdered the famous artist known to the world as well as the vulnerable and real woman he encountered on the night of her abduction. In this short story, Miss M is both abducted and rejected because of her bodily appearance. She falls prey to the whims of the phallocentric ‘S’. Here Manto unravels the violence underlying the asymmetrical relationship between the phallic subject and the *other*. The reverent and loving attitude of Miss M towards ‘S’ transforms him into a full phallic presence, thereby giving him the power. For ‘S’, however, the purpose of the possessing the power is primarily to reduce Miss ‘M’ to an object of desire. Her body thus becomes a mere object – studied, measured, judged by the violent, patriarchal gaze of ‘S’, but then quickly afterwards relegated to the realm of abjection.
5.3 “The Price of Freedom”

In “The Price of Freedom,” Manto explores the manner in which phallocentric operations wield control and violence over the female body. The author demonstrates the manner in which patriotic rhetoric and nationalistic ideals and ideology are, actually, an exercise by patriarchy meant to generate a group of people in order to manipulate them to submit to their victimization. In this story, Manto describes the plight of his childhood friend Ghulam Ali who is forcibly held prisoner to a hollow and unfulfilling life while participating in the nation’s fight for freedom. He is an active participant in the civil disobedience movement during which he falls in love with a fellow revolutionary: a girl called Nigar. Being a resident of Amritsar and a good orator, Ghulam Ali is chosen as a “dictator” by the revolutionaries for the prime purpose of addressing a rally at Jallianwallah Bagh and then getting himself arrested and thrown into jail as a sign of bravery and rebellion against the British rule (Manto 60). Ghulam Ali wants to marry his beloved before going to prison, and for this conjugal union he seeks the blessings of a religious sage known to the public as Babaji. The character of Babaji seems to be modelled upon Mahatma Gandhi – a visionary who professes practicing abstinence from the material things in life. The writer, however, reveals that Babaji’s proclamation of disinterest in worldly things is, in fact, a ruse. Manto narrates that Babaji is renowned for his piety and scholarship and has a legion of followers belonging to different religions. On his occasional visits to Amritsar, he resides at the palatial house of a local jeweller. Also, despite his proclivity towards religious activities, Babaji nurtures an avid interest in politics and continually but subtly drops hints and discusses political strategies
with people who come to pay homage to him. Even though he lives in an Ashram, Babaji is a man accustomed to living a comfortable life where people cater to his every whim and fancy and follow his orders. His disciples are more like his slaves, with lifeless and ashen appearance, whose life decisions are made and manipulated by their spiritual leader (67).

The character of Babaji represents the violence and power that characterize the panoptic function of patriarchy. The concept of panopticism has been investigated and theorized by Michel Foucault. He identifies body as the principal target of power. He says that modern power – disciplinary in its nature – operates in a capillary fashion throughout the social body which can be best grasped in the everyday practices which sustain and reproduce power relations. In his seminal work *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault studies these practices which, according to him, are an exercise in disciplinary power. He suggests that these practices were first cultivated in isolated institutional settings, such as prisons, military establishments, hospitals, factories and schools, but were gradually applied more broadly as techniques of social regulation and control. Their aim is to simultaneously optimize the body’s capacities, skills and productivity and to foster its usefulness and docility. It is not, however, only the body that the disciplinary techniques target. Disciplinary power which is initially directed toward disciplining the body, Foucault argues, gradually takes hold of the mind as well to induce a psychological state of conscious and permanent visibility. Here control is achieved by the means of subtle strategies of normalization carried out through the medium of constant surveillance and discourse.
In the above-mentioned short story, Babaji’s ashram appears as a form of Foucault’s idea of the ‘prison’ which, in turn, is his metaphor for modern disciplinary society founded on the concept of power, knowledge and body. Babaji projects himself as a revolutionary who is not enamoured of politics. Instead, he wishes for the spiritual enlightenment that will bring freedom to the citizens of the nation. However, Babaji frequently deviates from his proclamations by dropping hints about the tactics to be followed to the political leaders who were among the group of his followers. Moreover, he couches his political ideology in his influential rhetoric about youth and revolution. Babaji is, in fact, a power-hungry individual who maintains his dominant position in society by devising new means and tactics of control over a legion of followers. He has opened several ashrams and persuades his disciples to come and reside there. These ashrams are, however, more like reformatories where the activities of residents are closely monitored and controlled (as in a panopticon) by Babaji. He declares that his purpose is to guide them towards higher life; so, he prescribes to them a life devoid of any comfort whereas he enjoys all the luxuries provided to him courtesy his blinded disciples. The residents of his ashram have a “lifeless” and “pallid” look about them, an after-effect of the hard life they are forced to endure on the command of Babaji (Manto 67). Yet they submit quietly to their oppression because they have been completely overwhelmed and brain-

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In *The Panopticon Writings*, Jeremy Bentham presents panopticon as an idea of a new principle of construction devised primarily for penitentiary houses which, he argues, can also be applied to other establishments. Here the incarcerated individuals are enclosed within walls but remain isolated from one another, and are subject to scrutiny by an observer who remains unseen. Michel Foucault considers the panopticon to be a discipline mechanism which induces in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.
washed by Babaji’s ideology. Ghulam Ali too is one of the willing victims of Babaji.

He goes with his girlfriend Nigar to ask for Babaji’s blessings before their nuptials. Babaji expresses extreme displeasure at Ghulam Ali’s decision to marry. He advises Ali to send his fiancée to live in his ashram and then go and get himself arrested in order to show his patriotism. Later, Babaji changes his mind about their wedding and agrees to give them his blessings the next day at the Jallianwallah Bagh. The narrator writes that Babaji, with the makings of an astute politician, declares in front of riveted audience about his gladness over Ghulam Ali and Nigar uniting in wedlock. He states that procreating rather than dedicating one’s life to the cause of the country’s freedom is evil, indulgent and abnormal behaviour. Babaji, with his cleverly devised rant, quickly inveigles Ghulam Ali to promise to the entire congregation that he will not have children with his future wife and they shall spend their married life as friends. When Ghulam Ali comes out of his revolutionary stupor, he realizes that he has made a mistake by allowing his life to be controlled by another individual and, ultimately, he breaks his vow to Babaji and resumes living a full life.

The most obvious yet mute victim in this narrative is Nigar. Manto describes her as an educated, self-assured, and compassionate woman. Nonetheless, she remains voiceless in the face of the manipulation and oppressive dictums of Babaji. Moreover, she does not have any opportunity to take any decisions; she keeps moving between the ideology and the wishes of both Ghulam Ali and Babaji. In effect thus, both are the perpetrators of violence against Nigar. For Babaji, the body of the woman stands as a symbol
of indulgence and evil; he considers female body to be a deliberate distraction and obstacle that diverts the freedom fighter from his “normal” calling and conduct. Hence he advises Nigah to join the ashram in order to move Ghulam Ali away from the path of temptation. However, Ghulam Ali is not able to adapt to a life devoid of abstinence. So, he skirts his promise made to Babaji by deciding that he will have sexual relations with his wife but will not beget any children from her. However, he soon begins yearning for children – something to call upon as his legacy. Also, he is agonized on behalf of his wife for he knows that she craves motherhood. Ghulam Ali thus decides to ditch his promise to Babaji and produces a couple of children with Nigar. When Manto meets Ghulam Ali years later, he notices his friend’s hatred towards anything made of rubber – be it rubber soles or a deflated balloon. For Ghulam Ali, rubber alludes to condoms: a reminder of stunted and barren marital life. Ghulam Ali seeks transcendence from this desolate existence through natural contact with a woman’s body. In this story, Nigar’s body is reduced to a mere womb, an object, a means for Ghulam Ali to achieve the goal he considers to be his life’s true purpose. Hence Ghulam Ali is the primordial phallic subject who represses the subjectivity of the associated other by violating her body. This violation by Ghulam Ali has, in fact, no visible brute force attached to it. However, Ghulam Ali reveals himself to be a perpetrator of violence against woman because he unwittingly stamps her with the status of an entity whose existence is contingent upon the wishes, decisions and actions of the phallic subject.

According to Hélène Cixous, writing is a conspiracy of languages to produce tragic responses to the repetition of evil (Stigmata: Escaping Texts x).
She states that literature is scarred for it maintains and reanimates the traces of the wound inflicted upon the body of the individual. Cixous refers to such works of literature as Stigmatexts\(^\text{10}\) (xvi). The present chapter critically analyzes the female body – represented in Manto’s fictional narratives – as bearing the stigmatic of patriarchy. A critical examination of the above-mentioned stories reveals the scars inscribed upon the body of the woman which, in turn, highlight the multifarious forms of violence directed against her. In this chapter, each narrative is shown to present a varied image of woman’s victimization. In “Colder Than Ice,” Ishwar Singh’s violent treatment of the two women reveals that the existence and survival of a phallocentric man is contingent upon the torture of another human being. Moreover, a victim’s resistance to violence directed against her has a disintegrating impact on the subjectivity of her aggressor. An analysis of “The Woman in the Red Raincoat” unravels the violence underlying the asymmetrical relationship between the phallic subject and the other. Here the body of Miss ‘M’ is objectified and, subsequently, discarded to the realm of abjection by the violent, patriarchal gaze of ‘S’. Manto’s narrative entitled “The Price of Freedom” highlights the manner in which the phallic subject controls and reduces the female body to an object and uses it to achieve transcendence. Each of the aforesaid instances of violence shows woman’s mute acceptance of or resistance to the stigma of the other that has been

\(^{10}\)In her work entitled *Stigmata: Escaping Texts*, Hélène Cixous sheds light on the concepts of stigma and stigmata. According to her, stigma is the hallmark of the wounds that are inflicted upon the body. Moreover, stigma is the mark that signals out an individual for exclusion or election. However, Cixous interprets stigmata as the formation of an alliance between stigma and the trauma that is associated with it. The stigmata, she argues, engenders literature. In other words, literature reveals the stigma associated with the infliction of the wound and relives the trauma of the individual’s encounter with violence.
inscribed upon her body by patriarchy. An in-depth analysis of the violence directed against women in Manto’s narratives thus reveals that female body is the site upon which patriarchy carries out its violent operations. Manto’s fiction is, in fact, a “Stigmatext” where the author invokes varied images of the scarred and ravaged body of woman, thereby highlighting that her existence is inextricable from violence.