Colonialism and Trauma Embedded in Poetry: Perusing *Khooni Vaisakhi* as a Traumatic Response

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It is universally accepted that literary narratives do have a therapeutic quality to act as a crucial tool for recovery from trauma. Interestingly, they achieve this purpose through the narration of cataclysmic events. On April 13, 1919, British troops, commanded by General Reginald Dyer, discharged their weapons upon a gathering of unarmed Indian citizens at Jallianwala Bagh in Punjab. The tragic incident resulted in the deaths and injuries of over a thousand individuals. Among the survivors was 22-year-old Nanak Singh, who, against all odds, composed *Khooni Vaisakhi*, a collection of poignant twenty-four poems that offer a remarkable chronological narrative of events occurring during the month of April 1919. It was published in May, 1920. This poem is a record of the brutalities of the British government. So, the stringent English rulers banned the poem for its inciting nature just after the publication.

In addition to giving a graphic portrayal of this mass extermination, this work serves as a lens into the turbulent situation happened in the month of April in the given year. It encapsulates the mass sentiments while conveying a blistering critique of the deceptive colonizers and their savagery in India. The piece remained lost for six decades only to

get republished in the year of 1980. The poem got translated from "Gurmukhi into English" and was republished in 2019 by Navdeep Suri, the author's grandson, with the inclusion of supplementary materials to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the "Jallianwala Bagh massacre." This event also marked a significant turning point in the author's life in various respects. It vividly portrays the upsetting experiences of the people which are inherently traumatic and have pathological consequences on the mind of the indigenous people.

Nanak Singh believed in writing as a vehicle for resistance and through his writings, he wanted to liberate his reader from all kinds of insularity and to inculcate empathy in them. He emerged as a fervent advocate to ardently support for the sake of the country and a vehement attacker of the colonial rule in India by aligning himself with the "Guru ka Bagh movement" initiated by the "Akalis" in the year of 1922, which led to his arrest and several months of incarceration in the notorious "Borstal jail" situated in the city of Lahore. The author reflects on this experience in the introduction to his novel, *Adh Khidya Phul* (1940) which got published as *A Life Incomplete* (2012) by Nanak Singh. He characterized it as having been a transformative era in his personal development and literary evolution.

Khooni Vaisakhi stands out as an exceptional poem, not solely due to its making an appearance through the artistic self of the author who got survived from this mass killing but for its offering a contemporary perspective on the atmosphere of its epicentre in the year of 1919. Through the straightforward rhyme, it extends valuable insights to gain a better understanding about the individual because of his ascension to prominence within Punjabi literature. The poem acts as a testimony of the evolution of Nanak Singh who shifted his writing trajectory from the theme of religion to that of patriotism due to his getting deeply affected by the suffering of people of Punjab and India. He has let out a vituperative wail to strongly criticize the colonial violence and its perpetrators.

This poem from the early 1920s shows how poetry was used as a form of protest. It serves as an important piece of history, telling a clear and true story of what happened and reflecting the feelings and attitudes of the people in Amritsar in April 1919. The native people who found themselves disempowered in their own land stood against the torture of the British regime. Their resilience through protest resulted in horrible catastrophe which is notorious as a dark chapter in the book of British rule in India. The poet has written this poem as a reminiscence of the cruelty of the English rule for the posterity.

Here, Nanak Singh portrays the "Jallianwala Bagh Massacre" in great detail to address the psychological aspect of the suffering. Here the poet has incorporated a kind of narrative which describes the incidents and their consequences in a chronological but with the intervention of intermittent thoughts. It is a mixture of the thoughts of a survivor and poet. The continual re-experience of the past propelled the poet to write about the victims and their family.

Moreover, violence has always been an integral weapon of colonial empire. An empire seeks to expand its territorial boundaries, whereas colonialism refers to the imposition of authority, laws, and cultural practices by foreign leaders—predominantly from Europe or, at times, Asia—upon other populations. Empires maintained their dominance primarily through the use of intimidation or, in some instances, actual coercive force.

Hannah Arendt's thoughts on violence remind us that "violence appears when power is in jeopardy" (Arendt 1970, 56). Studies from the 20th century about massacres and genocides show that the attackers often feel vulnerable and weak, which leads to violence. In early settler society, fear and violence were closely linked. It might seem strange to connect fear with colonial violence, which is usually seen as a sign of imperial pride. However, there is a lot of evidence showing that early colonial society was filled with fear. In fact, it can be said that

settlers were very fearful. This fear in settler society had two sides. On one hand, settlers felt powerful because they could rely on the vast resources of the imperial State. On the other hand, indigenous people understood this power better than the settlers did.

Cathy Caruth examined trauma through her concept of 'belatedness' in the chapter titled "The Wound and The Voice" of *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) in a very significant way: "The story of trauma, then, as the narrative of a belated experience, far from telling of an escape from reality—the escape from a death, or from its referential force—rather attests to its endless impact on a life" (Caruth 2016, 7). Caruth's notion of trauma being ungraspable at the time of its occurrence engenders a delayed response. The poem's graphic portrayal of colonial brutality divulges a survivor's endeavour to reconstruct a fragmented memory that found expression in phrases like "searing hail" of bullets, "awkward heaps" of bodies among others. This overwhelming experience becomes a barrier to the complete comprehension of trauma. Nanak Singh was found unconscious under a heap of corpses which leads to Caruth's idea of "unclaimed experience" getting manifested in the process of writing becomes witnessing to integrate the onslaught of trauma into consciousness.

David Lloyd in his article "Colonial Trauma and Postcolonial Recovery?" (2000) made an argument that one's past is not only individual but also a product of social history which is found prominently in Colonialism and its consequences. According to him, Trauma involves a violent invasion and a feeling of being completely dehumanized, which destroys a person's sense of self and agency. The impacts and process of colonization are very oppressive in nature. Modern technological advancement equipped the colonial regime strongly and with the help of this the colonizers controlled the native people and destroyed their own self and culture. They did it successfully by using crude violence which gradually damaged the communities of the country. This converts their unbearably painful experiences into trauma which gets infested in the cultures across the

country. According to David Lloyd, there is no panacea to recover from colonial trauma except it being lived through. Here, the poem is an attestation of collective survival in documenting people looking for their near and dear ones among the scattered corpses. However, Nanak Singh's poem has emerged as a text with active trauma becoming a significant political force to decolonize the memory of the catastrophe.

In this context, *Khooni Vaisakhi* comes out of the wounded psyche. This draws attention to the interrelation between words and wounds which facilitates the healing process of the traumatised self through literary verbalization. This paper uses the theorizing of trauma to analyze the poem's narrative mechanism employed by the poet to unravel the traumatic traces which crop up as a consequence of the mass killing. It will offer an analysis of the colonial trauma as manifested in the poem. It will also explore writing as a personal act that serves as history by examining the narrative and how it gets shaped by the integrated existence of trauma.

Theoretical Underpinning of Trauma:

Cerebral approaches to postcolonial inquiries have frequently examined how the process of colonisation has affected both the colonised and the colonisers and the way they find themselves in the decolonising action of getting rid of the scar on the psyche. Coming under the oppressive colonial regime the native people got moulded into an assimilated self constantly feeling inadequate which results into trauma. This has found a continuation through war and carnage in the modern and postmodern era. In this context there arose some prominent voices in France who penned to analyze this traversing thread through the ages. Among them Frantz Fanon holds a very dominant position. It was crucial from their part in making a contribution to the interrelation between colonialism and its adverse effect upon the psyche of the perpetrators and victims.

To analyze the poet's traumatized self and its reverberation in the narrative of the poem it is very crucial and relevant to draw upon

Trauma theory. One of the prominent theorists of trauma is Dominick LaCapra, whose contributions are pivotal to the deliberation of trauma. He notably emphasizes the significance of history in understanding the traumatic experiences. He posits that trauma extends beyond personal psychological incidents, manifesting as a historical event that impacts entire communities or societies. For instance, the shared trauma from war, genocide, or colonialism can imprint cultural memory in ways that surpass the scope of individual experience. LaCapra distinguishes between "trauma" and "empathy", suggesting that recognizing historical trauma necessitates a deeper engagement with the past that extends beyond mere identification or empathy. La Capra's definition of "acting out" (reliving the trauma) and "working through" (critically engaging with it to achieve agency) in Trauma studies is also very significant for the analysis of the poem. The poem's repetitive use of the imagery of violence, blood and death represents an "acting out" the historical wound to evoke an immediate feeling of horror in the mind of the reader. Singh's narrative of the massacre can be brought into the purview of national unity to refer to his venture into "working through" the tragedy. The togetherness of Hindus and Muslims has been addressed in the poem to form a resistance against colonial "other" which shows that Singh transcends the boundary of mere lamentation by historicizing the massacre.

Trauma studies, as articulated by scholars such as Caruth, LaCapra, and others, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how profound experiences—whether they are personal or collective—are not merely remembered as memories but are re-experienced in manners that disrupt the constructs of time, identity, and language. This field of study underscores the notion that trauma often remains beyond the realm of complete conscious integration, frequently manifesting in intrusive ways that blur the distinctions between past and present. The implications of this framework are significant, extending beyond psychological theory to encompass cultural, historical, and literary analysis, as it posits that the legacies of trauma continue to influence both individual identities and broader cultural narratives.

The discipline of trauma studies, as influenced by figures such as Caruth and others, integrates concepts from psychoanalysis—particularly Freud's theories regarding repression, trauma, and the unconscious—and poststructuralism, which emphasizes language, narrative, and the fluidity of meaning. These theoretical frameworks elucidate the understanding that trauma transcends mere individual psychological concerns, emerging also as a cultural and linguistic phenomenon. In this perspective, trauma is perceived as both personal, in the sense that it impacts the individual psyche, and social, as the conditions surrounding trauma are frequently connected to broader cultural, historical, and political dynamics.

According to Carl Jung, the healing of trauma begins through the process of verbalization of the experiences of intense suffering. The psychoanalytic view looks at how trauma impacts the unconscious mind, which makes it hard to remember or understand consciously. The poststructuralist view focuses on the language aspects of trauma. If trauma can't be fully processed and remembered, it can't be easily told or expressed in words. Because of this, trauma is hard to explain, causing confusion in both personal experiences and shared histories. Jung expanded his theoretical framework to include the concept of the collective unconscious, which is a repository of universal archetypes and symbols that are inherited by all individuals. This collective trauma may manifest itself in dreams, myths, and cultural representations. It is evidently found in Singh's poem *Khooni Vaisakhi.* In this poem, Singh's chronicling of the disastrous massacre has given a cosmic significance through the use of archetypal motifs like "Martyr" and "Sacrifice." It has very effectively bridged the gap between the personal trauma of the victims and the broader psyche of the nation by drawing on the shared religious and cultural symbols of Punjab. Thus, the poem traverses the realm from unconscious horror of colonial violence to its emergence as a conscious protest.

This is the point at which it becomes strenuous to distinguish the past from the present making the border between them slide into porosity.

Therefore, the survivor does not merely recall the traumatic experience from a distance; rather, they re-experience it as though it is occurring once more, in real time. This phenomenon of re-living the trauma is frequently characterized by fragmentation, disjunction and dissociation. Instead of possessing a coherent, linear recollection of the event, the individual perceives the trauma as a perennial influence that lingers to fashion their understanding of the present.

Dissecting Singh's Narrative Mechanism through the Lens of Trauma:

Nanak Singh commences the poem with a customary invocation; a traditional practice revered in literary works and mentions Lord Krishna celebrating Holi at Vrindavan. He talks comfortably about the sacrifices of Sufi mystics Shams Tabrizi and Mansour Al Haq. His lively descriptions of Ram Navmi celebrations in Amritsar express a strong message of unity among the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities in the city. However, diverging from the norm of supplicating to a deity for prosperity, Nanak Singh invokes Guru Gobind Singh, a figure who resorted to wielding a sword in response to futile attempts at resolving oppression through peaceful means. Contemplating on his ability to combat the oppressive Raj with his pen, the writer sets the stage following the invocation with the poignant words 'Rowlatt Bill da Raula'. The poem vividly portrays the discontent simmering amongst the populace following the enactment of the oppressive 'black law', which authorized the arbitrary detention of individuals without trial, inciting widespread frustration. Skilfully chronicling the events leading up to the tragic episode, culminating in the tragic directive by Dyer to open fire on the unarmed public, the poem meticulously traces the chronological progression of significant occurrences of the era. Through capturing the reactions of the public to each unfolding event, the poem emerges as a credible historical resource, akin to Waris Shah's *Heer*, esteemed by historians for its account of eighteenth-century Punjab. Nanak Singh's narrative is distinguished by his ability to uphold

the authenticity of historical facts within the confines of poetic expression, a delicate balance that is a hallmark of his craft. Within the context of *Khooni Vaisakhi,* a fundamental conflict arises between opposing factions: the common people, striving for peaceful coexistence and national liberation, are juxtaposed against the relentless endeavours of the formidable British regime bent on exploitation and plunder through military might.

The poet has portrayed the use of brutal violence in the massacre which echoes in the lines:

> "Young boys flogged and bleeding lie
> Like fish out of water, in dire straits.
> Tied to poles and whipped with canes
> Skin peels, their tender backs lacerate.
> Flesh and bone do take the brunt
> As streams of blood rush to the gate.
> In desperate search their parents reach
> Pushed rudely, ordered: Go home and wait!
> …A funeral spirit pervades the air,
> A stifled wail, a silent dirge and a pain innate". (Singh 2019, 13)

The experience is so painful and overwhelming that the poet becomes unable to articulate properly. He says, "Words choke as I speak, they suffocate" (13). There are references in form of addressing to Hindu gods to describe the unbearable suffering of the family members of victims. The following lines from the poem show the mental state of the poet:

> "Ah! My heart the paper, my blood the ink.
> To create this pen, my bones did break.
> Says Nanak Singh, She was much too young
> Lonely and bereft, her heart does ache". (Singh 2019, 45)

Trauma is generating painful and involuntary flashbacks in the form of images which turn into seemingly paradoxical symptoms such as

emotions of rage and numbness. The image of dead bodies lying on the ground is so powerful that it evokes and intensifies the speaker's traumatic experiences which are very evident in the lines:

> "What can I say about the morrow
> Don't whisper a word, my heart warns me.
> At every corner, bodies strewn in rows
> In the bazaar of corpses, no vendor to see.
> Even Death, it seems has turned its face
> 'Enough!' it says, 'Just let things be". (Singh 2019, 49)

Here the poet is mourning and ruminating over the loss of people's youth and their life. The thought of their untimely death is reminding him of the massacre again and again. Here he is reluctant to accept the idea of death as the end of everything rather it is a continuation of their resilience. This can be found in the lines:

> "Don't believe they're dead
> They'll go and wake the dead, you hear?" (Singh 2019, 51)

Navdeep Singh Suri's article titled "Nanak Singh's Khooni Vaisakhi: The Poet and the Poem" (2021) discussed the occurrence of the "Jallianwala Bagh Massacre" just about thirty years before the massive sectarian violence sparked by India's Partition in the year of 1947. Yet, the people shown in the poem live in harmony across communities. There were two chief figures named Saifuddin Kitchlew who was a lawyer and Dr. Satyapal who was a Hindu physician. They brought Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs together. They stood united against British rule. The poem also shows a vivid scene of the Ram Navmi festival. The poet writes:

> "Hindus and Muslims they gathered together
> To rejoice at a festival, O my friends
> Brotherhood conveyed by Muslims that day
> Beyond incredible it was my friends.

A festival of Hindus though it was
Muslims made it just their own, my friends…
Doctors Saifuddin and Satyapal together
Tread on a path united, my friends.
Feted with garlands, our stalwart duo
Sent out a message clear, my friends.
Their friendship displayed a bond so strong
Hindu Muslim were the same, my friends". (Singh 2019, 17)

There is a perturbing depiction of the mob rummaging through to find their kith and kin among the heap of dead bodies. The painful devastation makes the elders feel an urge to meet the dead people:

"Clutching lifeless bodies of precious sons
Parents morn the abject horrors of the day.
My child, oh! Wake up just once more
What makes you sleep in a place so grey…
If Time indeed had come to part
Your parents could join, without delay". (Singh 2019, 43)

The work is full of mentions of a chained Mother India. It describes the harsh treatment she faced. In the poem "Protests and Martial Law," this comes after the "Rowlatt Act" passed. The poet is mourning over all the lost joyful days and has depicted how this suffering stultifies their quotidian life. The whole country descends into a state of wretchedness. He writes:

"Dispirited and despondent by turn of events
They lamented, aghast at miserable fate.
With sinking hearths, they then witnessed
A shadow spread across a nation great.
All comforts and pleasures now sadly gone
Leaving gloom and grief to stalk the state…
Strikes called in every city and town

Sobs muffled, they roam in a sorry state.
Those valiant sons of Bharat Mata
Shedding tears, dismayed and desolate". (Singh 2019, 11)

According to Navdeep Singh Suri, "Nanak Singh's own courage is on display as he bluntly describes Dyer as a bloodthirsty murderer who will surely face the torment of Hell. The fact that he dared to write and publish *Khooni Vaisakhi* at a time when the Rowlatt Act was still in force shows the spirit of nationalist fervour that was prevailing at the time". (Suri 10). The poet castigates the barbarity of the colonial regime by noting:

"Shame on you, you merciless Dyer
What brought you to Punjab, O Dyer?
Not a sign of mercy unleashing such horror
How badly were you drunk, O Dyer". (Singh 2019, 57)

During the conflict between Punjabis and the British in the period of 1839-1846, some individuals from Punjab chose not to engage in combat with the British forces. Instead of confronting the oppressive British government, certain individuals opted to collaborate as informants for the regime and betray the Indian populace. Nanak Singh aptly described such people in his words:

"But a scene so different on the other side
Friends gather at homes to celebrate.
A mission accomplished, the Act is done
'Tis time for wine and feast ornate.
Their quislings, turncoats and traitors all
Come laden with gossip and tales narrate". (Singh 2019, 11)

There is an oscillation between two kinds of feelings in the poem. On the one hand the poet is speaking of the supremacy of the destiny and the futility of fighting against it

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"…You can't fight Fate
When the Master orders, you just obey." (Singh 2019, 43)

On the other he is praying to God for the benevolence:

"Oh Lord! Do listen to our prayer
Your gentle flock's in utter despair
Their tears flow without restraint,
Our postcards of pain." (Singh 2019, 65)

The use of refrain "our postcards of pain" represents the lingering presence of trauma in the lives of the victims and their family. The use of physical violence on the native people left a deep scar on their psyche and this gets reflected in the poem through the visceral imagery.

Nevertheless, in the end, the poem transforms into a representation of a society that has transcended barriers based on religion and social class, coming together in unified resistance against foreign oppressors. The work embodies a sense of artistic mastery as the author's personal encounters are seamlessly integrated into his poetic expression. H.S. Bhatia mentioned in his article Singh's lines from his autobiography, *Meri Duniya*, "My society and I – my humanity and my self – are so much in consonance that I can never ever think anything apart from them. If anything hurts my society or my humanity it hurts me." (qtd. in Bhatia 126).

The Problem of Articulation and Representation:

In the realm of art, the emotional turmoil resulting from harrowing events results in a state of non-representability, making it challenging to depict and comprehend the atrocities endured by individuals. This lack of representation, in conjunction with the desire to address the horrors of the past, presents a complex dilemma for artists involved in exploring memory and trauma. Despite this, numerous artists and

writers endeavour to visualize and articulate experiences of trauma. In his article titled "Trauma, Absence, Loss," renowned historian Dominick LaCapra acknowledges the potential for healing within contemporary art and espouses the idea of translating trauma into action by addressing it.

LaCapra cautions against the tendency to romanticize trauma, highlighting the shared elements between trauma and the sublime. Both concepts evoke feelings of incomprehensibility, dreadful pain and disturbance in a way that it leads to a crisis in critical thinking. This creates a trouble in the possibility of easeful representation. LaCapra draws on Lyotard's discussion of this obstacle which makes the whole process of representation very problematic. In the modern world the wound of the Holocaust was a very grave reason to inflict pain on the psyche of the people deeply which resulted into a traumatic experience. He mentions that in terms of the idea of the sublime, the magnitude of the Holocaust's suffering transcends our capacity to articulate it. The concept of the apocalypse serves as another illustration, evoking a sense of wonder and intrigue, connecting to trauma, the Gothic, the numinous, and the sublime.

While it comes to the inception of trauma it is not the initial experience itself that is traumatic, but rather the subsequent reawakening of that memory. Survivors often find themselves confronting the impact of trauma after the fact, repeatedly reliving the primary shock. This cycle of reliving the trauma fixes the individual in a perpetual state of haunting, as emphasized by Caruth's interpretation of Freud's work "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (2003) in her book *Unclaimed Experience* (1996). She mentions that this repetitive compulsion to revisit the trauma binds the individual to their past, trapping them in a ghostly relationship that fosters feelings of stagnation and entrapment. (Caruth 59)

The poem being an articulation of the poet has been written out of his immediacy of experiences. In this context, Frank Ankersmit can be

mentioned regarding his discussion of historical consciousness in the book *Sublime Historical Experience* (2005). Here he discovers the immediacy of experience as an important tool to represent the past which usually gets distorted by the agency of language. He mentions, "In sum, trauma can be seen as the psychological counterpart of the sublime, and the sublime can be seen as the philosophical counterpart of trauma" (Ankersmit 2005, 338). Thus, he links trauma with the notion of sublimity highlighting the hurdle with representing the torn psyche that gets more difficult along with the limitations of language. This leads to the entity of time and its relation to both trauma and the sublime. In the continuum of time while the sublime surmounts it, trauma disturbs it through affecting the mind. Therefore, the individual finds himself to be vacillating between two-time frames; one is the present and another is the past which is "a primary experience that can never be captured" (Luckhurst 2008, 5). In this poem Singh's use of repetition and lack of integration act like a trap which keeps the memory of the past entangled in traumatised experiences of the victims.

Additionally, the translation of trauma involves extra linguistic layers of difficulty because it entails transferring not only words but also horror of the original language. The actual lived experiences of survivors may get obfuscated when it comes to translating extreme violence into standard terms of the target language. It is a paradox to translate a severe condemnation of the British colonial brutality into English, the perpetrator's language. The English translation of trauma in Nanak Singh's *Khooni Vaisakhi* struggles with capturing the linguistic and emotional accuracy of the survivor's raw Punjabi verse. The real conundrum for Navdeep Suri, the translator of the poem, was whether to maintain literal accuracy or preserve the poem's rhythmic impact. As English lacks the "sedimented layers" of Punjabi local idioms it fails to address specific communal things. The intensity of the trauma subsides when it comes to translating petrifying accounts of the massacre into standard English. Therefore, in order to avoid it the translation uses flagrant and direct imagery, such as "muffled sobs" and "hearts burn to

ashes" (Singh 2019, 41) to replicate the massacre. However, the centenary edition provides a solution by putting the original Punjabi verse alongside the English translation to diminish the limitation and make the original one accessible to the reader.

Colonial Violence and Entrenched Trauma in Indian Society:

The enduring impact of British colonialism in India encompasses a complex interplay of psychological and cultural trauma, extending beyond mere physical and economic subjugation. It entailed a deliberate deconstruction of indigenous identities, belief systems, and self-concepts. As a result, individuals and communities were deeply affected across various dimensions including mental, emotional, spiritual, and cultural realms. The consequences of this trauma persist in shaping the fabric of Indian society even in the contemporary era.

The massacre at Jallianwala Bagh presents a complex challenge to explain or comprehend, marking it as an experience that remains unclaimed. Trauma stemming from the event manifests in dreams, moments of silence, and a recurring theme, evident in the way it is portrayed in art and preserved in memory. More than simply an act of mass violence, the slaughter at Jallianwala Bagh symbolizes how Indian people's dignity, safety, and humanity got crushed under this profound attack. It created a lasting cultural scar that has echoed throughout subsequent generations. The lasting impact of that tragic day is not confined to physical memorials but has affected the whole country so deeply that it strives for healing from the lasting effects of colonial oppression.

The Rowlatt Act represented more than just a legal inconsistency; it symbolized the underlying aggression of colonial governance. By diminishing legal norms and facilitating severe suppression, it exposed the oppressive fundamentals of the imperial regime. The tragic events at Jallianwala Bagh serve as a poignant example of colonial response to nonviolent opposition: through force rather than dialogue. The

consequences of the Act had a profound impact on Indian politics, literature, and collective memory, establishing itself as a pivotal event that continues to shape the national psyche. Its lasting influence can be seen in contemporary analyses of governmental authority and aggression in postcolonial discourse.

Conclusion:

Khooni Vaisakhi transcends being just a mere poem; it serves as a narrative of trauma that intertwines personal resilience, national calamity, and cultural remembrance. Through its intense imagery, powerful testimony, and deliberate lack of publication, the work encapsulates the enduring aftermath of colonial brutality. It stands as a crucial literary representation of trauma in Indian history, encouraging audiences not to overlook but to recall, resist and reconstruct. Instead of providing resolution, the poem sustains the memory. Trauma does not dissipate once the violence ceases; it persists in recollection. Nanak Singh's composition transforms into a commemorative document, adamant about ensuring that the deceased are never forgotten. His poem becomes a private space to verbalize the past experiences and at the same time it serves as history which provides a lens through which the posterity can have a vision and understanding of the culture infested with collective trauma.

Thus, the poet has painted the picture of wounded psyche which drives individuals to repeat the experiences equivalent to traumatic past. Colonialism, by using violence, tortured and killed people brutally. Jallianwala Bagh massacre is one of the events which bears testimony to the cruelty of the colonial masters. Thus, the poet has given a narration of personal experiences of having gone through the incidents of past which has been a trigger for the outburst of trauma in an unsettling and destabilizing way.

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