

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

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Abstract

The use of violence as a weapon against humanity exposes brutality and the underlying layer of primitive dark desires in the perpetrators. This creates trauma in the victims of violence making their mind unstable. It was prevalent in colonialism with its damaging effects upon the native people of the colonized country. Consequently, literary and cultural texts have gradually become very important sites where the writers tend to represent individual and collective traumas. Trauma is deeply ingrained in human history and literature, as its representation through literary language, combined with imaginative elements, encapsulates the complexities of traumatic experiences. Thereby trauma literature explores the historical, societal and identity issues. According to Carl Jung, the healing of trauma begins through the process of verbalization of the experiences of intense suffering. Thus, art has become a healing device for writers through their narrative. *Khooni Vaisakhi* by Nanak Singh is a manifestation of his personal experiences and it is full of historical references pertaining to the “Jallianwala Bagh Massacre”. The poem contains an accurate narrative of the events by portraying true emotions and predilections of the people of Amritsar in April 1919. The narrative has captured the traumatic experiences of the people in the massacre. This paper will 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.

Keywords: Trauma, violence, colonialism, Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, narrative