

**Modern Indian Writing in Translation**  
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**Week 4 Lecture 1: Toba Tek Singh Part 1**  
**Length: 36:05**

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## “Madness and Partition”

MANTO ‘TOBA TEK SINGH’



(Introduction by Shweta starts)

I will be giving a very short biography of Manto. Manto was born as Saadat Hasan Manto in 1912 in the Ludhiana district which is now in Pakistan. His family is essentially Kashmiri but they moved to Ludhiana when, before Manto was born. But Manto moved back to India sometime in 1933. He went to Bombay and he lived there for most of his life.

In 1933 when he moved to Bombay he met Abdul Bari Alig who was a scholar and a writer, who encouraged him to write and read more than he did in Urdu. This was a huge inspiration for Manto and he started out his literary career with a lot of translations. His very first translation was Victor Hugo's *The Last Day of a Condemned Man* and it was in Urdu and it was published in Urdu daily.

Manto later became part of the editorial team at *Musawaat* which was a daily published in Urdu. He was on the team for a while, for about a year or so and then in 1934 he was commissioned to write radio plays and scripts for the Urdu station in All India Radio. He was at All India Radio for about 1934. There he wrote and later on he published a lot of his plays. There are four collections of this.

But essentially he began by translating the works of Oscar Wilde and Victor Hugo into Urdu and these found a wide audience. Later after he quit All India Radio in 1943 he, his short stories gained more of an audience. So between 1941 and 45 was when he wrote and published most of his short stories. His later works, especially towards 1945 and 46 as the turmoil in the country grew, focused more on the darkness in the human psyche and in innate sense of human impotency. So he wrote very everyday stories about men and women.

He also drew from the post-Partition society around him. So when he moved back to Lahore with his wife and her family after the Partition he was a very troubled man. He has been compared to D. H. Lawrence by a lot of critics because they felt that Manto wrote about the taboos of Indian Pakistani societies.

Manto's most famous story is Toba Tek Singh and Thanda Gosht which is very well-known today, and both of these reflect Manto's own state of mind during that point of time. Towards the end of his life he became an alcoholic and had liver cirrhosis which is what he eventually died of in January 1955.

(Introduction by Shweta ends)

(Lecture by Professor Divya starts)

The other story that we read on the Partition was Crossing the Ravi by Gulzar and that story captures the moment of migration. It captures the chaos, the fear, the threat, and inadvertent violence. So we see the transition by a population from one nation to another. This story, one of the most iconic representations by Manto, if you ask anybody what have you read on partition they would suggest this particular story.

I wanted to revisit this story to talk about perhaps two not really very observed aspects of the story. The most obvious one is the madness. So in Crossing the Ravi we see the migration, the transition. Here we see a landscape, a place after Partition. We are given a glimpse into India and Pakistan after the Partition, two years, a couple of years, two to three years after the Partition is what the narrator says when the story begins.

So madness is quite apparent. So that is Manto's reaction to this cataclysmic event that divides a nation. Can we see the first slide?

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## Madness and Partition

"Many of his short stories focus on the sense of despair and dislocation caused by the partition of Pakistan and India in 1947. Manto vividly recreates the anger and horrors of this period and the trauma of refugees uprooted and victimized by the delineation of arbitrary borders"

"Madness and Partition : The Short Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto",  
Stephen Alter



Okay, I have two commentaries to share with you today. The first one is by Stephen Alter, and first excerpt talks about the trauma. Many of his short stories, Manto's short stories focus on the sense of despair and dislocation caused by the Partition of Pakistan and India in 1947. So we see the dislocation both in Crossing the Ravi and in Toba Tek Singh where the inmates do not know where exactly they are located.

I mean, since it is a lunatic asylum we buy that theory but by two or three years after the Partition we definitely know where each of the villages in both the countries are located. There is no more confusion, but since this is a story which is set in an asylum we buy the premise that the lunatics do not know and even the saner ones among the lunatics don't know about the status quo of the identities of particular villages. Manto vividly recreates the anger and horrors of this period and the trauma of refugees uprooted and victimized by the delineation of arbitrary borders.

I like the word uprooted because the imagery of uprooting, upheaval is there very clearly in Toba Tek Singh, if you pay attention to Khuswant Singh's translation, certain words really capture quite vividly and viscerally the idea of being physically, you know plucked out of a particular landscape and being thrown out of it. So that imagery is quite telling in Khuswant Singh's writing. Can we...?

(Refer Slide Time: 07:02)

## Madness and Partition

As the characters in Manto's stories confront the ruthless inhumanity of ...  
violence ...their only conceivable response is madness.

Manto clearly saw the violence which accompanied Partition as an act of  
collective madness.

\*"Madness and Partition : The Short Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto", Stephen Alter



So madness is quite the reasonable reaction, response to such a trauma and Alter says that as the characters in Manto's story confront the ruthlessness, ruthless inhumanity of violence their only conceivable response is madness. He sees that not only as an individual's response but as a kind of an act of collective madness, a kind of schizophrenia. That is the impact on the human psyche as a whole.

The violence itself is seen as an act of madness where people kind of forget that they are reasonable, civilized, sophisticated human beings and participate in so much; you know reckless and violent behavior. I am glad you brought up Lahore. We did discuss the city in the previous, in the context of the previous story so people were a bit confused as to which country Lahore would go. That reference is there even in this story, isn't it?

Page 59, 'how could one guarantee that a similar fate would not befall Lahore. From being Pakistani today who could say it would not become Indian tomorrow?' So that uncertainty is beautifully captured in that reference and according to Cyril Radcliffe, his rationale for giving Lahore to Pakistan is that India had Calcutta, India had Delhi. So India had a lot of big cities and therefore he wanted to give a cosmopolitan space, city to Pakistanis as well. So that is his logic in kind of dividing up the two, dividing up the country. Can we move to the next one?

(Refer Slide Time: 09:06)

## Manto on Partition

These were “the times when philosophy, argumentation or logic had lost their meaning; they were nothing but an exercise in futility”



So this is Manto on Partition. This is what he thought of the divide. ‘These were the times when philosophy, when philosophy, argumentation or logic had lost their meaning. They were nothing but an exercise in futility.’ So, I do not think this needs any explanation. So this is a time where there is complete run of unreason which is probably why he chose the lunatics as the main characters to explore the theme of Partition.

If you look at the story, the summary that Mridula did, the story begins with a list of lunatics. We have several characters who are kind of described in their own eccentricity along with the bunch of murderers as well. So murderers and mad people are clumped together in this asylum. So only after that list of lunatics, at the end of that list we get Bishan Singh, the hero of this story. In some sense we do not have a plot per se in Toba Tek Singh. It is very episodic.

The governments make a decision. The lunatics are described and one particular lunatic does not want to go where he is supposed to go and he kind of lies between the two borders. That is the way you can sum it up. So there isn’t a kind of an organic plot per se which can be neatly summed up. So if you have to do the summary you just have to narrate each and every incident that happens in the story. Can we move on to the next one?

(Refer Slide Time: 10:57)

## Madness and Partition

"Manto takes an unusually pragmatic view of madness in this story. For him it is a fact of life, a symptom not only of the individual character's paranoia but of a kind of mass schizophrenia brought on by Partition."

\*"Madness and Partition : The Short Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto", Stephen Alter



Manto takes an unusually pragmatic view of madness in this story, says Stephen Alter. For him it is a fact of life, a symptom not only of the individual character's paranoia but a kind of mass schizophrenia brought on by Partition. So there is a kind of paranoia which results in this kind of brutal, barbarous behavior involving a lot of violence. So paranoia and violence go hand in hand in the days of the Partition. There was always the fear that the other community will outnumber your own community.

So we have to keep the numbers of our community higher so how do we do that? Go and reduce the numbers of the members of the other community. So that way you will keep your members high and probably that place will come to you and not go to the other. So this is the way simple people worked out their problems during the Partition. It sounds really painful and, you know, barbarous but that is how they reacted to the madness of the partition. Can we move on to the next one?

(Refer Slide Time: 12:11)

## Khalid Hasaan on Manto in Pakistan

"His early days in Pakistan were bewildering. Everything was out of joint. There was a mad stampede for allotments of evacuee property and a sense of terrible insecurity. Some people were living as if there was going to be no tomorrow. ...The country had gone through such a terrifying baptism of blood and fire that the dividing line between reality and nightmare was no longer discernible."

\*\*"Madness and Partition: The Short Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto", Stephen Alter



So this is Khalid Hasan on Manto in Pakistan. His early days when he has moved to Pakistan, his early days were bewildering. Everything was out of joint. There was a mad stampede for allotments of evacuee property and a sense of terrible insecurity. Stampede, insecurity, bewildering, those words capture the chaos of that particular moment.

Things were so unsettled to the migrants who have reached a new country. Some people were living as if there was going to be no tomorrow. The country had gone through such a terrifying baptism of blood and fire that the dividing line between; that should be dividing, the dividing line between reality and nightmare was no longer discernable.

So what is reality, what is a nightmare, cannot be distinguished, cannot be separated and that kind of confusion is communicated through the landscape of Toba Tek Singh, the story. You can see the pathos in that figure's desire to know where exactly his village is going to be, whether on the side of the Indian side or whether it is going to be on the side of Pakistan, and God Himself does not know.

God, quote unquote is a lunatic here. And He says I have not made up my mind and the God can be a representation of Cyril Radcliffe who takes his own good time to decide the borders, where the borders are going to be, between India and Pakistan? A terrifying baptism of blood fantastically captures the moment of birth of a new country. Next one

(Refer Slide Time: 14:04)

### Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

"Toba Tek Singh" is surely the most famous story about Partition, and very possibly the best one. I'd argue that it is in fact the best, and that most of the other good candidates are also by Manto. This story was one of his last ones; it was published in "Phundne" (Lahore: Maktabah-e Jadid) in 1955, the year of his death.

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00urdu/tobateksingh/storynote.shtml>



Okay, Frances W. Pritchett views on Toba Tek Singh; he also did a wonderful translation from Urdu. It is available online. So you can see the original story in Urdu and then Pritchett's commentary as well as his translation too, and he says, "This is surely the most famous story about Partition and very possibly the best one." I would argue that it is in fact the best in that, most of the other good candidates are also by Manto."

This story was one of his last ones. It was published in, I do not know how to pronounce it Phudne, is it right, Lahore in 1955, the year of his death. Khuswant Singh's Train to Pakistan is also a fantastic representation of those times. Bhisham Sahni's Tamas is also a very good representation of Partition. Cold Meat, there are also other ones, I swear by God by Manto is also a good story. Black Marginalia, the entire collection by Manto is a highly recommended read, Black Marginalia.

I want to pick up on two things in the story. One is the reference to his daughter. We do not really pay attention to the familial concerns of the lunatics. If you read the story very carefully you will see that the Hindu lawyer has been jilted in love. His romance is broken up and again romances are broken up, courtships are broken up, the father is mad, the status of the daughter is a big question, so all these indicators suggest that the institution of the family is under huge trauma because of the Partition.

So, I want to go back to, shall we do the courtship part? There was a young Hindu lawyer from Lahore. He was said to have become unhinged when his lady love jilted him. When he



heard that Amritsar had gone to India he was very depressed. His sweetheart lived in Amritsar. Although the girl had spurned his affections, he did not forget her even in his lunacy. He spent his time cursing all leaders, Hindu as well as Muslim because they had split India into two and made his beloved an Indian and him a Pakistani.

When the talk of exchanging lunatics was in the air, other inmates consoled the Hindu lawyer with the hope that he would soon be sent to India, the country where his sweetheart lived but the lawyer refused to be reassured. He did not want to leave Lahore because he was convinced that he would not be able to set up a legal practice in Amritsar.

So on the one side we have the romance being broken up but despite the breakup, he is still very attached to the lady and he does not want to be in a divided, in a divided country, so when the friends console him that you are going to go to India and your lady love is going to be in the same country, he is not satisfied because he is worried that he will not be able to pick up his profession in a new country.

So that tells you about the real concerns, you know the everyday concerns of livelihood. So beyond, above and beyond national identities, issues of livelihood become important. So in that case it is the profession that is of the foremost concern to this Hindu lawyer. And now let us look at the role of the daughter.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:19)

## Toba Tek Singh

"In "Toba Tek Singh, it is suggested, in the hesitant remarks of one of the visitors to the asylum, that Bishan Singh's daughter has been raped, but that is part of the horror which is taking place outside the main character's consciousness and does not enter into the dilemma of his own identity."

\*\*"Madness and Partition : The Short Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto", Stephen Alter



In Toba Tek Singh Stephen Alter says it is suggested in the hesitant remarks of one of the visitors to the asylum that Bishan Singh's daughter has been raped. But that is part of the

horror which is taking place outside the main character's consciousness and does not enter into the dilemma of his own identity. Two things, firstly violence is off the page. Violence is off the page. We do not see it on the page in this particular Manto story.

In fact it is said in such a subtle way, we really have to work out, we have to kind of assume that some kind of violence has been done to the daughter. So let us look at that section. So we have Fazal Din, a friend of the family visiting Bishan Singh and Fazal Din says that "I have been intending to see you for the last many days but could never find the time. All your family have safely crossed over to India." We are reminded of *Crossing the Ravi*, you know. "All your family has safely crossed over to India. I did the best I could for them, I did the best I could for them, your daughter Roop Kaur," and that's it, his sentence is abrupt. He does not complete, and then finally he says somewhat haltingly, "Yes, she too is well. She went along with the rest." So we have to assume that something is really, seriously amiss with the daughter. And look at the next paragraph.

So if you look at the next paragraph, perhaps we are left to wonder if the act of violence is subsumed in symbolic narrative, in figurative narrative. He says that... Fazal Din started again, "They asked me to keep in touch with you. I am told that you are to leave for India. Convey my salaams to brother Balbir Singh and brother Wadhwa Singh and also to sister Amrit Kaur. Tell brother Balbir Singh that Fazal Din is well and happy. Both the grey buffaloes that they left behind have calved. One is the male, the other a female. The female died six days later. And if there is anything that I can do for them I am always willing. I have brought to you a little sweet corn." So that sweet corn is a poignant touch, the human touch in this story, in this chaotic story with lots of lunatics running around, spouting, really existential concerns and ideas and philosophies but that offer of sweet corn kind of humanizes this place and tells us that there is still scope for humanity and humanitarian ideals to survive, you know.

So, I am really interested in that reference to two gray buffaloes and the fact that the female buffalo is dead. So, I am trying to connect that with the daughter of Bishan Singh, Roop Kaur and suggest that she too is dead after an act of violence committed on her. So we are left to work things out. So my point is that violence is off-stage as it is off-stage for most of the story in Gulzar's *Crossing the Ravi*.

The other is the dilemma of his own identity. That point is interesting because Bishan Singh seems to be most concerned with only this fact as to where exactly is Toba Tek Singh. And he is, he does look forward to the visits of his family, you know. He calls that moment, missed interview and so on and so forth, but the most important concern is where exactly is his village. So, these two concerns are important in my reading of this particular story. Yeah, can we move to the next one?

(Refer Slide Time: 22:36)

Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

"The confusion between the name of the village and the name of the main character is important to the story. ...By mixing up the name of the character and place, the individual and the land, Manto emphasizes the relationship between a person's home and his identity. He also uses the main character's madness to exaggerate the sense of separation, the distorted loyalties and the dislocated self."

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00urdu/tobateksingh/storynotes.html>



So, Bishan Singh is also known as Toba Tek Singh and this confusion between the name of the village and the name of the main character is important to the story. By mixing up the name of the character and the place, the individual and the land, Manto emphasizes the relationship between the person's home and his identity. He also uses the main character's madness to exaggerate the sense of separation, distorted loyalties and dislocated self.

All that is fine, I agree but I have a small correction, or may be a small specification to this criticism which is that the relationship between the person's home and his identity in my reading would be that Bishan Singh identifies himself not to the nationhood, not to Pakistan; he identifies himself in relation to his village. That particular pocket in Pakistan is what concerns him.

So it becomes regional identity, if you want to connect it to this particular course, so he is more concerned about the regional identity rather than larger landscapes which offer him his identity. So Toba Tek Singh is worried about his village Toba Tek Singh because that is

where his lands lie. That is what is his home for him more than anything else, more than anything else.

So it is a very very small ties, you know very specific ties that somehow define us. That seems to be the message. That seems to be one of the arguments of this particular story. Can you move on to the next one?

(Refer Slide Time: 24:20)

### Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

My translation is entirely literal: "In between, on that piece of ground that had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh." We know of course that the person Bishan Singh lay there. But since the narrator never calls this person by that name, he's able to force us to the additional reading that the real location of the village Toba Tek Singh is between the two new states' sharply demarcated borders. But if the village is there, then in what sense exactly, and in whose eyes? Is Bishan Singh sane or mad, conscious or delirious, alive or dead? With wonderful subtlety and literary restraint, the author allows us-- and thus also forces us-- to invent our own ending.

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mea/la/p/ritchett/00urdu/tobateksingh/storynotes.html>



So Pritchett says that “My translation is literal, entirely literal and that is the last line. In between on that piece of ground that had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh. We know of course that the person Bishan Singh lay there but since the narrator never calls this person by that name; he is able to force us to the additional reading of the real location of the village.

Toba Tek Singh is between the two new states sharply demarcated borders right, but if the village is there then in what sense exactly and in whose eyes is Bishan Singh sane or mad, conscious or delirious, alive or dead? With wonderful subtlety and literary restraint the author allows us and that also forces us to invent our own ending.”

So what Pritchett says is that we do not even know whether he is alive or dead. We assume that he is dead. The text does not spell it out that he is really gone so there is a lot of uncertainty leaving us to make up our own minds about the status of this particular hero. And the symbolic idea seems to be that the village itself seems to lie between these two countries India and Pakistan and that division causes the death or destruction of Bishan Singh. If you

look at Khuswant Singh's translation there is something different going on there. Can you move on to the next one?

(Refer Slide Time: 25:56)

### Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

In the pre-dawn peace and quiet, from Bishan Singh's throat there came a shriek  
that pierced the sky.... From here and there a number of officers came running, and they saw  
that the man who for fifteen years, day and night, had constantly stayed on his feet, lay prostrate.  
There, behind barbed wire, was Hindustan. Here, behind the same kind of wire, was Pakistan.  
In between, on that piece of ground that had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh.



So this is Pritchett's translation. "There, behind the barbed, wire was Hindustan. Here, behind the same kind of wire, is Pakistan. In between on that piece of ground that had no name lay Toba Tek Singh." So the question is, is it the man or the village? Are we talking about literal presence or symbolic presence here, and if we look at Khuswant Singh's translation, I do not know whether I have put it there on the slide, lets, you can check if that's there.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:27)

### Khushwant Singh's Translation

The barbed-wire fence on one side marked the territory of India;  
another fence marked the territory of Pakistan. In the No Man's Land  
between the two barbed-wire fences lay the body of Bishan Singh of  
village Toba Tek Singh.



Oh yes so the barbed wire fence on one side marked the territory of India, and another fence marked the territory of Pakistan and in the No Man's Land between the two barbed wire fences lay the body of Bishan Singh of village Toba Tek Singh. So he kind of takes away the

subtlety, Khuswant Singh takes away the subtlety by spelling it out clearly for us that this the body of Bishan Singh who is from that village. So that confusion between the person and the village is taken away by Khuswant Singh. So Pritchett's translation seems to be better here because of the layers, symbolic layers of meaning.

So the key point and that I kind of reiterate time and again the fact that the loyalty is towards the village, smaller pockets of land and association rather than to larger chunks that give you your name and identity. Shall we move on to the next one?

(Refer Slide Time: 27:28)

### Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

The original is, like the whole of the story, stark and simple in almost a minimalist way; my translation reflects those qualities, as you can easily check for yourself in the Urdu text:

He had one daughter who, growing a finger-width taller every month, in fifteen years had become a young girl. Bishan Singh didn't even recognize her. When she was a child, she wept when she saw her father; when she'd grown up, tears still flowed from her eyes.

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00urdu/tobateksingh/storynotes.html>



Let us return to Roop Kaur. This is Pritchett's translation from Urdu. He writes that he had one daughter who growing a finger-width taller every month, in fifteen years had become a young girl. Bishan Singh did not even recognize her. When she was a child, she wept when she saw her father. When she had grown up tears still flowed from her eyes. So this is Frances Pritchett's translation from Urdu. Let us move on to the next one.

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### Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

Khalid Hassan, by comparison, takes away some information that the author wanted us to have (the poignant emphasis on the daughter's gradual growing up over the years, and her continuing silent grief), and adds a fair amount of other "information" that he himself invents (including a whole final sentence of obtrusive padding):

"When he was first confined, he had left an infant daughter behind, now a pretty young girl of fifteen. She would come occasionally, and sit in front of him with tears rolling down her cheeks. In the strange world that he inhabited, hers was just another pretty face".

*Mottled Dawn: Fifty Sketches and Stories of Partition* (New Delhi, Penguin India, 1997, pp. 1-10).



And he does not like the translation by Khalid Hasan. He really kind of criticizes the way Khalid, you know does this part. He says that he includes a lot of padding. If you read that excerpt, Khalid Hasan by comparison takes away some information what the author wanted us to have and adds a fair amount of other information that he himself invents. So he doesn't like the way he describes that section on Roop Kaur.

When he was first confined he had left an infant daughter behind. Now a pretty young girl of fifteen, she would come occasionally and sit in front of him with tears rolling down her cheeks. In the strange world that he inhabited, hers was just another pretty face. So this is Khalid Hasan's translation of Toba Tek Singh.

So you can see that from that excerpt, in that excerpt in itself can be a narrative, you know. The father leaves the child behind. The infant grows up and she is a pretty girl and perhaps that's a pretty face against a very turbulent world. So it is very romantic, romanticized picture of the separation between father and child. Look at the repetition of the word pretty, pretty. If you go back to the earlier one, if you go back to the earlier one...



(Refer Slide Time: 29:30)

### Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

The original is, like the whole of the story, stark and simple in almost a minimalist way; my translation reflects those qualities, as you can easily check for yourself in the Urdu text:

He had one daughter who, growing a finger-width taller every month, in fifteen years had become a young girl. Bishan Singh didn't even recognize her. When she was a child, she wept when she saw her father; when she'd grown up, tears still flowed from her eyes.

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00urdu/tobateksingh/storynotes.html>



Look at the way finger-width taller every month, you know she grows that much every month. It captures the minutiae in a very interesting way. In fifteen years had become a young girl. Question is why was she crying even when she was a child? That question inevitably arises, and he was mad before he came here. He did not turn mad at the lunatic asylum. So what brought his madness on, is a question that is not answered.

He is a prosperous farmer. He has a lot of lands. He has a lot of lands, he is prosperous and suddenly he seems to go mad. At what point does he go mad? At what age? So all these are information that is not provided to us by Manto. So again the child's reaction is also very interesting. Why has she been crying since she was born? So all that is not clearly explained. Next one.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:37)

### Khushwant Singh's Translation

Bishan Singh had a daughter who had grown into a full-bosomed young woman of fifteen. But she showed no comprehension about his child. The girl wept bitterly whenever she met her father.



Now look at Khuswant Singh's translation. Bishan Singh had a daughter who had grown into a full-bosomed young woman of fifteen but he showed no comprehension about his child. The girl wept bitterly when she met her father. So she is not crying all the time. She cries only when she meets her father. So you can see how meaning becomes, you know subtly changed when you look at all these translations.

Full-bosomed young woman of, there is a lot of emphasis on the physicality of the young girl in Khuswant Singh's pen and that is very interesting. So her sexuality is highlighted here in Khuswant Singh's description which tells us a lot more about the translator as well, or perhaps he wanted to suggest the sexuality becomes a problematic physical attribute during these turbulent times. So there are lots of things going on here. So can we go back once again to Frances Pritchett's translation?

(Refer Slide Time: 31:42)

### Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

The original is, like the whole of the story, stark and simple in almost a minimalist way; my translation reflects those qualities, as you can easily check for yourself in the Urdu text:

He had one daughter who, growing a finger-width taller every month, in fifteen years had become a young girl. Bishan Singh didn't even recognize her. When she was a child, she wept when she saw her father; when she'd grown up, tears still flowed from her eyes.

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00urdu/tobateksingh/storynotes.html>



So the details of that young girl, the changes in detail of the young girl tells us a lot about the act of translation as well as the point of importance in the culture that they want to capture. So, here finger-width is the word that captures my attention.

(Refer Slide Time: 32:05)

### Frances W. Pritchett( 2005)

Khalid Hassan, by comparison, takes away some information that the author wanted us to have (the poignant emphasis on the daughter's gradual growing up over the years, and her continuing silent grief), and adds a fair amount of other "information" that he himself invents (including a whole final sentence of obtrusive padding):

"When he was first confined, he had left an infant daughter behind, now a pretty young girl of fifteen. She would come occasionally, and sit in front of him with tears rolling down her cheeks. In the strange world that he inhabited, hers was just another pretty face".

*Mottled Dawn: Fifty Sketches and Stories of Partition* (New Delhi, Penguin India, 1997, pp. 1-10).



Next one, pretty, the romantic notion of a pretty young girl lost in these turbulent worlds.

(Refer Slide Time: 32:12)

### Khushwant Singh's Translation

Bishen Singh had a daughter who had grown into a full-bosomed young woman of fifteen. But she showed no comprehension about his child. The girl wept bitterly whenever she met her father.



And the next one is full-bosomed. These are the, you know details that really attract my attention when I do a comparative study of all these translations. Next one? I think that is it. Alright so in this story, as I pointed out, identities become smaller, identities become smaller and that somehow gets lost or forgotten when we talk about large scale events such as partition.

So we need to realize that regional identities matter, regional identities such as the identities of Toba Tek Singh to his own village, you know in Pakistan seems to be the foremost concern in his mind rather than anything else, be it the daughter or be it any other familial concern, so there is a kind of marginalization of familial loyalties, marginalization of familial loyalties.

I gave the example of the Hindu lawyer who seems to be obsessed with his lady love, romance seems to be a foremost concern but, you know ultimately when he is told that he is going to go to India he says that “Oh, no, I cannot make a living there.” So we can clearly see that the romantic fidelity takes a second seat, a back seat, and where he is more worried about the profession.

So family, familial concerns and especially women, daughters really are violently affected by this event, this unforgettable event in history. The imagery of trees, at one point we have one lunatic climbing up a tree and saying that ‘I do not want to go to any country, I want to stay where I am on top of the tree. I want to stay where I am on top of the tree’, page 57.

And again page 61, most of the lunatics resisted the exchange because they could not understand why they were being uprooted from one place and flung into another. Uprooted, being plucked apart so that imagery is used and those of gloomy dispositions by yelling slogans.

And again in the final sections of the story, again the tree imagery, they try to use force. Bishan Singh planted himself, to plant oneself like a tree, or a sapling would be planted. Bishan Singh planted himself on the dividing line and dug his swollen feet into the ground with such firmness that no one could move him. So he is like a big burly tree, you know which cannot be uprooted and they just let him be, and the tree falls of its own. So it is a very interesting way to capture one's location. That's why the commentary of the critic is very interesting.

The idea of the dislocation of the self is captured through imagery in this story with that of the tree. So nice choice of figurative language utilised, by Khuswant Singh. I would like to know how Manto used; you know similar words to capture dislocation in Urdu. If anybody knows Urdu, you can just go home and read that up.

Any questions? We have read this story time and again but I still love to come back to the story and compare them with other renderings of the partition and every time we get to notice a different thing about the story. Alright, thank you for your patience.

(Lecture by Professor Divya ends)