

Echoes of Trauma: The Interplay of Bodies and Borders in Gitanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand*

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Abstract

This research paper explores traumatic memory associated with bodies and boundaries in the aftermath of World War I as represented in *Tomb of Sand* written by Gitanjali Shree. The contention of this paper is to analyse how witnessing violence and migration creates a sense of shock by transmitting the trauma in the selected novel of Gitanjali Shree *Tomb of Sand*. This research probes how the narrative depicts the painful aftermath of India's partition, emphasising the interplay of bodies, borders, and memory, particularly concerning women's experiences. Gitanjali Shree represents the influence of trauma in the mind of the individual by presenting the character Ma and how intergenerational trauma embodies her and restricts her way of living. This study analyses the novel through the lens of Cathy Caruth's notion of trauma, as stated in her seminal work *Unclaimed Experience*. The role of delayed, fragmented, and repetitive experiences of trauma is emphasised through this theory which, provides a crucial framework for understanding the characters' psychological and emotional landscapes. *Tomb of Sand* with its nonlinear storytelling aligns with Cathy Caruth's ideas and mirrors the disorienting and haunting nature of trauma. This research enhances our understanding of how literature relates history, collective memory, and personal experiences that serve as a site of trauma, healing, and recollection. Thus, providing the readers with an engaging storytelling method Shree's *Tomb of Sand* serves as a healer to partition sufferers.

Keywords: Memory; Motherland; Narratives; Plasticity; Trace; War

Introduction

The interplay of Bodies and Borders in the context of Gitanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand* reflects the intricate relationship between physical, metaphorical, and symbolic boundaries and their impact on individual and collective identities. Understanding this concept helps to delve deep into themes of trauma, identity, and resistance. The body in the novel *Tomb of Sand* particularly associated with the female body becomes a site of personal (patriarchal oppression) and historical violence (partition). Borders serve as dividers and connectors. It is not limited only to geographical divisions created during partition but also serves as an extended metaphor for cultural, societal and gendered boundaries. The impact of borders creating trauma in the Body of the survivor highlights the potential for healing and transformation when the character decides to cross all the borders that restricted her. Thus, the interplay in this novel serves as a framework for understanding the interconnectedness of historical and personal narratives. The overall objective of this study is to examine the interplay of bodies and borders in

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influencing the memories of the survivor and their transformative journey, particularly from the perspective of Ma who is restricted within the confines of societal norms. So far, the novel has been analysed from the feministic perspective and limited research is available on the traumatic perspective concerning Caruth's theory. Analysing this novel from Cathy Caruth's Trauma and Memory studies based on the book *Unclaimed Experience* would set a new limitation to literature.

Gitanjali Shree is one of the celebrated women writers of the 21st century celebrated for her unique way of storytelling blending Hindi and English Language. She mimics the non-linear nature of memory and trauma with a fragmented and layered narrative structure by placing marginalised characters such as women and the elderly as a central protagonist. Her way of exploring cultural depth reveals her voice rooted in Indian literary tradition. Shree masterfully juxtaposes humour with profound themes like grief, loss, and identity. This interplay creates a dynamic reading experience that keeps her narratives engaging while allowing her to tackle weighty issues. Her most celebrated Booker Prize-winning novel *Ret Samadhi* translated by U.S. translator Daisy Rockwell as *Tomb of Sand*, interrogates the concept of borders—geographical, emotional, and cultural. *Tomb of Sand* as a piece of postcolonial literature is a medium to explore trauma especially the experiences of women as downplayed. This post-war novel is a perfect literary representation of collective trauma affecting the physical and mental health of the survivor. This partition took a heavy toll not only on individual human lives but also shattered their kith and kin and social relationships. Shree answers the common question “Do you want to save your life or your honour?” (604) which is placed on women during every partition and in the time of displacement. She also presents this novel from the suppressed woman's perspective “This is not a history, just a herstory” (*Tomb of Sand* 394) which adds a new genre to partition literature whereas in almost all the partition novels, the main theme would be narrating history or sufferings of the community as a whole. Here individual's perspective is presented. Furthermore, the text challenges traditional gender norms and patriarchal structures, presenting the female body as a site of resistance and reclamation. This study seeks to explore how Shree redefines trauma as not only a burden but also a space for agency and transformation, using the interplay of bodies and borders to illuminate the enduring power of storytelling. The novel unpacks the lasting impacts of displacement, memory, and survival by situating the individual whose body becomes the archives of collective memories, within the broader context of partition's violence and its intergenerational echoes.

Body as a Site of Historical Memory

Wrinkles in the body of all elderly survivors hold different stories of history they witnessed during their lifetime. Martin explains in her essay, *Forced Migration and Mental Health* “Forced migration often involves trauma, dislocation, and abrupt change in life. At a minimum, the displaced may face emotional problems and difficulties in adjustment resulting from the loss of family and community support. More serious mental health problems may arise from torture and sexual abuse before or after flight” (Martin 65). Migrated people are more likely to develop trauma within them as a result of forced migration. Leaving their family and community behind they have to face lots of emotional problems. The intersection of political issues with personal creates trauma in the minds of the survivors. Elaine Scarry in her book *The Body in Pain* asserts “Whether or not it is verbally memorialised, the record of war survives in the bodies, both alive and buried, of the people who were hurt there” (Scarry 113).



Scarry argues that war is recorded in historical documents and the bodies of survivors and the deceased. Survivors bear physical scars and injuries, while trauma serves as a living testimony of violence. Those who die carry the effects of war, leaving a legacy of sacrifice that remains in the memories of their families. In *Tomb of Sand*, the protagonist's journey across physical and metaphorical boundaries delves deeply into the lingering trauma of partition and the possibilities of transcendence and reconciliation. The process of recollecting traumatic events influences individuals for years and triggers them emotionally. This would affect their well-being. Survivor of traumatic incidents is often remembered with haunting memories and flashbacks stored in their body in the form of scars and marks. The violence, inhumane treatment, dehumanisation, huge massacre, etc leave scars on the bodies of the survivors who witnessed and this in turn reminds them of what happened in the past. In *Tomb of Sand*, Ma's body is used as a site of Trauma which is revealed in her healing journey when Ma moves back to her daughter Beti's home after her husband's death. Shree has also highlighted the effect of the catastrophe of partition on the lives of people especially women, who were merely reduced to the bodies to be played with. "As though her body is a coat, she used to wear right side out, but now wears inside out" (*Tomb of Sand* 269). This metaphor reflects the transformation of Ma's identity as she deviates from societal norms and embraces her authentic self. The term "inside out" epitomises her rejection of conventional expectations and acceptance of a personal and unconventional identity. As a part of restructuring identity, societal conventions must often be challenged to uncover and embrace one's hidden internal self.

Borders as Psychological Wounds

Borders are not just lines drawn on the map. They are the mere representation of past events that run through the blood and minds of every survivor who witnessed partition and got displaced from their homeland. Borders are not fixed; they are fluid constructs shaped by historical, political, and cultural forces, constantly renegotiated through human experiences and interactions. It can be crossed at any cost through living in the present as Ma did with her life. Borders at all levels are fluid. Geographical and cultural boundaries deeply influence emotional or psychological boundaries, affecting millions of partition survivors. In *Tomb of Sand*, Ma crosses the border to redefine her life, challenging conventional perceptions of endings. As Geetanjali Shree writes, "Those who consider death to be an ending took this to be hers. But those in the know knew that this was no ending; knew she'd simply crossed yet another border" (14). In one stage of Ma's life, specifically after her husband's death, she felt she neared death and the people around her believed the same including her family members. But death at this point is not the end but the beginning of the transition that Ma decided to wear with her skin. It is a cyclical part of the transformation. When she decided to cross the border to reach Wagah, people believed it was the end of her story but only the close ones knew she was crossing another border despite all the personal (suppression) border that was restricting her. 'Yet another border' here signifies she has crossed many borders in her personal as well as societal life. Resilience and rebirth foreshadow Ma's journey of self-discovery and reinvention throughout the novel. As Shree mentions "A bullet came, punctured her body, shot through and out the other side. Anyone else would have sprawled face down in the mud, but Ma flipped backwards like she was doing a somersault. She lay back on the ground in an attitude of victory, elegantly, faceup, as though she was reclining on a soft bed, the sky her coverlet." (*Tomb of Sand* 13). It reflects her refusal to conform to

expectations, even in death, as she continues to challenge and redefine her identity. Being a woman in this world is not so simple. In every phase of life, she has to cross so many boundaries placed on them by this patriarchal society that restricts her from being human. By exceeding these literal and metaphorical limits she could see the true reflection of her soul. Aparna Aggarwal, mentions this in her research paper “Narratives of Indian Women and Their Catastrophes: A Study of Gitanjali Shree’s *Tomb of Sand*,” “Ma succeeds in creating a route to the forbidden. comparable to the window that opens out towards the guava orchard” (1736). As a woman, there are so many boundaries and borders which she has to face at every phase of her life due to the patriarchal society, but it goes beyond the bounds of her life to find her sweetheart by crossing the borders and for a change she starts to think about herself and becomes selfish. The protagonist Ma also crosses the borders placed on her as a woman by this patriarchal society to find her love.

The border resonates not only geographically but also personally and existentially. As Ramani mentions in her *Writers First, Women Later* “In a male-dominated environment, women’s emancipation and equality are achieved through unwavering work”. Every woman has to struggle so hard to reach the state of freedom. Shree presents the trauma of a woman in a patriarchal society by presenting the character Ma. She challenges the patriarchal constructs by portraying a woman, especially an elderly woman aged eighty who defies societal expectations and embarks on journeys of self-discovery and agency, creating space for new understandings of identity and autonomy. Through her novel, she picturises what happens when the boundaries that divide nations and bodies blur which paves the way for the echoes of historical trauma to reverberate through the lives of the living.

Collective Memory and Individual Trauma

The connection between trauma and memory has been explored in various studies. As Lauren Aeur observes in her article *Your Trauma Therapist*, “Memory can be an elusive and, at times, confusing experience especially for individuals who have lived through trauma” (Aeur). Survivors frequently struggle with fragmented or inaccessible memories. Memory is a repository of experiences and narratives providing insights into societal structures and transformations over time. It is not just a recollection of the past but serves as a means of reclaiming and reinterpreting history. It serves as a testament to resilience and resistance, preserving the voices and experiences of the survivors and their healing journey. If it is the memory which “drives the syndrome”, it is logical to conclude that the “traumatic memory” must be specifically different from other forms of “normal” memory.

Partition literature often explores various types of traumas, including personal, collective and intergenerational. Collective Memory is the memory that gets stored in the minds of the survivor which provides glimpses into the traumatic pasts of the character. Individual trauma refers to the individual experiences of pain and suffering, as Ma suffered physically and emotionally after her husband’s death. This Individual suffering rises with the collective memory of her past sufferings. Gitanjali Shree explores the trauma experienced by the protagonist Ma instead of exploring the whole traumatic happenings of history. Because the impact of collective trauma is less than that of individual experience. Understanding collective trauma reveals what happened in the history whereas individual experience is connected to the emotions of the survivor. In their research paper, “Partition as Memory: Construing Women Narratives,” Sobti and Kumar examine the profound impact of the partition on



women, emphasizing how they were often reduced to mere symbols of communal honour. They state that during the partition, "Women were reduced merely as bodies, carrying the burden of honour of their community" (731). Women survivors after partition survive merely as bodies, carrying the weight of displacement and communal honour, a reality shaped by visible losses and invisible scars. Toni Morrison in her work, *Unspeakable Things Unspoken* observes that "a void may be empty, but is not a vacuum," emphasizing that certain absences are so deliberate and pronounced they command recognition, akin to neighbourhoods shaped by the exclusion of others (Morrison 11). Trauma emerges from the rekindling of such absences, making it difficult to completely forget past events, especially those with deep emotional connections. These absences, though unseen, exert a powerful influence, demanding recognition and analysis. This leads the incident get stored in the minds of the survivor offering a chance of revisiting.

The Delayed Experience of Historical Trauma and Transformation

The delayed experience of historical trauma happens within individuals where the psychological or emotional effects of a traumatic historical event are not immediately felt or processed by individuals or communities. Shree writes, "One must live through thousands of days to reach the dying day" (*Tomb of Sand* 415). Each day holds new experiences that will be stored in the minds of every individual. The survivors find it difficult to process the incident at first. Later when they are exposed to another trauma, this past trauma is being reminded in their mind which will direct them to react to both. Cathy Caruth mentions this in her book *Unclaimed Experience* by referring to the actions of Tancred from Tasso's poem "Just as Tancred does not hear the voice of Clorinda until the second wounding, so trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature-the way it was precisely not known in the first instance-returns to haunt the survivor later on" (6). This line exposes Tancred's recognition of the consequences of his earlier deed when he is exposed to a second wounding. The protagonist Ma in *Tomb of Sand* resonates with second wounding by the delayed and fragmented processing of the historical trauma of dislocation and the personal trauma of her husband's death. Partition of India scarred her so traumatically and physically as well. Still, she suppresses all her pain until she is confronted with her husband's death where the transformation begins with a realisation. Initially, she resisted to wake her up from the bed. She kept lying in the bed facing the wall for the whole day. "No, no, I won't get up. Noooooo, I won't rise nowwww. Nooo rising nyoooww. Nyooo riise nyoooo. Now rise new. Now, I'll rise anew" (*Tomb of Sand* 21). She is so stubborn not to get up and face people. However, she was determined to rise as a new woman despite the traditional role that kept her suppressed for a long time without any transformation. This delayed experience of her trauma accompanied by second wounding catalyses Ma's rebellion against societal norms and expectations, especially regarding age, gender and widowhood. "At eighty, Ma had turned selfish" (*Tomb of Sand* 529). This will be the perceived notion of people with a patriarchal mindset when they observe Ma with such a huge transformation from a passive to a tenacious woman. Passive objectification of women is another problem that creates trauma in the lives of every subaltern. The novel revisits this historical trauma through Ma's journey across the border, which becomes a metaphorical reclamation of her identity and a rejection of the objectifying gaze. Ma embarks on her journey after her husband's death. She was "Indifferent to every role: mother wife widow, mother-style wife-style, or wrap them all into one: family-style role (roll?), and fed up with all of them."

(*Tomb of Sand* 27). Though she grapples with the personal trauma caused by her husband's death and historical partition, she prepared herself to re-engage with this memory that would allow her to transform. Her decision to cross the borders both geographically and emotionally to revisit Pakistan redefines herself as a new woman rather than a victim of partition. She actively prepares herself to engage and reinterpret her history. She challenged the finality of Borders. The return to Pakistan here is the symbol of porous national borders; it shows that memory and identity cross political divisions. Crossing age, gender, and societal expectations' borders, Ma redefines her role in the world by embracing freedom and fluidity.

Trauma's Quiescence and Dissociation

Quiescence in trauma refers to the silent, dormant state of emotional pain that often becomes part of an individual's psyche. Cathy Caruth's book, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996), prominently explores the trauma model, laying the foundation for understanding how quiescence and dissociation operate as mechanisms of survival and silence in the aftermath of traumatic events. She represents trauma by interpreting Freud's proposition of trauma theory. According to Caruth, both individual traumatic gestures and collaborative literal events of extreme nature cannot be completely comprehended or represented due to trauma's quiescence and dissociation. Instead, they're understood through fractured narratives that point to the history's meaning as a form of reduplication or performance. This is precisely the case for the elderly protagonist Ma. She refuses to the societal line and instead experiences a form of rebirth as a metaphor; in this way, it indicates the silenced yet omnipresent trauma of partition in the novel. Ma's transformation from passivity to assertive self-discovery parallels the slow surfacing of repressed pain and identity. The novel highlights the sense of isolation, loneliness, and estrangement borne from personal painful experiences, "But I am the Goddess of Solitude" (*Tomb of Sand* 334). She starts enjoying her solitary state and is even ready to cross the border without accompanying her family members. Silence becomes her strategy to overcome trauma. Another important psychological response to trauma is dissociation, which is the disconnection from reality or parts of identity to cope with overwhelming experiences. Ma's retreat into silence and her initial resistance to engaging with the world around her illustrate this state. Her eventual crossing of borders – physical, emotional, and societal is a way for her to reconcile these fractured parts of herself. This process of reconciling with fragmented identities leaves traces of the trauma to extend far beyond the individual experience which affects the generation of the survivor.

Transgenerational Hauntings

Trauma experienced by an individual affects not just the survivor but also their family members across generations. *Tomb of Sand* set against the backdrop of partition after World War I explores how historical violence and personal losses continue to shape identities and relationships within families. As Cathy Caruth observes in *Unclaimed Experience*, "The repetitions of the traumatic event—which remain unavailable to consciousness but repeatedly intrude on sight—thus suggest a larger relation to the event that extends beyond what can simply be seen or what can be known and is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility that remain at the heart of this repetitive seeing" (92). Analogously, Elis Marder in her essay *Trauma and Literary Studies: Some 'Enabling Questions'* states, "The importance of finding a new way to acknowledge the impact of events that can only be known



belatedly and of listening to the power of experiences that can only be expressed indirectly” (2). Both views remind us that trauma is complicated. It doesn’t always show up directly, but it still shapes who we are and how we relate to each other over time. The shadow of partition lay long and dark, not just over those who lived through it, but also over their descendants, shaping lives in unseen ways. The events of the past continue to haunt the subsequent generations and reflect the psychological and emotional burdens passed down, where the pain of displacement and separation is inherited, shaping identities and relationships even decades later. Like the story of Ma steeped with an unresolved past and the silence, she adopted as a response to that event. Ma’s experiences of loss and displacement are not confined to her alone. They bleed into the lives of her children, particularly her daughter Beti, who grapples with inherited anxieties and questions of identity. This intertwining of personal and collective memory underscores how the past refuses to remain dormant. Ma’s later-life decisions and rebellion against patriarchal norms reflect the haunting echoes of silenced women’s histories. Her story becomes a means to confront the ghosts of the past, giving voice to those who were marginalized or erased.

Language and the Articulation of Trauma

Psychology assists criticism in two ways, investigation of the act of creation and in the psychological study of particular authors to show the relation between their attitudes, states of mind and the special qualities of their work. Through literature and other artworks, people might understand the historical happenings, but understanding the emotional feelings associated with it is quite difficult for any individual. Urvashi Butalia highlights in her book *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* that Partition was “surely more than just a political divide, or a division of properties, of assets and liabilities,” but also a profound “division of hearts,” as survivors often describe it (7). She also emphasises the “untold suffering, tragedy, trauma, pain and violence” of communities who had hitherto lived together in some social contact (7). Butalia further notes that growing up in post-Partition India meant learning the basic facts of Partition without grasping the lasting trauma embedded in every household. She questions, “Is there such a thing, then, as a gendered telling of partition?” and explains that women often frame Partition through “the minor keys of their lives,” recalling personal losses such as a missing child or family member, while men predominantly focus on communal riots and political issues (12). Partition stories differ significantly when analysed through a gendered lens and the diverse experiences of individuals.

The articulation of trauma in the novel *Tomb of Sand* is deeply intertwined with Gitanjali Shree’s experimental and fragmented narrative style. She employs playful, layered prose to reflect the complexities of memory and pain, blending realism with surrealism. This linguistic fluidity mirrors the fragmented and often unspeakable nature of trauma, creating a narrative space where history, memory, and identity intersect in profound and unexpected ways. By employing fragmented and poetic sentences Gitanjali Shree depicts Ma’s emotional state as she revisits her suppressed memories of displacement and loss. Her quest for freedom in later life arises when she pays attention to her trauma at present. Gitanjali Shree’s use of a playful tone creates a sense of curiosity that explains the depth of the character’s emotion. The narrative structure of this novel with fragmented and non-linear storytelling reflects the complexity of memory and trauma. It also uses flashbacks and multiple perspectives which weave a rich tapestry of personal and collective memory. Even to express the resistance of Ma to wake up and face people, Shree writes “No, no, I won’t get up. Noooooo, I won’t rise

nowwww. Nooo rising nyooow. Nyooo riise nyoooo. Now rise new. Now, I'll rise anew" (*Tomb of Sand* 21). Ma was very much stubborn not to wake up so she kept lying in the bed facing her back to the wall. Though Ma cannot speak, her thoughts are readable by those around her. Rather than being self-expressive, she is focalized, central to the narrative, with her state of muteness strengthened by others interpreting and communicating her viewpoint. John Hersey observes this in his book *Hiroshima*, "And now each knows that in the act of survival, he lived a dozen lives and saw more death than he ever thought he would see. At the same time, none of them knew anything" (4). This profound insight reflects the paradoxical nature of survival—bearing witness to intense life experiences while grappling with existential uncertainty. Such complexity underscores the importance of understanding the multifaceted nature of resilience.

Healing and Transformation

The novel *Tomb of Sand* by Gitanjali Shree conveys the concept of nature as a healer of trauma. As observed by Weiling Deng in *Death and Life in the Bordersands: On the Queer Remembrance of Partition through Gitanjali Shree's Tomb of Sand*. The sand is portrayed as a force that connects humans across time, symbolizing universal empathy for the transgressions of borders. This empathy facilitates an understanding of the trauma experienced by individuals, thereby dismantling physical, emotional, and cultural boundaries. The dissolution of these boundaries is presented as a component of global connectivity, reflecting a movement toward greater unity in the face of global challenges. Ma remained silent and hesitated to meet people who came to console her. She even hesitated to face her son and daughter. She wished to spend some time alone. It is only when Sid presents Ma with the cane that holds butterflies of multiple colours Ma starts to wake up from the resistance that holds her. Ma, Beti, and Sid capture pictures to express their happiness and transformation. Gitanjali Shree presents the rainbow as a symbol of hope and transformation. When Ma along with Beti saw a rainbow, the sense of transformation sparked in their mind "And from there it twinkled in Granny's eyes. Rainbow here, rainbow there, rainbows, everywhere! And the one reflected in the eyes the sparkiest of all" (96). Ma started yelling when she saw the rainbow, "Nooo noooo, Sid's Granny made some nu nu-type noises and sort of smiled and up it jumped—the rainbow, that is" (*Tomb of Sand* 96). With sparky eyes, her life began to spark. From there she moves from Bade's house to Beti's home where the actual transformation in the mind of the survivor begins when she starts to love her body despite the scars she carries through displacement "Your body is your body, whether it's your sixteenth year, seventeenth, or seventy-eighth, you prance about strutting your burgeoning blossoming shape" (*Tomb of Sand* 260). Wholeheartedly accepting the scars helps Ma to move with assurance, radiating vitality, development, and beauty, perhaps in celebration of their metamorphosis.

Healing and transformation begin with understanding and integrating the past. Her journey to discover herself opens doors for a new way which was hitherto unknown. The protagonist Ma's journey to rediscover her past self begins when she plans to revisit her home country Pakistan where she was brought up. Gitanjali Shree presents Ma to remain silent until she rediscovers herself and decides to revisit from the beginning. "The beginning begins at the beginning" (*Tomb of Sand* 324). There uncovers her family history in Pakistan she had before partition, which reflects the broader search for identity and healing in the face of generational trauma.



Conclusion

Novels published post-war mostly deal with the sufferings and hauntings of the character as well as the survivor. But there are visible transitions that could be seen from just a source of suffering to a catalyst for resilience emphasizing the themes of resistance and healing. The depiction of the sufferings of the character is a mere representation of what happened in the past whereas the emergence of resilience reveals the strength and ability to heal. This research paper examining the key themes of resistance, trauma, resilience, and healing in Gitanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand* also reflects healing and transformation by emphasizing self-discovery and empowerment, giving readers the nuanced experience of trauma and healing.

Gitanjali Shree not only recollects the suffering and traumas that the character encountered but also depicts the inner strength and resilience that helped to overcome the traumatic memory. By illustrating trauma's profound impact, she showcases the healing process, often through personal growth, community support, and the reclamation of identity. *Tomb of Sand* depicts a strong woman character by portraying her transmission from a traumatised woman to a confident and articulate woman. Resilience in literature refers to the capacity of characters to endure, adapt, and recover from adversity. This often involves maintaining hope despite challenges, finding strength in the community, and drawing on cultural heritage and traditions for support. Resilience is depicted through the characters' ability to overcome obstacles, persist in the face of difficulties, and ultimately grow stronger from their experiences. *Tomb of Sand* illustrates how the protagonist survives and thrives despite historical and ongoing traumas. It explores the multifaceted process of healing from trauma highlighting the journey toward personal restoration. Shree addressed the past wounds by presenting the character Ma who reclaims her identity to move forward. Though healing is nonlinear, the character endured a complex process of confronting pain and fostering resilience which paved the way for healing and self-discovery. By addressing Trauma and healing as both sides of the same coin, *Tomb of Sand* serves as both a mirror and a beacon reflecting the challenges faced by the partition survivor and guiding the readers to a great legacy of strength, hope, and transformation amidst the haunting flashbacks. As noted in *Love, Life, and Beyond*, *Tomb of Sand* is "not just a story to read but a journey to embark on" ("Book Review: *Tomb of Sand* by Geetanjali Shree"). Shree incorporates numerous themes that appeal to readers, such as love, partition, motherhood, patriarchy, female empowerment, ageing, and friendship. Through this intricate narrative, Shree guides readers, particularly women, in reflecting on their life paths and breaking free from societal traps. The novel offers strength to overcome mental struggles and inner turmoil, reassuring readers that even the hardest challenges can be overcome.

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