

# The Trauma And Its Literary Remembrance In Selected German And Hindi Narrative Texts

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Since the 1970s and 1980s, remembrance and memory have been significant topics in literature, culture, and history. However, it seems that memory results from neuroscientific studies or psychology. Memory as a theme is a current attraction of the research. Specifically in literary studies, there have been various ways of dealing with memoirs in recent years.

In the age of technological media, it seems that everything can be stored/saved and recorded, and reaccessed indefinitely. However, the memory of an individual in the artistic guise of literature offers a different view of meaning. In addition, knowledge of the past shifts from an individual's memory to external sources, especially after death. Therefore, forms of individual expression such as diaries, interviews, memoirs, and literary texts (especially autobiographies) have gained importance. This form of archiving is very important and relevant after the author's death. The texts, which deal with the past and historical events and record these events in writing, are constantly available, and over time the memories are further transferred. Therefore, literature seems to have the task of preserving and keeping alive the memories in autobiographical form so that the following generation has the opportunity to perceive the past and the extreme experiences of people retrospectively.

The extinction of the witnesses of the Second World War in Germany on the one hand and also of the eyewitnesses of the partition of India on the other hand and the emergence of the discourse on the victimization of Dalits in India leads to the question of how the memories can be re-constructed and how a form of expression can be created where awareness of the tragedy and crime can be preserved and passed on. The following questions arise explicitly: How can past experiences of an extreme nature be made tangible? What role do eyewitnesses play in this regard? Is it possible that the memory of this unique, traumatic time can be made tangible for future generations without the active participation of eyewitnesses?

## 1. Subject of research

The questions above refer to the topic of memory and its reconstruction. In his work, "The Collective Memory", Maurice Halbwachs attempts to demonstrate the social relativity of memory. He takes a counter position to Bergson's and Freud's theories of memory, which emphasize that memory is an individual process. According to Halbwachs, every personal memory is "a collective phenomenon".

Since the end of the 20th century, the culture of remembrance and 'coping with the past' has become established themes. It was taken up in TV formats, such as Guido Knopp's docu-dramas and films such as Schindler's List (1994) and Downfall (2004). The reader also appears very relevant in this context.

In addition to the term "culture of remembrance," the term "literature of remembrance" or memorial literature is discussed. The authors usually focus on their own family history or autobiographical experiences in the memorial literature. These kinds of texts establish a connection between the respective generations of the family and shed light on their relationship to one another. In the so-called family and generation novels, the search for one's past is linked to the story of the parents and grandparents.

Aleida Assmann sees in the form of memorial literature a new impetus for academic discourse on the culture of remembrance and as a late reaction to the violence of the 20th century. Memoirs oscillate between fiction and fact, imagination and investigation, and invention and authenticity.

"This literature is a testament to what the parental generation encapsulated and denied through silence, guilt, and other self-immunizing reflexes. Nonetheless, it was transmitted to the second and third generations."<sup>1</sup>

Literary fiction attempts to capture events and make them available for future generations. It can help to visualize "the experiences, the collective memories, and memories of individuals".

Marianne Hirsch, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, talks about post-memory and defines it as "the relationship that post-event generations bear to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came first."

"The post-generations inherit memories that can overwhelm their own life stories. For Hirsch, the link between post-memory and the past is mediated not through memory but imaginative investment, projection, and creation."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Assmann, Aleida: *Wem gehört die Geschichte? Fakten und Fiktion in der deutschen Erinnerungsliteratur*, Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur, University of Konstanz, 2011, p. 213- 225. here. p. 218.

<sup>2</sup>Hirsch, Marianne: *The Generation of Post memory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2012, p. 16.

This paper takes literature as a medium that re-constructs the memories and the past of the individual. Literature as a medium re-construct the memories and the past and with those authors are showing their imaginative investment, projection, and creation to re-construct and tell the reader about the past. In memorial literature, the link between past and memory, fact and fiction, offers a narrative opportunity. In this context, fictionality does not mean "free invention", but a transcription under the overpressure of biographical experience. This offers literature an opportunity to re-construct the past and offer a different perspective of history that traditional historiography lacks.

The paper also investigates "memories" and their representation in literary works. The work examines how the authors conceptually use different memories in their works, trying to make unique experiences tangible and to draw a picture of their past, present and future. In addition, it aims to examine how the theme of memory takes shape in the authors' literary fiction and how the authors deal with the past.

In addition to the memory and post-memory discourse as reflected in selected German literature, the paper will continue to engage with this phenomenon, albeit focusing on how it manifests itself in the post-independence India in Hindi literature. "Dalit Autobiographies" provide a unique discursive texture to Hindi memorial/post-memorial literature. This paper does not want to suggest in any way that the German memorial/post-memorial literature in the context of the Holocaust is similar to the confrontation with the Hindi texts - be it in relation to the memory of the partition of India or the memory of the marginalized communities. It merely shows that non-Holocaust memorial/post-memorial and trauma-literature phenomenon exists mainly in the Indian context of post-independence Hindi literature. It shows different shades, and with closer inspection and with the help of a few concrete examples, it can enrich the discourse of memorial/post-memorial discourse in literary studies as a whole.

## 2. Hypothesis and research questions

The paper deals with selected texts from German memorial literature and Hindi narrative texts that give an insight into the past of Germany, India's partition, and the socio-cultural situation of the Dalit community: this offers a possibility of a new perspective of the past. In the selected texts, experiences of an extreme nature are made tangible for the reader. The phenomenon of remembering itself is a situation of an extreme nature, as these experiences are unique, traumatic and brutal. Is remembering these traumas comparable to reliving them? Experiences of an extreme nature in this present paper are also based on different experiences: (1) In the German context, dealing with the memories after wars and especially after the Second World War with the Holocaust. This is contrasted with (2) the narrative of the exclusion and victimization of the untouchables and (3) the tragedy of the Partition of India.

The paper follows the question of whether the phenomenon of the reconstruction of the past also exists in India in addition to Holocaust literature and whether the German memorial/post-memorial literature is comparable

with selected Hindi narrative texts. One section of this paper aims to develop a comparative methodological perspective on memorial/post-memorial literature based on the similarities and differences in approach, i.e. in the process of remembering and reconstruction, which the German and Indian authors apply when they deal with their respective past.

However, the paper does not deal with the concept of memorial/post-memorial literature with a genre per se but with three different forms of memorial literature. These three forms suggest how to approach the idea of memorial literature and reconstruction of the past. In no case does this Paper attempt to compare the content of the texts; rather it deals with three different texts and contexts, and what holds them together is the phenomenon of the reconstruction of the past, the phenomenon of remembering, and how can experiences of an extreme nature can be made tangible to the reader in the present. In the selected German texts, the generation of perpetrators is presented as a group of consciously or unconsciously participants in a decision to exclude others, that is, who made a decision that excluded and murdered a community of "Jews" and caused a loss in everyone's family. Be it, perpetrators or victims. (Loss of one's own family member in war etc.). Dalit autobiographies also tell the extreme exclusion of a community, and the texts about the partition of India re-construct the experience of the people they have been suffered from, what they have not done: the people had to suffer Trauma from what they knew nothing about or were not active participants in the decision that caused the tragedy of partition of India.

In this context, the paper will focus on the following questions:

1. How are experiences of an extreme nature re-constructed and conserved in selected texts and made tangible for the recipient/reader?
2. How do the authors deal with their past? How do the authors try to understand the past? How and why do they feel the need to re-construct the past?

The two selected texts are: from German *Am Beispiel meines Bruders*: By Uwe Timm (The novel has been translated into German: *My Brother's Shadow* by Anthea Bell) and a Dalit autobiography *Murdahiya* by Tulsi Ram.

Before I talk about the books which I have selected for this paper, I would like to talk about the concept "Trauma" by Irene Visser and comparative literature by Gayatri C. Spivak, which has offered me space to bring German and Hindi texts together for this study:

### 3. Trauma

In her text *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Cathy Caruth offers the following definition of what she describes as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder for the individual:

"There is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event, along with

numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event”.<sup>3</sup>

In her text *Trauma in Non-Western Contexts*, Irene Visser talks about the reformulation and transformation of trauma theory. The reaction of non-Western scholars necessitated this reformulation and transformation. Cultural Trauma is theorized according to the dominant Western diagnostic model, which defines Trauma as individual and event-based. Through the influence of critics and non-Western trauma perspectives, the orientation has been refocused and transformed to include a much broader spectrum of Trauma with a much clearer emphasis on "political, historical, and socioeconomic factors."

The development of early trauma theory, which viewed literature as a "closed psychoanalytic system" and which was filled with "contradictory theories and controversial debates", has had a significant impact on the study of non-Western literature, particularly in providing "a view of trauma as diverse narratives in the Literature and far-reaching effects in culture". The overly narrow Eurocentric model of early trauma theory, now embracing the long-term and systemic violence of colonization, racism, exploitation, and oppression, has been expanded to include a broader understanding of Trauma due to non-Western perspectives.

Literary trauma theory presents a complicated interweaving of concepts and approaches in its continuous expansion. It offers strong potential for fruitful connections between and within disciplines and encompasses exploration of many cultural expressions, such as written, visual and oral storytelling, drama and song, and written literary forms, as cultural modes of addressing victimization and the many outcomes of traumatization.

“As a research paradigm, trauma cannot be stabilized according to a predetermined field of theory, [...] but is both embedded in and traverses' relational accommodations between disciplines, geographies, histories, implicating flows of material and imaginary resources and the institutions directing their distribution and access”.<sup>4</sup>

Irene Visser's thesis enables an examination of both the Holocaust trauma and the traumatic experiences of the Dalits/Untouchable castes in India and the suffering of the survivors of the partition of India, in which Trauma outside the European area is also dealt with.

In her book, *Death of a discipline*, Gayatri Spivak's perspective of comparative literary studies advocates a study in which literature from different cultural areas, languages, and periods can be read, researched, and compared. This study does not have to be centered on the literature from Europe and the USA but also explicitly considers the literature of Latin America, Africa, and Asia in different languages. Therefore, I saw an opportunity to

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<sup>3</sup>Caruth, Cathy: *Explorations in memory*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore/ London, 1995, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Visser, Irene: *Trauma in Non-Western Contexts*. In: Kurtz, Roger J.: *Trauma and Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 124-139, here, 125.

examine selected texts for this Paper from German and Hindi narrative texts together. The selected texts deal with the German past and two contexts from the Indian cultural domain, in which people tell their experiences from the past to the reader in the present. All selected texts deal with experiences of an extreme nature, the experiences are re-constructed in these texts and made tangible for the reader in the present. These experiences are unique, so a comparison of the content does not seem possible. In this paper, therefore, the comparative study does not mean taking two texts from two different cultures and comparing them culturally, politically, and economically, but comparing them, as Gayatri Spivak suggests broadens the horizons of subject or discipline of comparative study. Therefore, the selected texts are not compared in this work in terms of content, but in terms of approaches and process of reconstruction of the past.

#### **4. *Am Beispiel meines Bruders*: By Uwe Timm**

In *My Brother's Shadow* is a semi-autobiographical novel. The book was published in 2003. In this novel, he tells the story of his family and his brother. In the reconstruction of his brother's past, Timm refers to the letters he wrote to his family from the war place, a personal diary, and the family member's memories of his brother Karl-Heinz. His brother was 18 years old and volunteered for the Waffen SS. After a severe injury, he died. Several years later, after the death of his brother, the author has only a vague memory of him. Timm lived in Hamburg during the Second World War. His family includes his father, mother, sister Hanne Lore, Karl-Heinz and Uwe.

#### **The loss of the brother has caused the family trauma.**

##### **4.1. Trauma**

Not writing about his brother or not revisiting his past was a traumatic phase of Timm's life. Talking about his mother, he admits: "As long as she was alive, I could not write about my brother". In doing so, he reveals inhibitions and distances that reach back to his parent's home. Deaths blocked open communication about family history. Nonetheless, Timm lends form and meaning to his narrative through his investigative approach, which revolves directly or indirectly around the search for evidence as to whether his brother Karl-Heinz, 16 years older, is/was a perpetrator of atrocities.

##### **4.2. Loss of brother as family trauma**

The material of the text openly displays the pain of the family because of the loss of the brother in the war. Although his brother found himself in what is now considered one of the most brutal of war in human history, his parents felt his death was premature and unexpected. This leads to parental Trauma that carries over to the youngest child, Timm as well. The death of Karl-Heinz occurred geographically, temporally and also politically beyond the reach of the narrator and his family. The grave is identifiable as a traumatic experience, but the alleged precision of its location "Znamjenka Heroes' Cemetery in Ukraine. The loss of this favorite child is



reinforced by the fact that there was neither a corpse to mourn nor a grave to visit, i.e. there was no opportunity to say goodbye to an ideal family member.

## 5. *Murdahiya*

*Murdahiya* is the first part of Tulsi Ram's autobiography, published in 2010, and deals with the village life of Tulsi Ram. It is a testament to his experiences of pleasure and pain as a child at home, in the village, and at educational institutions. *Murdahiya* is not only an autobiography but also a creative expression of the author's personal experiences as well as the socio-cultural relationships of all the surrounding castes and their complexities. *Murdahiya* reveals the layers of caste discrimination, exclusion, humiliation, oppression, hatred, religious tradition, ritual, and superstition that pervade the Hindu social system.

In this autobiography, village life's caste hierarchy and economic structure are broadly stated. The lack of modernity in the post-colonial Indian villages is clearly presented. Through his own experiences, the author traces a situation that has not changed much even today. One can read in the newspapers every day how exclusion, caste discrimination and violence still exist in 21st century India in the name of caste.

*Murdahiya*'s title is metaphorical in nature. *Murdahiya* is the lifeline for the Dalits of Dharampur village. Tulsi Ram's *Murdahiya* shares the experiences of struggle, caste oppression, exploitation, marginalization, traumatic experiences and the torment of Dalit society at different stages of life. Tulsi Ram's life story reveals the discrimination, harassment and oppression of the Dalits and their struggle for pride, self-respect, freedom and human status.

### 5.1. Caste system, exclusion and discrimination of Dalits (Social Outcaste) Social life and atrocities against Dalits

Sociologically, the term Dalits was used exclusively for the untouchables of Indian society who faced the worst kind of social marginalization/exclusion. The term "social exclusion" has been defined as a multi-dimensional process combining different forms of exclusion: participation in decision-making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into a common cultural process. In combination, they produce an acute form of exclusion.

We must add the elements of religious justification for such exclusion of Dalits, based on 'Dharma' and 'Karma'. The social marginalization/exclusion of an untouchable is so overwhelming that even as one advances economically and politically, one is not entirely accepted by castes higher up the hierarchy. Another aspect of social exclusion is that Dalits, due to their extreme form of social exclusion, have not been able to accumulate social capital, which could give them the potential to develop their consciousness. Furthermore, they cannot rebel against the Hindu social order without this awareness. While not part of the Varna hierarchy, their cultural placement in the Hindu social order was influenced by the artificial consensus legitimized by the karma doctrine.

The Dalits had to live on the outskirts of the village. They were not allowed to sit in the chair in front of a higher caste person. They rarely had the right to study and many were in no position to go to school. Tulsi Ram recalls his school days in the village and talks about discrimination and social exclusion at school. He says that education was not an issue in his family. Since only the Brahmins could read and write in the village, the family always had to go to them and ask them to read the letters from their relatives and other family members. Tulsi Ram was sent to elementary school to acquire the ability only to read the letters. The discrimination in the school that Tulsi Ram talked about was practiced not only by the higher caste students but also by, the higher caste teachers. Tulsi Ram says there were 13 Dalits in his class who had to sit in a separate row, being untouchables. The other children (from higher castes) never wanted to meet and touch Dalits. This was the atmosphere in which his school days began. Classmates, who came from low castes, called him by his caste name to humiliate him: This humiliation remains in his memory as a traumatic experience, which triggers from time to time.

### Some examples from the book:

„जिनमें एक थे हीरालाल । वे लोहार जाति के थे, किन्तु अकारण वे मुझे 'चमरा-चमरा' कहकर बुलाते तथा बात-बात पर गालियां देने लगते थे। हीरालाल की एक विशेषता यह थी कि वे फुटबॉल के बहुत अच्छे खिलाड़ी थे। उनकी इस कला की सभी लोग सराहना करते थे। मैं भी उनका बड़ा प्रशंसक था, किन्तु वे मुझे जन्मजात दुश्मन समझने लगे थे । वे हमेशा कुछ क्षत्रिय छात्रों के साथ रहते और जातिसूचक गालियों का इस्तेमाल करते। इन लोगों के चलते कक्षा में मेरे लिए बैठना मुश्किल हो गया था।”<sup>5</sup>

„गर्मी के दिनों में प्यास लग जाना एक बड़ी समस्या थी। स्कूल के पास एक कुआं था, जिसके चबूतरे तक को हम दलित बच्चे छू नहीं सकते थे। पानी पिलाने की विनती मुंशी जी से की जाती।”<sup>6</sup>

„कुएं थे, जिनमें से सिंचाई के लिए तीन कुओं का ही उपयोग होता था, क्योंकि शेष तीन कुएं ब्राह्मणों के पानी पीने के लिए थे तथा उन्हें दलित छू नहीं सकते थे।”<sup>7</sup>

„जिसका प्रमुख कारण था कि डिष्टी साहब चमार थे। हड़कम्प इस सवाल पर सबसे ज्यादा मचा हुआ था कि खाना तो रोज की तरह अध्यापकों के चौके में बन जाएगा, किन्तु अपनी थाली में कैसे खिलाएंगे? हेडमास्टर साहब ने मुझसे कहा कि मैं अपने घर से एक लोटा तथा थाली लाऊं, यह बात किसी को भी न बताऊं। मैंने वैसा ही किया और उसी में डिष्टी साहब को खाना दिया गया।”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Tulsi Ram: *Murdahiya*, Rajkamal Prakashan, 2010, p. 139.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 52.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 67.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 2010, p. 59.



## 6. A comparative study:

The above-suggested approach to comparative literature lets the following terms see similarities in how the past is reconstructed in the selected German and Hindi narrative texts.

### 6.1. Trauma:

Trauma as a concept and reconstruction of traumatic experiences are common themes in all selected texts. In the selected German texts, the Trauma within German literature is not the Trauma of the perpetrators (generation) but instead finds expression in the experiences of the protagonists who live later, for whom the trauma consists instead in the deeds of their ancestors to learn and process. The loss of family members at the site of war and the recollection of the murder of Jews often appear as central, tragic motifs.

### 6.2. Technique of the narration

The concepts of the montage technique are based on a deconstructive approach that does not rely on spatial-temporal continuity of the representation and does not seek to create unity, but rather irritates the reader and prompts him to re-construct and create meaning again and again. This method is mostly used in scientific research. This technique makes the family history believable and verifiable. In his book *Narration and no end*, Uwe Timm expressed the importance of montage technique and the use of montage technique for his writing:

“There, literature is contrasted with the normality of speaking, which does not reflect and is therefore exposed to the flooding of media image garbage. As long as it is not trivial, literature brings the reader at a distance from language and irritates the natural way of speaking through experimental handling: through combination, a new connotation can be achieved, tiny expansions of meaning, even confusion of meaning [...]”<sup>9</sup>

With the concept of montage technology and Brecht's understanding of montage technology, the different memories and mentalities of people are presented. Indirect satire can be assumed, in which a questionable system is exhibited instead of claiming to depict an existing system.

### 6.3. Autobiographical elements

According to Philippe Lejeune, an autobiography is characterized by the fact that a natural person reports retrospectively in prose on their own existence and places the main emphasis on the portrayal of their own life. Philippe Lejeune speaks of "a verifiable identity of the author, narrator and main character" as other characteristics of the autobiography. The notion of the autobiographical pact, developed by Philippe Lejeune, proposes that first, the naming identity between the narrator, protagonist, and author should be considered to decide whether they are identical. In the selected German texts and the texts about the division of India, it should be noted that the first-person narrator and the author are identical and relate many events from their own lives.

<sup>9</sup>Neumann, Brigit: *Literatur Erinnerung, Identität*. In: Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning: *Gedächtniskonzepte der Literaturwissenschaft. Theoretische Grundlegung und Anwendungsperspektiven*. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2005, p. 148-178, Here, p. 163.

The Dalit Autobiographies are the life stories of the authors. Therefore, it can be assumed that the selected texts also have things in common in this sense, being either autobiographical or containing autobiographical elements.

#### **6.4. Presence of the absent**

It is evident in Timm's novel that the author only wanted to look into the past of his lost brother because he was often talked about in the family. He is an ideal figure in the family and is present in the memory of family members.

It is often said in Dalit autobiographies that exclusion and discrimination along caste lines still exist to some extent in the present, even though the constitution states that all are equal before the constitution. The partition literature emphasizes that the partition of India did not solve the problem of religious conflict. The unrest (a consequence of which the partition of India took place) between two religious communities also takes place in the present, i. H. the authors not only deal with their past but also take a critical look at their present.

#### **6.5. Addition to the national history/history writing**

An essential similarity in all texts is that they refer to provable historical events. A different perspective of history and historiography develops. The family is suffering from various traumatic experiences and their remembrance will be embodied in the family novel *In my Brother's Shadow*, which are lacking in national history. Dalit literature, and especially the Dalit autobiographies, deals with the past of the Dalit community, which expresses a different perspective on aspects of history that are not included in the national history. For example, Dalits and their exclusion and victimization before and after Indian independence, etc. This history was not taught in schools and universities.

Gyanendra Pandey and Urvashi Butalia question history and claim that there are gaps in history. The individual was ignored. For example, the Trauma before and after the partition of India, suffering of the individual, discrimination based on caste, women and children and their victimization during the partition of India have not been given a place in national histories. You will find fertile ground in this literature and these texts.

They, therefore, advocate the reconstruction of memory so that the gap in history can be filled.

#### **6.6. Family history as collective memory**

In the German narrative texts, both individual and collective memory are re-constructed through family history and a collective image of victims has been tried to portray. The authors' past and traumatic experiences refer to an individual or to their family. As Halbwachs, Assmann, and other thinkers suggest that memory is always collective or belongs to a community, it can be argued that the past of the family or an individual tells the history of a community or of that country.

In the Indian sense, the Dalit autobiographies reconstruct the whole Dalit community, and the partition literature indicates that all who were victims of the tragedy experienced the same Trauma.

### 6.7. Writing motifs

In her essay, Aleida Assmann states not only forgetting three other forms of social dealing with traumatic Experiences: (1) remembering in order not to forget; (2) Remembering in order to forget and (3) Dialogic remembering. All three forms of remembering to presuppose the recognition of the victim community by the perpetrator community.<sup>10</sup>

The commemoration of experiences of an extreme nature does not fulfil this basic requirement. Nevertheless, the selected works in this present work record these three forms of remembering, at least in their beginnings. Remember not to forget (1), meaning from an asymmetrical experience of violence to reach a common (symmetrical) culture of remembrance, whereby the restoration of historical truth plays a central role. This seems to be one of the greatest similarities in terms of writing motifs in selected German and Hindi texts.

The contemporary witnesses of the events (the Second World War and murder of the Jews, suffering of the partition of India) are slowly dying out and this leads to the question of how the experiences of the extreme nature of the Second World War in Germany on the one hand and the partition of India and the victimization of Dalits in India on the other India can be helped to a form of remembrance that preserves and processes the consciousness of the most terrible time of crime brutality against humanity and suffering. The literary depiction of the experiences/memories of the coming generation is one of the authors' writing motives.

About dealing with the concepts of memory, history, the present, historiography and their literary representation, there are methodological similarities between the texts. Making the experiences of an extreme nature tangible for the reader and offering a new perspective of the past or a different way of dealing with the past was the basic assumption in the analysis of the respective texts since they together underlie the phenomenon of the reconstruction of the past. The process of remembering the past occurs through the literary form of the autobiography and all the selected texts have at least autobiographical elements in a particular form. The selected texts also have similarities because the same writing motifs (the passing on of memories of the past and their preservation for future generations) are used, which can be read as a supplement to the respective, already existing national history.

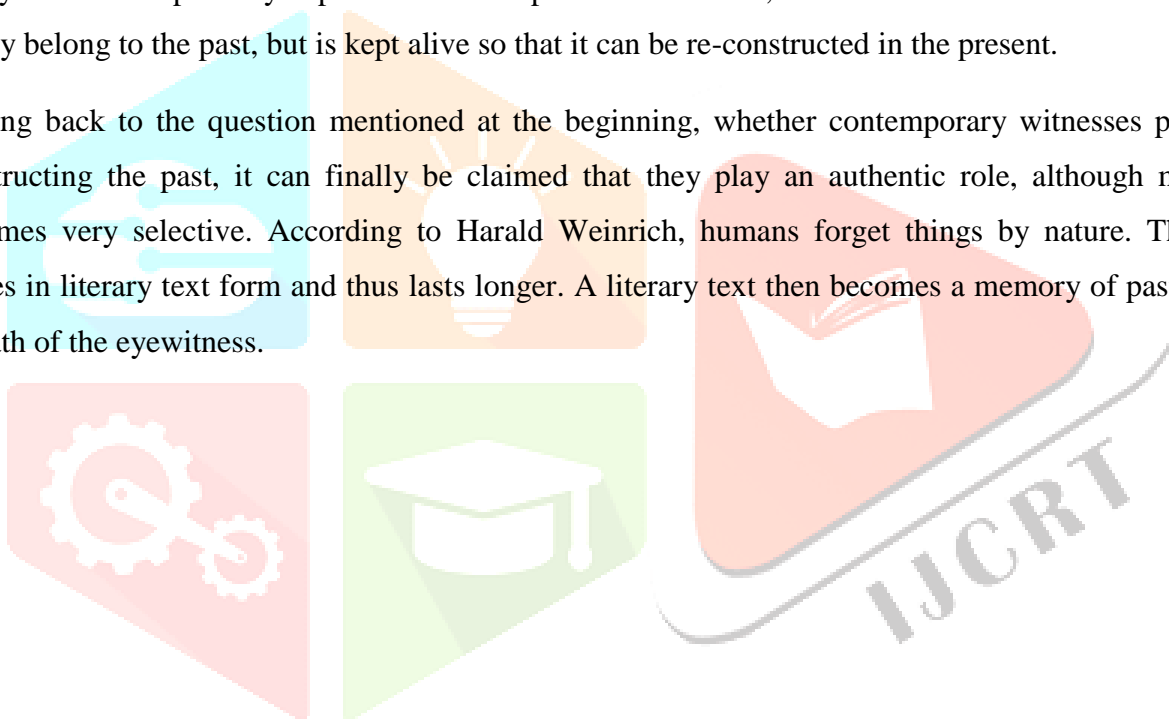
The narrative technique used by all authors in the literary representation of the process of remembering is a montage technique, whereby the memories and also the mentality of the people is re-constructed, which, especially in the German context, is intended by the authors to understand the generation of perpetrators

<sup>10</sup>Assmann, Aleida: *Die Last der Vergangenheit*. In: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 4 (3), 2007, p. 375–385, here. p. 383.

retrospectively. Within the Hindi narrative texts it has been used to understand the cause and consequences of the tragedy and Trauma.

The past events described in the texts are partly still present in the present. In the German context, they are in the memory, and they occur unintentionally or intentionally in the present. In the Hindi narrative texts, the past and the effect of the past on the present is re-constructed because the events can still be partially experienced in the present. Therefore, it can be asserted that the engagement with the Hindi narrative texts in this paper also has a contemporary relevance and is legitimized to the extent that it is also partly a reconstruction of current events. The current preoccupation with the terms past and memory in Germany shows the influence of the past on the present. The experiences and memories that have been reconstructed in the selected Hindi texts of this paper are not only the experiences from the past (exclusion and discrimination of the Dalits and religious conflicts/unrest), but they can also be partially experienced in the present. Therefore, a thesis can be raised that the memory does not only belong to the past, but is kept alive so that it can be re-constructed in the present.

Referring back to the question mentioned at the beginning, whether contemporary witnesses play a role in reconstructing the past, it can finally be claimed that they play an authentic role, although memories are sometimes very selective. According to Harald Weinrich, humans forget things by nature. Their memory survives in literary text form and thus lasts longer. A literary text then becomes a memory of past events after the death of the eyewitness.



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