Mute Can Speak: Subaltern Feminist Revision of the Partition Trauma of 1947

Trauma, "a medico-legal concept that is intimately involved in the shaping of a distinctively late modern form of subjectivity" is an internally contested and cross-disciplinary field converging with implications of psychology, sociology, history, political science, philosophy, ethics, literature and aethetics (Palladino qtd. in Pandey 124). Trauma Studies destabilizes the established discourse of communism, nationhood and nationalism; and introduces a new realm to address the repressed and deleted history of the traumatized victims creating a recovered history that leads towards the possibility of repair and construction.

Trauma is an unspeakable and inaccessible experience provoked by unimaginable overwhelming events such as holocaust, genocide, terrorism, colonialism, slavery, subordination, industrial warfare, totalitarian atrocity, modernization, imperial invasion, immigration, diaspora, world wars and the like. These catastrophic events entail trauma that cannot be ignored and are so cataclysmic that they cannot be spoken out. Also addressed as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), previously called "shell shock" or "combat stress," in the words of prominent trauma theorist Cathy Caruth is, "a response, something delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucination, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from after the experience, and possibly increased arousal to stimuli recalling the events" (3-4). That trauma is never a severe pain at the moment the horrondeous event occurs, rather is always triggered when the event of similar shock takes place repeatedly. Trauma is a belated explosion occuring when an event triggers the previous one. Ruth Leys also emphasizes the belatedness of traumatic event:

> owing to the emotions of terror and surprise caused by certain events, the mind is split or dissociated: it is unable to register the wound to the psyche because the

> ordinary mechanisms of awareness and cognition are destroyed. As a result, the victim is unable to recollect and integrate the hurtful experience in normal consciousness; instead, she is haunted or possessed by intrusive traumatic memories. The experience of the trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually reexperienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present. (qtd. in Saunders 16)

Trauma is triggered when the painful pshyche remembers the disruptive past due to the intrusive event in the present. The memory of the horrendous event breaches the normal consciousness and affects the mind psychologically.

Trauma, as Sigmund Freud and his peers have related with hysteria, emerges from psychoanalysis. Freud has mentioned sexuality as a precipitating cause for traumatic hysteria coming from "memory relating to sexual life" (qtd. in Kaplan 27). However, sexuality has never been the only cause for trauma as war trauma is entirely different from female hysteria. Later on Freud theorizes that trauma results from "a breach in a protective shield" (31). Trauma produces dissociative selves:

> it produces emotions—terror, fear, shock—but perhaps above all the disruption of the normal feeling of comfort. Only the sensation sector of the brain—amygdala—is active during the trauma. The meaning—making one (in the sense of rational thought, cognitive processing, namely the cerebral cortex, remains shut down because the affect is too much to be registered cognitively in the brain . . . Just because the traumatic experience has not been given meaning, the subject is continually haunted by it in dreams and hallucinations. (34)

The memory of the unspeakable losses of the dire past remains dormant in mind surreptitiously

that the conscious mind grasps it only when similar event reoccurs in some other moment in life. In this regard, Caruth construes that trauma is a "temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment, the trauma is repeated suffering of event" (10). But the horrible event leaves such indelible marks upon the consciousness that affect the life forever and changes "the future identity in fundamental and irrevocable way" (Alexander qtd. Saunders 18).

There is always a void, or gap or absolute numbing, also called latency between the two events of the same nature. The void "precludes its registration … [in the] form of belatedness" or nachtraglichkeit (Laub qtd. in Caruth 6). Caruth borrows the term "latency," a period of delay or incubation, from psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud who defines it as "the period during which the effects of the experienced are not apparent" (7). Since trauma is an insistent return of overwhelming event, registered belatedly and based on memory, it is bound up with the crisis of truth.

In terms of crisis of truth Caruth further points out "the enigmatic relation between trauma and survival itself" (7). So far the memory is purely individual and subjective, the truth in the victim-witness testimony is not fully trustworthy. It is solely upto the victim about what to remember and what to forget. The trauma theory subsumes the crisis of truth. Allen Feldman also adds that "truth emerges from oblivion and concealment . . . the recovery of truth is opposed to forgetfulness" (167). The oblivion contains the inaccessibility of the truth. The polemical thrust of trauma theory derives from Paul de Man's disgnostic assessment of contemperary criticism, that is, "a movement from a rhetoric of crisis to a rhetoric of trauma, from the (im)possibility of theory to its traumatic predicament" (qtd. in Toreman 335). To put it simply, trauma cannot be expressed fully; it is mediated, distorted and fabricated in part. John E. Teows notes trauma as an interminable process of criticism with "the inevability of evasion." (129).

Further, Caruth valorizes this imcomprehensiblity as “referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs, or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence” (8). Toreman writes trauma as the theory of impossibility. It is, for Hungerford, “an incomprehensible experience that gets passed around” (81). In the same vein Marianne Hirsch notes trauma as a “contradiction between the necessity and the impossibility of fully bearing witness” to a particular traumatic past (152). Even Dylan Triggs says that the “result of displacement between recollection and expereience is impossibility of recreating the felt depth of past” (93). The stories of trauma can never fully represent what has actually happened. The testimony can be mendacious and a mine of well-told lies.

It is not only the forgetfulness but also the language that characterizes the impossibility of complete expression that makes the testimony of traumatic memory unreliable, fallible and unapproachable. Trauma Studies is also associated to the deconstructionist theory that asserts the impossibility of meaning in the relation between signifier and signified. Psychoanalyst Lacan states that “the real always comes amiss. It has the force of a reversal or interruption, of a peripety displacing one meaning by another, or which undoes the knot of signifier and signified that establishes signification”(qtd. in Hartman 539). Like unconcious language can never absolutely express what has been expected to express. The testimony of the witness

> haunts the viewer effectively [and] undercuts a claim of temporal continuity . . . offers a counter narrative in which testimony becomes guided by void rather than points of presence incommensurble past . . .[memory presumes] a disbelief that the same person is now witnessing the same location, right here, right now, here and now is spectral . . . testimonial impasse central to memory of trauma . . .

entails the impossibilty of completion. (Trigg 99)

Thus the impossibility of witnessing and testifying trauma is parelleled to an inaccessibility of articulation. Memory can be appropriation, fabrication and manipulation.

Nevertheless trauma theory lies on the condition of suspension of disbelief, too. Memory and testimony are not completely unreliable and scratchy that cannot fully express justifiable truth at all. In fact only the memory and testimony can challenge and rupture the unjust as well as inhuman traumatic past and help cure the traumatized psyche. While memorizing the experience turns out to be torbulent since it takes the witness away from the present and switches to the past. The moments of muteness, anger, fear and anxiety caused by the atrocity become evident in accordance with the unforgettable experience they have undergone. Survivors describe the moment very differently as a time of grief, confusion, illness and shocked numbness (Kraft 327). Even the hesitations, pauses and silences are significant and expressive to unravel the unbearable past: "Unspoken and unspeakable dimensions of traumatic recall . . . the silence and muteness are more telling and forceful than verbal narrative… muteness and the mute witness have thus acquired the status of the time and complete witness" (327). Muteness speaks louder than the words narrated in conventional historiography. Witness powerfully transmits the psychological and emotional milieu of the struggle for survival through her moments of silence and through her hand, gesture and tears (Hirsch 155). Therefore, although discarded as a barbaric activity troubling the historiography, memory that acknowledges personal voices, deforms and shatters the constructed pattern of an individual life. Memory tells the untold truth.

Along with the untold truth, trauma studies is relevant for its therapeutic dimension. Despite the fact that the remembering might haunt and torment both the witness and the listeners for a short while, the retelling rather turns out to be therapeutical. Dennis A. Foster asserts that

the witnesses of the events are “inevitably incapable of adequately representing them . . . [yet] if we acknowledge them, truer and healthier future becomes possible" (740). The gloomy moment and the desolete psyche relieves after the telling of the erstwhile repressed trauma and humans become free and healthy again in life.

It is useful to note the experience that the witness also undergoes traumatic experience while memorizing the horrible past. The survivor relives the past, goes back to an unbearable scene and “is overwhelmed by emotion and for a time unable to speech” (LaCapra 123). To exemplify, Tim Woods makes a case study of Charlotte Delbo, a survivor of Auschwitz projecting the

> traumatic problems and personal consequences of remembering and forgetting Holocaust. [She] characterizes the way a buried memory can erupt unexpectedly, bursting through skin of one’s self-consciousness like an 'alien' traumatizing the self to such a degree that are facts dead. Her reflection are motivated by the moral question of how a survivor can speak for and remember the dead. (339)

The moment of witnessing is the experience of the “suffering inflicted an unmitigated evil regime” (Bernstein 175). Delbo’s tears, gestures, silence, pause, hesitation speak as the reality of the catasthropic inhuman past. But once the traumatized self explains all the pain, she moves towards freedom. She relieves all her suppressed anguish, gets her pain over and becomes a new, psychologically and physically healthy self.

While remembering not only the witness but also the listeners and perpetrators may experience the traumatic pain of atrocity in the past which has been characterized as vicarious trauma, “unconscious identifies with the victim, becomes a surrogate victim and lives the event in an imaginary way, may lead to confusion about one’s participation in the actual events”

(LaCapra 125). Whereas if the listeners show empathy to the victim and postulates for the victim, maintaining a distance from the victim, it is termed as virtual trauma,

> one may imaginatively put one self in the victim's place while perspecting the difference between place on speak in the victim's voice- is connected with emphatic unsettlement . . .[It] may and even should effect the mode of signification or representation in different, non legistated ways- unsettling phenomena. (125)

Whosoever gets traumatized by the testimony, it is a temporary pain since trauma studies verges on healing act taking recourse to humanity, morality and faith in life.

To put light on the revisionist notion of Trauma Studies, the theory not only unsettles but also forces us to rethink the established notions of understanding (Caruth 4). Trauma studies distorts and subverts normativity and compells us to rethinkings and renegotiations. LaCapra boldly mentions that trauma studies provides "a forum for the voices—often suppressed, repressed or uneasily accomodated voices—of certain victims who were being heard for the first time in the public sphere"(696). The recalling of the traumatic experiece "corrupts or even threatens to destroy experience in the sense of an integrated or viably articulated life. Trauma is an out of context experience that upsets expectation and unsettles ones very understanding of existing contexts" (117). Writing in the same vein, Toreman maintains that trauma has triggered a "fundamental disruption in our received modes of understanding and of cure, and a challege to our very comprehenssion of what constitutes pathology" (333). Trauma studies exhumes the unexplored vestiges that speak for others, the silenced and the dead who would never testify, and ultimately writes against the grains of the conventional historiography.

Allen Feldman cites Seremetakis who asserts to employ "social pain as a strategy of

resistance" (178). For her pain can create a rupture between the embodied self and dominant institution:

> Submitting testimony was not just wounded people showing their scars in public but rather as an act of political and historical intervention; setting the record straight after the first time in their lives, impoverished shanty town mothers could place their discourse, perceptions, moral evaluations and experience or the same jural, normative and authoritative plane as those arbitrary way over these women. Former monological authority was now being vehemently contested and delegitimizes by black and gendered voice. (179)

Trauma Studies enable both the violence and the deleted history to restore their materiality. Trauma installs and smuggles into human rights discourse "that sorts victim and witness into positions of hierarchical observation, compulsory visibility, and non-reciprocal appropriation of the body in pain" (Felman 186). Trauma studies allows expression of "private stories into one collective story that reveals a legal hearing and public acknowledgment and validation" (Hirsch 154). Also Olick and Robbins attaches trauma studies with social memory as being "nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary [and] centerless enterprise [that] draws together the dispersed insights to differ from, challenge and reconstruct out of the diversity of the dominant discourses" (106). Trauma theory is a shelter for those who are "entirely at a loss, disoriented and uprooted" but the role and politics of memory affect the way a particular trauma is recovered (Hungerford 731).

Trauma is a special form of memory. Trauma finds its way into memory. Trauma Studies documents history in the memory and the words or testimony of eyewitnesses as "memory is knowledge from the past, not knowledge about the past" (Margalit 14). Memory works at the

> points of intersection between past and present, memory and post memory, personal and cultural recollection. Testimonial objects [of memory] enable us to consider crucial questions about the past, about how the past comes down to us in the present and about how the gender figures in acts of memory and transmission . . . while some remnants merely give information about the past . . . others prick and wound and grab and puncture, like the punctum, unsettling assumptions, exposing the unexpected, suggesting what Barthes call "a subtle beyond" or the "blind field" outside the frame. (Hirsch and Spitzer 359)

More than narrativization, it is the transmission of traumatic memory which captures not only the specificity of the wound but also makes the reader or listener of the wound think about it. An engagement with traumatic memory at the level of its affect on the mind can bring it into existence. However, memory is too personal, localized, and multi-dimensional; Memory is an individual cognitive process rooted in the experience of a past event or set of events" (152). Even Margalit claims that "memory plays a constitutive role in formation and reproduction of individual and communal identities, including national identities" (154). Indeed memory is one of the key mechanisms through which identities are constructed. "When knowledge comes, memory can also return. Memory and knowledge are one and the same thing reproduced" (Friedlander qtd. in Assmann 261). As well, "memory sites and memory practices are central loci for ongoing struggles over identity" (262). Memory is part and parcel of our identity.

Memory is essential because memory supplements our identity, the reason why we exist today. Whatever we are at present life is symbol of our identity. Meenakshi Verma asserts in her compilation *Aftermath* that "memory is intrinsically linked to identity . . . memory is widely called upon today to legitimize identity, indeed to construct or reconstruct it . . . individual and collective, and a site of

struggle as well as a site of identification . . . Memory serves as a ground for determining identity and the means for explicit identity construction" (xxxv-vi). Since we live in the twenty first century mnemo-historic age, we have mnemonic obligation and we should remember. Margalit also adds "to remember is to know and to know is to believe" (14). Remembering helps us live present free from the pain of past.

In memory "specific details are recollected from the past and applied to the spatiality of the present . . . the place in present is undercut by the radical singularing of the traumatic past" (Trigg 91). In other words, memory is the reproduction of the past in the present [and] this accumulated past acts on us and makes us act" (Berliner 201). Memory intervenes the history that is marked by suffering and oppression. It is important to remember those wounding emotions that leave "scars in the form of painful memories and which are central for motivating our political actions" (198). Memorization reproduces what has been presented as the characteristics rather than exceptional linguistics structure. The label memory aims to grasp the past we carry, how we are shaped by it and how this is transmitted. Our memory exhibits our identity, our origin and our social life in future.

Memory is guided by the social, cultural and political context. It is a social construction: "Memory is not the series of recalled mental images, but a symptom for culture storage of the past" (201). But our social history is just fake images of glorification, heroism, valorization and ultimate transcendence. Social memory is a culture that corresponds to those "community perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, values and institutions that are transmitted across generations" (202). Alexander contends that

> trauma is a social construction that it is humans' reactions to events that provide the sense of shock and fear associated with trauma. The cultural construction of trauma . . . begins with a claim to some fundamental injury that is them transmitted through influential cultural agents such as the mass media and

> religious, aesthetic, legal, scientific, and state institutions, which define the nature of the trauma and the victim, establish the relation of the trauma to those who experience it only indirectly, and assign responsibility. (19)

The cultural trauma transmitted through social institutions retrieves the memory of horrendous past despite a long interval between two destructive events. Those dominant shared memories of all modern states are responsible for humiliation. They are the records of thick ethical relation while our concern should be thin and moral one to the humankind: “Thick relations are in general our relations to the near and dear. Thin relations are in general our relations to the strangers and the remote. Ethics . . . tells us how we should regulate our thin relations . . . the connection between traditionalist and the ethics of memory is straightforward” (Margalit 7-9). There are no examples of modern history being just, fair, non-discriminating, egalitarian and humane.

In fact, collective memory is drastically selective. Certain memories live on, the rest are “winnowed out, repressed, or simply discarded by a process of natural selection, which the historian uninvited, disturbs and reverses” (Olicks and Robbins110). Historiography of minor events is often “subjected to official campaigns to silence, marginalize or deny them. The bloody story of empire has been either ignored or glossed positively” (Bell 159). Similarly, Duncan Bell contends that nationalist movements and national identities are forged, sustained and transformed. Memory is employed in contemporary social and political thought. In the same light Allen Feldman posits that

> an archaicized past is a convenient signifier that has been too neatly stitched into the dominant ideologies of the present and which does not disrupt but enforces the linearity of historical time and promotes history as teleological continuum without

> ruptures or alterity [projecting] infallible program of history as progress. (165)

Therefore, the celebrated historiography is the "damned up force of our mysterious ancestors within us and piled up layers of accumulated collective memory" (Olick and Robbins 106). It deliberately erases the small stories that construct life.

In addition to the international selection and repression in established history, comparing it with mythology, Bell asserts that

> society institutionalizes mythologies what they choose to acknowledge as belonging to their history, what to teach and commemorate, what is left aside—is a deeply consequential mechanism of inclusion and exclusion . . . they retain hegemony through a combination of conscious policy making and often unintended institutional path—dependencies and social practices. We are the products of our past, even if we are not fully determined by it. (158)

Thus, our history is manipulated and our identity is the political design of the history. The historiography is deployed into a nationalist enterprise deliberately for the political design of the history for the political purpose. History is a compilations of the inhumanities executed by the inhuman fellow humans. In short history is a "dead memory, a way of preserving pasts" having no "organic experiential relation,

> History is written by people in the present for particular purposes, and the selection and interpretation of "sources" are always arbitrary. If "experience" moreover, is always embedded in and occurs through narrative frames, then there is no primal, unmediated experience that can be recovered. (Olicks and Robbins 110)

History is pejorative, biased and elusive. Duara writes that the relationship between linear

historicity and the nation-state is repressive: “National history secures for the contested and contingent nation the false unity of a self-same, national subject evolving through time . . . enabling “conquests of historical awareness over ‘other’, non progressive modes of time” (qtd. in Olick & Robbins 117).

Such regressive mode of history can only be critically intervened and intrigued by memory and testimony although both are considered as highly mediated and appropriated and so as unreliable, fallible and redoubtable. They make real representation of the silenced, the voiceless and the repressed ones as memories not only memorize the past they also make interpretation:

> Memories are never simply records of the past, but are interpretive reconstructions that also bear the imprint of local narratives conventions, cultural assumptions, discursive formations and practices, social contexts and commemoration. When memories recall acts of violence against individual or entire groups, they carry additional burdens such as indictments or confessions, or are regarded as emblems of a victimized identity. Here acts of remembering often take on performative meaning within a charged field of contested moral and political claims (Verma xxxiii)

Memory intensifies the pain that victims experienced in the traumatic event. It unveils the jerks and loopholes that have been smoothened in the national historiography.

Memory becomes more immediate and distressing as it explicitly brings into light the fragmented reception of the past. One becomes disoriented, frightened and panicked, when the trauma / memory is retrieved or triggered. Memory makes trauma available to anyone as memory explores the past as it was in reality. It interprets past in its horrible appearance:

> [It] marks enigmatic and elusive moments out of a past characterized by disruption, distortion and internecine struggle. As such it reveals the illusions and uncertainties of unresolved disputes, unrequited hatred, vengeful rumors and unimaginable suffering, which have come to us couched in what have usually been stereotypical collective memories. For these historians, memories of traumatic events raise doubts about our efforts to represent them adequately. Issues about the power of choice in rendering images of the past figure prominently in their interpretation. (Hutton 250)

Therefore memory is not fragile and unreliable rather they embarrass suspicious history in the past. It is on the side of continuity, permanence and retentions, but memory destabilizes and subverts the narrative history in order to reintegrate into a coherent world and move towards rewriting a new history. So memory is “not to be hidden, but meant to be narrated to educate others and to document lives of those whoever murdered—recalling gives meaning to the act of recalling” (Kraft 328). Memory releases painful emotions but does not diminish it. The disclosure of painful past seemingly adds more pain but in reality, “it’s just inflicting and spreading knowledge—leading the survivors to therapeutic well-being—giving great hope” the act of remembering the traumatic past is thus normally helpful to forgetting the unbearable pain of life (328). The forgetting of trauma, however, cannot materialize without testimonies on the part of the victims.

Memory is intrinsically connected with testimony that functions as an “impossible demand, a break in spatio-temporal presence” (Rothberg 87). The exclusion of testimony detrimentally confines the historial to sources that can be "either cruelly mute, or insufficently documented biased or self-serving” (87). Life that people live at present may not be reality.

There lies life within life in case the people in particular have undergone a horrible mass slaughter such as partition in India, holocaust, World War, slavery and apartheid as well as thier sequential violence in the form of rape, child sexual abuse, racist and homophobic attacks, torture and atrocities. The accounts of trauma of such exceptional violence and historical injustice are rampant like everyday discrimination. The pain, agony and anguish of the victims and survivors remain unexpressed, suppressed and repressed. The official history is deaf and blind to such historical trauma. But Trauma Studies brings out the hidden suffering through testimony, that is, an "evidence given by person[s]" referred to as witnesses, who gain "some privileged knowlege and through first hand experience" (Frisch 36).

Testimony conveys the stories of pain and atrocity through multiple forms such as talk shows, personal narratives, autobiography, memoirs, diaries, confesssional programmes and the like. Jeshajahu Weinberg states, "personal narrative is woven into the text so history is made incarnate through the experience of men, women and children who went through the event (qtd. in Kushner 288). Testimony is "a vital personal supplement to impersonal documentary evidence . . . testimony is no longer grasped only as a datum, an empirical referent to be assessed in terms of what one already knows" (Simon and Epport 2). Each testimony places us in individual space and demonstrates our severe pain minutely. The very personal nature of testimony is the essence in which the witness portrays his or her own experience as an agent. Testimony endows power and subjectivity bringing into light the hidden truth out on the surface: "that testimony does not reflect some already existent truth, politics or ethics, that it creates the condition for its own existence and reception by constituting configuration of self, space and community" (Ahmed and Stacey 5). Testimony enhances and strengthens the neglected truth in life and brings existence to the self.

Testimony opens up the private domain to the prevalent public history. Al-Kasim contends that "the story of a state violence that reaches into a private domain is not only the story of state silence and political subjection, it is also the tale of layers and histories of a violent subjection of women predating, enabling and surviving the apartheid regime" (176). Also Kushner notes "the chaos and the rupture in the lives of the victims are lost sight of in the desire to achieve smoothness"(291). In the like manner Yeager mentions, "there is so much loss, so much hopelessness, that there has to be an abundance of holding and of emotional investment in the encounter, to keep alive the witnessing narration" (Yeager 415). The customary history creates the gaps, also called lacunae, glorifying the smooth reality while testimony exhumes the unexplored terrains from the unprecedented niche: "material remnants can serve as testimonial objects that carry memory traces from the past and embody the process of its transmission . . . through silences, whispers, and the power of his own fantasies and nightmares" (Hirsch and Spitzer 353). Hence, in a whirlpool of such hopelessness and underrepresentation testimony plays an active role to make recognition and representation of the misrepresentation.

Drawing on the transgressive nature of testimony, Simon and Epport note that testimony comprises "representations either by those who have lived through such events or by those who have been moved to convey to other what has been impressed upon them" (1). Likewise Ahmed and Stacey mark that "to testify is an imperative to speak out and to tell one's story," to charge the muted voice with sound, and to unfold the hidden discrepancies in the history. Testimony serves, as Carey-Webb notes, as "an expression of survival and loss simultaneously aspiring to human continuity, the establishment of justice, and the making of the future when memory and history are brought together in these aspirations, testimony imposes particular obligation on these called to receive it obligation imbued with the exigencies of justice" (2). Testimony is a manuvre

for a call for justice and representation of the victims, the innocents and the traumatized and the haunted ones. Testimonies of the real victims or the generation of the survivors speak out for the justice. Undoubtedly justice is denied to those who are made silent. Testimony is a means for justice:

> The official representation of communal violence . . . continues to be dominated by the picture of crowds having gone insane in the natural reaction to some provocative action on the part of one or another group, the academic understanding of riots has changed considerably. . . the performative force of these terms comes from their capacity to relocate narratives of violence and to anchor them to juridical-political discourse. . . . critiquing grand projects for building identify and/ or self, the article asks for mindfulness towards experience and forms of making the experience of violence knowable when saying gives way to showing. (Das 295-304)

Justice today has become bound up with witnessing, testifying and truth telling. Testimony fuctions for justice. Testimonial form is bound up with the duty to "represent that which cannot be lived or accessed directly, never quite available, even to those who testify to its existence. Through testimony's betrayal, the unspoken is heard so that listening becomes a kind of thinking.

In testimony art, the performative writing may be a means of bearing witness to , enacting and to some extent, working over and through trauma, whether personally experienced, transmitted from intimates or sensed in one's larger social and cultural setting" (LaCapra 136). The goal of testimony is

> to incorporate these memories into an enlarged global arena, making one room for additional, local, regional, national and transnational; testimonies about

> slavery, colonialism, genocide and subordination. These diverse sectors of memory and testimony, their role in activist and legal struggle for remembrance, recognition, restitution and justice –offer political urgency for memory and testimony—that reflects back . . . and inscribe it into today's global language of human rights. (Hirsch and Spitzer 153)

Testimony makes unknown spheres of private life known to the public. It is a call for human rights for the deprived and unrepresented ones.

For those who are not adequately represented in history, testimony, as Amy Hungerford borrows Felman, is "not simply a testimony to private life, but a point of conflation betwen text and life, a textual testimony which can penetrate us like an actual life, the text here is not only like, then but it can become the actual experience of another life, an experience that then becomes ours" (74). Testimony is a means of transmission of trauma to future generations. The society, our cultural practices and our daily activities execute the way trauma has shaped our demarcations. The act of tranference is defined as

> a return of the repressed . . . [it] repeats or acts out a past event or relationship in a new, therapeutic setting that allows for critical evaluation and change. Transference is the occasion for working through the traumatic symptom. It is an imperative therefore to recognize the symptom and the trauma as one's own to acknowledge that trauma still is active and that one is implicated in destructive effects. (Berger 576)

Transference allows rethinking of the historical loss and transmits it to the coming generations. In the course of time it helps triumph up the severity and shock of the unthinkable pain.

LaCapra classifies transference of memory into two parts: "'erlebnis'- is a shock to the

system, and may be acted out, or compulsive repeated and 'erfahing'- involves more viable articulation of experience allowing opening to possible future" that can be in the form of literature and so on (177). The literature works through the pain but it cannot fully recover the traumatic experience. As LaCapra argues, "specific memories release emotional disturbance in the form of unhealed wounds of the past are only soothed while working through the literary testimonies. . . [but] working through trauma doesnot imply the possibility of attaining total integration to the self . . . Such retrospective would itself be phantasmatic or illusory" (118-9). Although entire traumatic experience cannot be retrieved since memory is illusory, it transmits the history revealing the importance of minute details of horror of genocide.

The main function of trauma is "not to inform factually but to transmit affectively" through representation of trauma literature, film documentary, fiction, testimony, history, oral reports, diaries and memoir (Hirsch and Spitzer 155). Literary writing allows trauma to be transferred from one person to another. Literature though phantasmic and imaginary, is a beautiful site that focuses the relationship of words and trauma, and helping us to "read the wound" (Hartman 537). Fictive testimony holds the knowledge of traumatic event either registered or received from constant tropization. So what history cannot do is done by the literary tropization. The repetitious imaginary of literature about the unspeakable traumatic past written in figurative language is powerful in expression and exploration. The fictive testimony articulates the moment and makes it known to the public. "There is more listening [and] more hearing of words within words" (541). Hartman borrows from Edmund Spencer that trauma is "myrrh sweet bleeding in the bitter wound" (qtd. in Steve 122). Because testimony appeals to a human commonality that touches our heart as well as mind, there is more space for justice. Hartman claims that "the aim is to release all memories, including those latent or dissociated"

(254-55). Thus testimony does help us to redress the social inequity and functions as remedy for social illness.

The social disease of discrimination and violence persist as women experience the most unspeakable and unbearable trauma in historical event of extreme violence. No wonder women, defined as objects to be possessed, to execute power on, are the primary victims of the gross violence and gloomy inhumanity. The masculine atrocity tampers the self, identity and existence of women. In fact violence upon the women is considered as victory over the masculinity. Some women willingly choose death to save the honor while the others are forced to die during mass killing. Women are made escapegoat to save the masculine value of honor. During the time of partition violence in India, women were stripped and marched in the streets writing political slogans on their private parts, tore the womb of a pregnant women to wrench apart the fetus in the act of killing. Such horrondous reality is polished up in the highly glorified slogans of independence. Women are disproportionaterly underrepresented perpetuating subjugation by the state system. This dark facet of the barbarism is lauded with the crowning granduers of history. The testimony of women highlights the victimization under apartheid that is untold, uncompensated and unredeemable. Trauma Studies with the support of testimony in the form of the personal narratives of the women, beset them with a power-position as speaking subject articulating own past, question the state-history and resist masculine supremacy. Rather than adhering to unjust dominant history trauma theory challenges and displaces our politics and ethics. The narrative is the voice for the voiceless that redresses injurious histories and protects the human values. It is an expression of reassurance and a desire to survive. Testimony lifts the marginalized groups empowered by making them know their own histories and enabling them to undertake it themselves.

Literary texts represent the hidden, mediated and represeed reality through its tropization; "the only way to overcome a traumatic severance of body and mind is to come back to mind through the body" (Hartman 541). For example, an unresoolved shock-literature written from a political angle scrutinizes history more clearly opening a new avenue to publicity. Even the textualization of the most trivial event generates the same intensity as that of the most overwhelming. The broken narratives are the most real and necessary assertions where, "the brute, silent fact of the scar remains, endlessly repeating the events that scarred them but there is no other way to deal with that past except by telling stories, narratives that inevitably appropriate the past and help the community leave to live into their future" (Foster 746). The exploration of truth mostly gets space in testimony with its revisionist venture.

Regarding the revisionist discursivity, Emmanuel Levinas pays special attention to the Other:

> it attempts to offer a site for the hitherto ignored, unacknowledged or repressed pasts that have been margnalized by the dominant accounts of the past; feminist narrative, ethics narratives, non-heterosexual narratives. The second way literature can act ethically, is by altering its form to put the other first. In this way, dominant aesthetic and cultural forms are disfigured in order to make room for other narrative modes, other cultural forms, other 'way of telling'. It is an acknowledgement of the hegemonic into specifically 'pre-pared' cultural patterns. Hence, other past emerges through other forms, forms which have hitherto been suppressed, refused, ignored or belittled. (qtd. in Tim Woods 341)

Literature offers history as a permanent reactivation of the past in a critique of the present. The continuity of time is broken and so the understanding of collective identity is impaired. Hence,

trauma literature is an “important factor in the reconstruction of past events and a rival partner of historiography” (Assmann 261). Its vey notorious unreliability is an indispensable and integral part of resistance to repression.

Nonetheless, pure testimony is almost impossible. It is indelibly challenged by its own insufficiency. Since testimony is to bear witness to the unrepresentable, it is bound to be manipulated and fabricated. Agamben writes,

> testimony is the disjunction between two impossibilities of bearing witness; it means that language, in order to bear witness, must give way to a non-language in order to show the impossibility of bearing witness. The language of testimony is a language that no longer signifies and that, in not signifying, advances into that which is without language, to the point of taking on a different insignificance—that of the complete witness, that of he who by definition cannot bear witness. To bear witness, it is therefore not enough to bring language to its own nonsense. It is necessary that this senseless sound be, in turn, the voice of something or someone that, for entirely other reasons cannot bear witness . . . testimony becomes an act that is not predicated on the knowledge of fact. (qtd. in Frisch 50)

Although fact is distorted in history as to provide narrative cohesion, testimony is the only means that demonstrates the horrible truth of the voilence. It explores the unsaid reality of the marginalised groups such as women and children as well as completes the gaps in history.

Mainly for the women testimony strongly articulates the incomprehensible violence and human loss speaking rather than remaining silent about traumatic injustice or violence:

> As narratives unravel and memories are revised, the study of the traumatic events of the past has exposed a trauma among historians themselves—their worries

> about the nature and responsibility of their own endeavor. The task of analyzing the vagaries, not to mention the misuses of memory, has chastened the historian's judgment, and obliged them to consider the pitfalls of subjectivity in their own interpretations. (Hutton 255)

With the acknowledgement of pitfalls of national history and offering a space for personal voices and their inclusion in historiography, the unexplored truth is explored. The texualization prompts us to return to the old and very practical historiographical problems of testimony and interpretation. Undoubtedly, the voiceless gets the voice and the misrepresented ones are rightly presented. Hence, memory and testimony adhere to the political relations of trauma and offer "oral remedy for political problems" (Mowitt 294). Trauma is a transformative event that raises public awareness with an implicit "demand for justice for reparation, restitution, a setting right of the mechanisms of cultural and other kinds of representation" (Steve 103). In a nutshell, trauma theory helps not only recover the unspeakable memory but valorize it in a way that the negative experience can be transformed for future possibilities.

One such unspeakable memory is the trauma of the partition violence of 1947 in India. 15 August 1947, the day when erstwhile-colonized India waved the flag of independence, also marks a black day in Indian history for it is also a division of India into two nation-states based on religious difference; India belonging to the Hindus, and Pakistan, the habitat of the Muslims. The crowning glory of independent India is imbued with the bloody history of massive violence, heinous bloodbath, indiscriminate killings, identity rupture, mass migration, dislocation and displacement, riots, arsons, loots, abductions, rape and other similar barbarity. However, the national historiography of India, taking recourse to oblivion, has deliberately sanitized and cherished ideally the cataclysmic violence of partition as a glorious moment. The history simply

negates the trauma of the creation of two separate states. So, the partition history needs to be revisited and the borders are to be redrawn by focusing its different perspectives of pain, fear, anguish, humiliation, shame, despair, uncertainty, death and other prices that innocent Indian people specifically women and children, paid for liberty and independence of India.

The decolonization of British India brought with itself carnage and devastation of gigantic proportions. The shocking facets of the horrendous genocide incorporated the horrible attacks on women and children, including “the inscription of slogans on women’s bodies as part of the orchestrated violence against the ‘other’ community” such as “Hindustan Jindabaad” and “Pakistan Jindabaad” (Saint 6). No wonder, **“**twelve million people were displaced, one million were killed, and about seventy-five thousand women were abducted and raped on both sides of the border" (Butalia qtd. in Bachetta 569). In fact, the British Raj kicked the Indians so hard that the Hindustani denizens blindly killed each other in the name of religiosity and communalism:

> With a bare five weeks to decide, Radcliff got down to the momentous task of deciding a boundary that would divide a province of more than 35 million people . . . The departing kick of British imperialism at both the Hindus and Muslims while Dawn called it ‘territorial murder’ and said ‘Pakistan has been cheated by an unjust award, a biased decision, an act if shameful partiality by one who had been trusted to be fair because he was neutral (Butalia 65-67)

For the English Radcliffe it was merely a line in goegraphical structure but for real Indians partition was a separation of brotherhood, of culture, of livelihood and of senstiments. Paola Bachheta rightly states “partition was the culminatin point of the British colonial policy of divide and rule" (569).

O**n the one hand Partition heralded the dawn of independence and sovereignty state**

while on the other, it was an outbreak of horrondeous bloodshedding. The drawing of a mere line became a root cause for "dislocation, chaos and violence. It is outrageous to accept that Indians so naively obeyed the British that the Indian brothers killed each other as per the British manipulation, “Muslims and Hindus fell at each other because the English divided them, told them they were different people. They said if you want to be independent, to rule yourselves, you must be separate” (Butalia 263). The departure of the British Raj left the Indian state hollow and divided from within. Meenakshi Verma calls the partition violence in India is a festered wound that stinks and its memory hurts in "the head and the heart" (xix): "Partition memories are like a wound. The more you cover it with a bandage, the more it will start stinking and will fester, and the entire limb will have to be cut off” (l). Partition was the dark side of independence and for many it has been a traumatic experience of ethnocide and genocide.

The violence of partion has further been insinuated as per the design and plan of political authorities. Paul R. Brass claims that "the matter of spontaneity and mass frenzy as . . . attacks of persons from one community upon another as opposed to preplanned and organized attacks . . . there can be no massacre from the side of the populace without both planning and enthusiasm." (92). People just easily fell pray to foul trick of authority and their meagre design which consequently led to a large scale of communal hatred, violence, atrocity and bloodbath. That is why, partition violence in India mocks the Gandhian nationalism of non-violence since it is a metaphor of dead bodies, mutilated bodies and silenced bodies. Definitely, the political leaders accomplished the demand of two separate states but they never envisioned that such folly would invite the tremendous destruction and irreparable loss of life and property. In other words, the mass violence indicates shortsightedness and frivolity of the so-called highly revered leaders such as Gandhi, Jinnah and Nehru towards the plight of billions of the denizens who loathe them

at the bottom of their hearts:

> Jinnah, the architect of the 'two-nation theory', became the villain of the piece for several Indian historians. Many Pakistani historians deemed 'Hindu' leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru responsible for the failure to ensure parity and protect the rights of the minority community in the envisaged independent nation-state (Saint 14-15)

Before dividing India into two states these politicians must have an insight of the impending upheaval and chaos in the country. Just to fulfil the wish of the mass symbolizes the folly rather than honesty to the people. Butalia presents a testimony that curses the act of Gandhi who let India be divided but never did think whether partition would guarantee for happiness. Damyanti Sahgal, a survivor of Partition mentioned a woman's regards towards honorable Gandhiji in Butalia's T*he Other Side of Silence*:

> You know . . . Gandhi, he's given us a lot of trouble, a lot of trouble. That old man , he doesn't even stop for breath, he keeps telling us get out, get out. After all where will we go? Here we are very happy. Baba, we'll leave because we have to, we'll leave because we have to leave, but not before we have taught him a lesson. We 'll leave such all state of affairs that brother will fight brother, sister will fight sister, there will be killing and arson and rape, we 'll leave such a state affair behind that he will not be able to control it, and he will raise his hands and plead with god to send us back . . . send them back. And then what will happen . . . his own men, his own people will hurl abuses at him, they will give him trouble, they will say look at this mess you have got us into. (95)

The politicians decided to break a nation into two parts but they never realised the consequence;

never pondered that a state is not just geographical stature that it is an assimilation of society, culture, religion, love, care and attachment with each other.

The socio-cultural structure of the society was undoubtedly responsible for an internal demand of a separate state for Muslims by Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim league. Before Partition, although the sense of Hindu superiority was dormant, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims lived together in relative peace and harmony: "The interaction between Muslims and us was one of mutual respect and brotherhood, but we rarely shared food" (Verma 11). Hindus thought themselves superior to the Muslim and they looked upon them: "Hindus often do, practicing the 'untouchability'. . . use with Muslims. They would insist on cooking their own food . . . [never] eating anything prepared by the [Muslim] family and somehow [made] their hosts feel 'inferior' . . . This was the reason Pakistan was created" (Butalia 31). Muslims strongly believed that Muslims would never have equality within a Hindu-dominated state. Unbelievably Hindus would accept raw gifts from Muslims but would never eat cooked food. Muslims werenot dogs that Hindus had to be afraid of but the latter treated the former so badly that the demand for a separate state seemed deserving:

> If we went to their house and took part in their weddings and ceremonies, they [Muslims] used to really respect and honour us. They would give us uncooked food, ghee, atta, dal,whatever sabzis they had, chicken and even mutton, all raw. And our dealings with them were so low that I am even ashamed to say it. A guest comes to our house, and we say to him bring those utensils and wash them, and if my mother or sister have to give him food, they will or less throw the roti from such a distance, fearing that they may touch the dish and become polluted . . . [moreover] if a Musalmaan was coming along the road, and we shook hands with

> him, and we had, say a box of food or something in our hand, that would become soiled and we would not eat it, if we are holding a dog in one hand and food in the other, there's nothing wrong with that food. But if a Musalmaan would come and shake hands, our dadis and mothers would say, son, don't eat this food, it has become polluted. Such was the dealings: how can it be that two people are living in the same village, and one treats the other with such respect and the other doesn't even give him the consideration due to a dog? How can this be? They would call our mothers and sisters didi, they would refer to us as brothers, sisters, fathers and when we needed them, they were always there to help. Yet when they came to our houses, we treated them so badly. This is really terrible. And this is the reason Pakistan was created. (Butalia 72-176)

Every citizen has a right to live freely and happily and it is injustice for the Muslims to be treated as untouchable. How ridiculous it is when a dog gets greater respect than a human being! What use is that religion which commands one to treat as pure and impure, holy and polluted!

The Hindu society was so orthodox that they considered Muslims less than human as untouchables. They feared the touch of Muslim although touch is marked as symbol of love:

> Those sanatani Hindus who are orthodox, who have so many restrictions, are terrible to live with. Arya smajis who were converting Muslims called this ceremony, shuddhi. Now shuddhi is a terrible word because it implies they were napaak, ashuddh and they became paak after conversions these were unbearable words and acts for most Muslims. I myself found them unbearable. It is because of this attitude that Pakistan was created. You treat them like achut. Friends are visiting you at home and people are saying, keep their plates separate. Is this the

> way to treat people? Is this human? I couldn't tolerate this . . . Untouchability was the main reason for Partition – the Muslims hated us for it. They were so frustrated and it was this frustrating which took the form of massacres at Partition. (Menon and Bhasin 236)

The religious discrimination of everyday life forced Muslims to demand for a separate state where the decolonization of India fueled it to the worst.

Furthermore, Hindus and Sikhs always dominated Muslims for the economic reason, too. Poor Muslims worked for rich Hindus and they felt they could never get equality with Hindus and Sikhs

> Hindus and Sikhs owned land, Muslims laboured on their land. In a way, they were exploited by us, they were under us . . . For them Sikhs and Hindus were also same because they were close to each other . . . [with partition] they took their revenge. Servants killed their masters. Those servants who could barely stand straight in front of their masters abducted the women of landlords and expressed their anger. It is these sections who turned into mob. Jinnah was unable to control these elements. (Menon and Bhasin 236)

While India had the reality of untouchability towards the Muslims, the geopolitical drawing of boundary in 1947 further fueled to create the borders and boundaries in their lives. The subdued hatred hidden in socio-cultural practices simply expulgated through this vicious division. The sense of "Hindu superiority and Muslim barbarism" soared to the bloody violence of revenge and retaliation between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Partition violence prompted people to mass migration, compelled the separation from the homeland and propelled them to live with a bitter reality of exile and loss. Many cross-border

romances failed and family crumbled. One night people slept in India and the next day, they were bound to move to Pakistan or they had to migrate from one state to the next. Partition caused the homelessness and rootlessness in the innocent and harmless people. The so-called responsible political leaders never paid heed to emotional and socio-cultural attachment. For them, the formation of two independent states did matter more than the painful reality of thousand of stories of loss of home, root, and loneliness: “if political leaders and the state heaved a collective sigh of relief that things had decided, hundred of thousands of people were left with a sense of bewilderment (55). The leaders never envisioned the impending disaster upon innocent women.

Women like Somavati never recovered from the trauma. They were so nostalgic that their beautiful past would never be retrieved. Partition made their life “meager and bereft in every respect” (Menon and Bhasin 220). Partition turned out a symbol for

> loss of place, of property, of people, of peace . . . I have no country now. This is not ours. Earlier we had a home, a country, because we belonged there. Now we belong nowhere. How can you have a country without a home, a job? How many different places we have lived in since Partition! The real country is the one we have left behind. That was our real home, the home we loved. Relationships were stronger, families looked after each other. All that has also finished. Now no one cares. There is no hunger now for food, only a hunger for people gone. (220)

Thus, partition violence in 1947 left people bereft of home and security. They lived a life of dislocation and rupture. The blissful past would never be back; “with Partition, order, freedom from fear and contentment were replaced with instability, death, permanent dislocation – emotional, physical and psychological—ceaseless toil.” (Menon and Bhasin 221). People were

frightened and intimidated to remember the horrific past and tragic life during partition. Partition violence affected many innocent people out of the joy of life. Partition in India not only ruptured the Indian territory into two but cause many breakages in life. Those scars never got healed.

The worst form of barbarity took place in trains that carried numerous refugees fleeing their homeland. Everyday hundreds of people died innocently in trains. Chaudhary Mangat Singh in Meenakshi Verma's oral testimony remembers the bloody event during partition:

> Things did not take very bad turn till three trains arrived from Pakistan . . . filled with corpses . . . of men, women and children. . . It was some time in early September in 1947. One morning we were told of the trains that had arrived from Pakistan. Initially no one believed it, but we actually went and saw two trains in Amritsar. Only the two drivers and the guard were left alive in the train, maybe to let the train reach Hindustan, so that Hindustanis could see. . . we have to send a message to the Muslims that we could also kill', [people] choose to see violence as a sport, a game or contest in which the two teams must at least even the scor, if not seek to prevent the opponent from winning . . . This incident gave people reasons to pick a fight with them. Soon the fight got bloody and we took out our firearms and fired on them. It was the month of rain. These people were walking along one of the canals. As we fired, people kept on falling into the canal . . . Whoever tried to run away was hacked and thrown into the canal . . . some people jumped into the canal, mostly women. Some even jumped with their babies . . . in their arms . . . we were firing from my rooftop . . . we could see. It was the rainy season and the water of the canal was mud-colored and swirling . . . people and corpses would disappear within seconds . . . so many people died that day . .. the mud-colored water in the canal had turned reddish. (Verma15-21)

Partition turned men animalistic that the bloody killings undoubtedly satisfied their desire to kill.

The death of one community provoked anger in the other and they were determined to send the similar answer of violence. People relished their violent instinct during the period of turmoil and havoc. Attacks, plunder and murder became common phenomena:

> All the trains were supposed to have an armed escort of Gurkhas, but often the Muslims would disguise themselves as Gurkhs. They would climb onto the trains and loot everyone. . . When we reached Lahore, we were searched. Even Muslim women in disguise looted us, whenever they got a chance, they took it. Even though the first train was supposed to be the safest. . . On the way, we could not even drink water. If we got out at the station we were afraid we might be killed. (Gyandevi in Menon and Bhasin 142)

No sooner, one side exterminated the refugees traveling in a train, the other party would instantly send another trains filled with dead bodies. The more one community killed a larger number of othered peopler, the better faithful they offered to their religion. The bloody game of killings took place as revenge and retaliation so largely that as Swarna Aiyer explains

> by August 13 it became impossible for passengers to reach Lahore station because they were attacked on route; between August 12-18, it became a veritable death-trap, and in the rural areas, by August 15, nearly every east-bound train passing through Montgomery and Lahore was stopped and attacked . . . the dead and dying littered berths and platforms, and those who escaped murder, died of thirst or starvation. These “trains of death” only repeated the savagery taking place all over the Punjab. Foot convoys were ambushed, with escorts sometimes joining the mobs and shooting indiscriminately; one such convoy, nearly six miles long,

> which left Lyallpur on September 11, 1947 was attacked several times during its journey, and of the five thousand refugees, one thousand perished. (37)

The world witnessed a heart-wrecking genocide in partition. Even remembering such violence is a pain although remembering is another form of forgetting.

Almost every family member became both victim and aggressor of the genocidal pain. For this reason, people were reluctant to speak about Partition. Heera Lal in Verma's testimony contends partition as madness that drew him to stab a Muslim:

> It was madness that I agreed to this game. The man was stripped and he was a Muslim. I hesitated, and the others started jeering, 'Refugees are pathetic people. They are not masculine enough, and that is why they ran away and left their property and land.' They laughed loudly at that Muslim and me. I became enraged and plunged a knife in his belly . . . with all my might . . . there was a gush of blood, which soaked me. I stabbed him a couple of times more. And then I became scared. (Verma 47)

Partition ignited anger in people and turned them into murderers. Even murder did not terrify them. They were blood-thirsty and monstrous during the partition.

Like Heera Lal, Nassir Hussain, a farmer and ex-army man in Butalia's writing also features how the circumstance forced him to be a murderer. When our own people are tormented and killed, we never examine what is right and what is wrong. We are driven to act as per what occurs to be correct to us as it happened to Hussain,

> I still cannot understand what happened to me and other youngsters of my age at that time. It was a matter of two days and we were swept away by this wild wave of hatred. . . I cannot even remember how many men I actually. It was a phase, a

> state of mind over which we had no control. We did not even know what we were doing'. He too is haunted by remorse for the moment of madness in his life. (Butalia 58)

Our ethical values were washed away when brothers killed brothers of Other community. The madness of killing reddened the clean image of humanity.

Additionally, partition violence left no stone unturned to defame everything expressing the inner hatred in community: "the repertoire of violence on all sides included profaning everything that was held to be of scared and symboliv value to the 'other'—from pigs and cows slain in front of mosques and temples, to the circumcision of non-Muslim men, and the forced consumption of beef by Hindus- and . . . to sexually violating their women" (Menon and Bhasin 45). Even holy animals and sacred places were not spared. Partition became a conjecture of all unimaginable violence, torture, savagery and inhumanity.

An unspeakable violence, both physical and mental, was executed primarily upon women. Conventionally women are considered as inferior, servile, self-sacrificial and essentially the instrument of sexual gratification and reproduction. "Woman as a person did not count, her wishes were of little consequence. She had no right to resist defy nor even to appeal, for the act denied even that basic freedom" (Butalia 152). Women have no one to represent them, nor have they been able to collectively mobilize to represent themselves. Men always spoke for them. That is the reason why woman's body was tampered through rape, abduction, conversion, self-willed death and forced death. Violation upon women's body is a matter of pride and ego of male construction: "the men ha[ve] salacious delight and gratification of the fulfillment of revenge in the act of maiming, stabbing and bodily mutilation" (Verma 15). Women's body did not bear significance in national history.

First and foremost, a nation also revered as motherland is compared with mother or female body and tampering on a woman body is insulting and torturing mother-state. In words of Butalia,

> The country whether referred to as Bharat, or Hindustan, was imaged in feminine terms, as the mother, and partition was seen as a violation of its body . . . partition represented an actual violation of this mother, a violation of her (female) body. . . If the severing of the body of the country recalled the violation of the body of the nation-as-mother, the abduction and rape of its women, their forcible removal from the fold of their families, communities and country, represented a violation of their bodies as real – not metaphorical- mothers. (147-150)

Indeed, the entire nation is considered as mother or a woman and the rape of women is equivalent to the rape of the motherland. Furthermore, when the male disfigured the women from the other community by amputating the breast and writing the slogans on their body indicating the capture of the possession of the most private parts, they felt proud of dishonoring the other and victory of their fold:

> female bodies were equated with notions of home, their respective religious 'communities,' nations, and national territories. thus geopoliticized, women were dualistically positioned as either óurs'or 'theirs'and, acccordingly, encoded as sites for masculinist protection or desecration.. 'Othered' women were subject to stripping; parading naked; mutilating and disfiguring; tattoing or branding the beasts and genitalia with triumphant slogans; amputating breasts; knifing open the womb; raping, of course; killing foetuses. (Menon & Basin qtd. in Bachetta 571)

Women have been neglected and their bodies have been a territory to be "conquered, claimed or

marked by the assailaint" or tampered to show the victory of one sector community over the another (Menon & Basin 43).

The othered women were subject to henious act of extreme disgrace, atrocities and inhumanity. These acts insulted the "feminization of women's male counterparts who prove incapable of protection of "their women"/communities/nation" (Bachhetta 171). Hence women were not agents but means to expose the brutality and disgust of one community over the 'other'. The more the othered women were victimized, the greater relief they felt at heart but they were ever indifferent to the reality that be they Hindu, Muslim or Sikh women, the tortured was the human soul. The sense of humanity was forgotten. The sense of revenge and retaliation was so vigorous that human beings turned into monsters and saints became demons. Jagtar Singh remembers:

> The Muslims were doing unspeakable things just a few miles away in Lahore and inside Pakistan. The Muslim women were abducted and sold away. The Hindus did not buy them because of their rigidity about pollution by touch, but a lot of Sikh men did take on the abducted Muslim women as wives or concubines. I knew several people who made a fortune selling and buying abducted women. . . . There was a problem with the Hindu men. They would commit badfailei (rape) and then abandon the Muslim woman or sell her off. After dishonouring a woman, they did not have the guts to kill her. They would sell her off. (Verma 59)

Women were objects to impose men’s power. The vulnerable women were tortured and treated worse than animals.

Many women willinglychose death to save their honour or celebrate martyrdom because death, for them, was preferable to dishonour. Notably ninety women jumped into the well in

Thoa Khalsa. Likewise many women begged their male family member to behead themselves.

> very large number of women were forced into death to avoid sexual violence against them, to preserve chastity and protect individual, family and community “honour” . . . when women themselves took their lives, they would either jump into the nearest well or set themselves ablaze, singly, or in groups that could be made up either of all the women in the family; the younger women; or women and children . . . many women and girls saved their honour by self-immolation. They collected their beddings and cots in a heap and when the heap caught fire they jumped on to it, raising cries of ‘sat sri kal' (Menon and Bhasin 42).

To sacrifice their life to save their honour was a pride. In the like manner, fathers killed the female members to save the honour. Charanjit Singh Bhatia beheaded his six daughters rather than getting them married to his Muslim neighbour:

> many women were subjected to intrafamilial voilence, “forced to die at the hands of men in their own families”, because death was deemed preferably to dishonour, which, according to specific historical-contextual constructions of masculinity, required male control over the sexuality of female kin. Men deemed the murder of their own kins-women a herioc alternatives to interreligious marriage and conversation. Considering the narrative by Charanjit Singh Bhatia, a sikh uncle's six daughter to ensure their safety, the uncle 'seeme' to agree, but at night he gathered all thirteen members of his family together and decapitated them . . . he then lit their chita (pyre), climbed onto the roof of his house and cried out; “baratan lao ao! hun lai ao baratan aapniyan! merian theeyan lai jao, taiyaar ne vyahvasto, (bring in the marriage parties! you can bring your grooms now. Take

> my daughter away, they are ready for their marriages!) and so saying, he killed himself, too. (Bachhetta172)

Such was the extreme hatred of the communism that death deemed honour than conversion or contamination in religion. On the other hand, in a specifirc historical –contextual construction of masculinity, male exudes control over sexuality of female kins. By killing own daughter the father retained his own honour, renounced control over his daughter's sexuality by handing them to Other, while on the flip side, he exerted his disgust towards Muslim male protection.

Self-immolation of women thwarted the threat of women's chastity—conforming codes of masculinity and appropriate behaviour for women to safeguard honour: "so powerful and general was the belief that safe guarding a woman's honour was essental to upholding male and community honour that a whole new order of violence came into play, by men against their own kins women, and by women against their daughters or sistesr and their own selves" (Menon and Bhasin 44). The lines between choice and coercion gets blurred during partition.

The situation with the abducted women was more heart-rending. They lived with a fear whether they would be accepted by their original family. Some of them had already internalized the lifestyles. They would better live in the new atmosphere rather than going and living with the previous life. Their trauma always haunted and tormented them. Very few of them got remarried. Many of them lived in ashrams learning sewing and making their livelihood. Many of them never got retrieved.

Not only the women but the children had also precarious life due to traumatic experience in partition. Many women aborted their children. Those who were born suffered more since no one of the family would like to keep that child. Even if they would grow up, they would have no future. They had to live a forced and unhappy life:

> Many children, Partition survivors, developed severe psychological problems, and found they could not live in families . . . If such children are illegitimate on this side, they will be illegitimate on the other side too and I think it would be a matter of shame for the girl to take the child to that place. If such children are taken by the girls they would be murdered or done away with. . . Social workers said most of the children abandoned at camps were girl children, and the pressure of work made it difficult to screen potential adopters. Many young girls then ended up as domestic workers or as prostitutes, swelling the numbers of the whole generation of young girls that the writer Krishna Sobti said had been 'sacrificed' to Partition. (Butalia 192)

It is too frustrating to state that "child of history, without a history" (Butalia 129). Children who are considered as the future of nation were left of nowhere as if their birth was unwanted. Partition violence forced people to live unwanted life. Instead of filling new hopes in life with dreams of new opportunities, they were lost in the mist of bloodshed, hatred and humiliation.

Thus, partition is a horrendous traumatic cataclysmic genocide that tormented everyone and principally women. However, our national historiography both in India and in Pakistan displayed a marked silence regarding the reciprocal violence during the partition. Despite the ubiquotous knowledge of the "compulsive, destructive and pointless violence" both nation-states overtly glorified partition for their achievement of independence and separate nations:

> dominant historiographies of partition have functioned together somewhat like a chronotype . . . certain elements (dates, the deeds of 'great man') while effacing others' (subaltern subjectives, eemotion, the body, lived experience). This exclusion, paradoxically, has operated simultaneously with the public revelation of "facts" detailing some of the human and specifically gendered aspects of partition . . . itihas

men sirf aur tarikh sahi hoti he, baaqi nahi' (in the history books, only the names and dates are corrrect, not the rest. (569)

History is merely the compilation of selected and filtered facts. Official memory serves as a provocation of heroism and bravery that ignores the real discontinued small stories that constitute our life. The absence of those small stories marks nothing but just the unreliability of the national historiography.

History also celebrates death at the moment of national revolution as martydom but every death is not sacrifice. Millions of innocent people died just for the sake of religiosity and yet "neither of the two nation-states attempted to symbolically commemorate the million dead in the form of a monument" (Saint 32). The communal riots caused massacre of hatred and disgust that is still rooted in present day life. Such socio-cultural reality is a stigma to the "supposedly bloodless and non-violent independent movement" of partition of India and so is deleted from the mainstream history. Such stories have not made to the official accounts of history. "T**he millions who died and suffered the unspekable violence on their bodies as well as those who were displaced and lost their identities, had been reduced to mere statics [and numbers] in the studies of partition violence" (Verma 90). History is merely the compilation of dates.** Gyanendra Pandey argues, "that the treatment of violence simply as reflection of ongoing processes, or aberrational interruption of these, serves to normalize the violence and reduce history to a more or less generalised account of the triumphant march of modernity and progress" (192-3). The national historiography only glorifies the prevailing history and ignores the hidden nuances of painful reality.

Certainly, partition history is written from a masculinist perspective. Women are there but almost invisible. They are not provided with subject position but are projected as object of

study as they prevail in police reports and documents. History is silent about the details of violence against women.

> [N]o nationalism in the world has ever granted women and men the same privileged access to the resources of the nation-state. Moreover, as Mosse points out, 'nationalism had a special affinity for male society, and together with the concept of respectability, legitimized the dominance of men over women' the passionate brotherhood of 'deep comradeship' that Benedict Anderson talks about is an essentially male fraternity in which women are enshrined as the Mother, and the trope of nation-as-woman' further secures male-male arrangements and an all male history (Qtd. in Menon and Bhasin 110)

In other words women have been subsumed only symbolically into the national body politic. Either they are abducted or raped, or they were disfigured and insulted, they were only targeted to humiliate and dehumanize their male counterparts. The importance of women had been nullified. The traumatic memory of 1947 has been deliberately sacralised by forgetting its cataclysm as Javed Alam mentions that the trauma of partition has conformed to oblivion with the interest of the sectarian health of nation since remembering is considered "greatly misplaced and dangerous in India. Alam takes forgetting as reification as an attempt to build an (artificial) unity through the metaphysics of hemogenity" (qtd. in B. Pandey 5). T**he history is silent towards chaotic, uncontrolled, more excesive and illegitimate reality of violence.**

Indeed partition violence in India has been projected as diagram of undying heroism, valour and sacrifice negating the excessive bloodshed and savagery. Humanity and compassion had become the unheard stories. Gyanendra Pandey points out how history works to forget the nooks of violence and projects the harmony:

> a constitution of community through a discourse of violence 'out there' . . . it is denial of any violence 'in our midst', the attribution of harmony within . . . to be represented . . . as the limits of history . . . tales of . . .heroism and sacrifice of community and its members . . . [who are moving towards] silencing evidence of disagreement, denying lapses in solidarity and asserting that entire acted together to overcome the enemy, whether through suicide or through revenge attacks.(188-9)

History has simply homogenized and normalized the violence as if it is everyday phenomena. The inner sense of human pain has been glossed over. Writing in the same vein, Menon and Bhasin note the absence of discrimination in the national history, as "the abundance of political histories on partition is almost equaled by paucity of social histories" (6). They stress that

> official memory, after all, is only one of many memories. Different sorts of telling reveal different truths, and the "fragment"is significant precisely because it is marginal rather than mainstream, particular (even individual) rather than general, and because it present history below. the prespective such material offer us can make for insights into how histories are made and what gets inscribed, as well as direct us to an alterative reading of the master narrative. At their most subversive, they may counter the rhetoric of nationalism itself; may even nationalism itself; may even enable us to rewrite this narrative as what Gyan Pandey calls "histories of confused struggle and violence, sacrifice and loss, the tentative forging of new identities and loyalities. (8)

The oral narratives subvert the hegemonic representation and present the truth through the pictures of the underrepresented ones. Menon and Bhasin, Butalia and Verma take recourse to oral narratives to highlight the forgotten and overshadowed stories. **as they are the fragments to**

supplement and complete the gaps existing in national historiography. They allow the rethinking of the national historiography underpinning "the institutional structures of the state and intersection between patriarchal ideology and sexual violence directed against women by locating gender and sexuality at center" (Saint 182). Partition testimonies allow private stories to be spoken out in public sphere and hence they render the healing of the barbaric past of pain, terror and suffering. The personal narrative expose masculinist violence against women during the mass migration of partition through the projection of "shock and horror to cataclysmic violence . . . [and] a large scale inability to work through the traumatic memory of partition" (Saint 176). Trauma forces a remembering which not only knocks down the wall of hegemonic historical consciousness but also conduces to forgiveness. M**inute, broken and discontinued stories complete the sense of wholeness and bring forth the trivialized truth, break down the inherited sense of community, and render the incomprehensibility into comprehensible.**

Gyanendra Pandey also emphasizes the importance of revisiting histories by focusing on petty narratives. He believes in hearing of marginalized voices through small stories so that the slipagge of the objective history and purposive statement in history would be recovered:

> **while historian's history must be necessarily be concerned with structure and contingency at the same time, the historian needs to struggle to recover 'marginal' voices and memories forgotten dreams and signs of resistance, if history is to be anything more than a celebratory accounts of the march of certain victorious concepts and powers like the nation-state, bureaucratic rationalism, capitalism, science and progress. This is a task to which, for**

> **reasons touched on above, the historioghraphy of Partition has not addressed itself. (214)**

Popular history has always elided the history with positivism, hope and aspirations. It has misconstrued the victory as metaphor of decolonization. History is not supposed to be homogenization; it has to be coverage of representation of individuals, families, communites and nation-states. Moreover, the victimization and torture upon innocent women has been completely forgotton. Women are mistreated as objects to fulfill the beastly instinct of men by geopoliticizing their body to be conquered and ruled and inflict unprecedented range of injury .

Literature sustains the capacity to unveil the historical injuries courted upon the innocent citizenry. It has cultural freedom to travel among cultural, temporal and historical boundaries to reveal the violence rendered by authority. It even transcends the spatio-temporal dimensions and portrays the pain and suffering more vividly and rigorously by the dint of its imaginative and creative assertion. Although literature is caught between the impossibility of understanding and the problem of understanding impossibility, it claims for the identity and existence of the underrepresented and ignored voices of marginalized people and ultimately makes the inaccessible the accessible. Yusin also states that literature asserts

> a singular and irreplaceable truth about an individual's experience and memory, literature transcends historical specificity. Because of its status as fiction, literature is granted the creative freedom to travel among cultural, temporal and historical boundaries without violating the authority of experience. In so doing, literature does not simply describe the experience of history; it takes us on a journey through the occurrence and experiencing of history. When we read

> Partition literature, we are not simply reading, we are experiencing the partition through the act of reading. Stories do not simply describe the trauma of the Partition; it is also about Partition literature and the possibility of reading literature as a new kind of testimony and historiography. What happens in literature then is the unspeakable silence of the Partition that begs for meaning despite impossibility. For what histories like Partition teach us is the difficult truth that our identities are born to the other in ways more profound than we may have previously acknowledged. (458)

Yet language that itself is embedded with inability to express fully, sometimes literature fails to depict the inhuman reality that it claims to project. Some literary works are unable to reveal the perversions in sexual behavior during the partition to preserve of woman's honour for the sake of her family and her society than for herself. Additionally literary writings rather reiterate the same patriarchal and male-dominating conception of nationalism and communism:

> The experience of the partition produced a large volume of literature, much of which was autobiographical in inspiration. Most of this literature remained inauthentic, because it tried to reduce the violence to the language of feud in which violence from one side was equally balance with violence from the other. . . similarly, but the language of self-sacrifice was often used to describe events, but inevitably degenerated into a glorification of self-mutilation without exploring the generative capacity of suffering. (Das and Nandy qtd. in Khan 107)

Where the language of literature has to be the voice of Other as Levinas calls for "continual unselfish surrender to the other," the literary productions only repeat the same language of glory of independence (qtd. in 465). Beerandra Pandey also pinpoints that literature, "a mechanism for

effecting the ethical relations with the past," has been contaminated with the ideological contours of dominant culture (137). Literature is mediated with its deployment to political ends showing a "shared interest in the relationship between "trauma and the politics of historical representation" (137). Indeed the language in representation of trauma and pain is problematic in that the literary writings "remain infected by the inauthenticity accruing from their internalization of the nationalist historiography of partition, even though the history-from-below approach in these . . . historical writings prevent a full-scale configuration alone the lines of disciplinary history" (129). Rather than rupturing the ethical communism the cultural-political force of memory, the literature solidifies the notions of nationhood and community. It embodies a shockingly biased representation of community discourse of sacrifice and otherness.

The literature must not be jaundiced with an author's personal bias and ideology adhering to a particular communal prejudice. A good piece of traumatic literature, as Dominick LaCapra asserts, "instead of constructing an ideological edifice of identity politics, should help highlight the ways through which a surrender to such a politics can be avoided" (qtd. in Pandey 130). Likewise, Gyanendra Pandey shoulders this critical responsibility on "a historian who is cognizant of this process" (130). Rather than conforming to the dominant cultural politics, the literature must deconstruct the conventional parochial prejudice of popular history: "the discursivity of the literature is defined by the identity of its other . . . [rather] the work of critic of the literature of trauma is both to identify and explicate literature by members of survivor groups, and to deconstruct the process by which the dominant culture codifies their traumatic experiences" (Tal qtd. in Pandey 129-30). Indian English partition literature conforms to the popular history and reveals two symptomatic possibilities of the return of historical trauma as discourse: the language of martyrdom on the one hand, and the use of prose of otherness on the

other. When the language of sacrifice is deployed, the literature of trauma, to quote Dominick LaCapra, turns into the "'redemptive, fetishistic narrative that excludes or marginalizes trauma through teleological story'" (131). The Indian English literature internalize and reify the repeated version of tales of glory, sacrifice and heroism.

Unlike the existent literature that simply codify the cultural-political values and found a political identity to normalize the traumatic memory, the oral testimonies collected by Butalia, Menon and Bhasin and Verma question the communal identity politics itself to deconstruct the codes of nationhood and communism. The oral narratives repeatedly share and mourn the victims' painful reality. Testimonies call for, to borrow Foucault's words, "a resurgence of hidden suppressed histories that destabilize and challenge the official ones" (qtd. in Kumar 95). These gendered-sensitive narratives explore, "male bestiality and helpless female victims now lie unmasked, calling for a deeper understanding of the malfunctioning of patriarchy and the causes for such large scale sexual abuse" (Kumar 93). They transmit the specificity of the cataclysmic violence in 1947 from the perspective of morality while interrogating the ideological underpinning of the state-centered national histories. The narratives emphasize the human relations "backed by the attribute of human beings, such as being a woman or being sick" so that it would arise vicarious traumatization in the readers evoking cathartic empathy with the victims (Margalit qtd. in Pandey 131). The oral histories underscore the moral need to use the violent past as a warning to others about future survival. Morality functions as a basis for disqualifying ethics concerned with personal and communal relationships—"it is morality that provides a threshold test for the assessment of ethical relation"—which favour a community or nation over others with equal moral claim (131). The testimonies share a moral need for the hearing of the pain of nightmarish past by a moral community so that the history is revisited with the spectacles

of the underrepresented subaltern.

Testimonies exercise the nightmarish past to invoke for a bright morning of hope and dreams. Das and Nandy also present testimonies depict the most intimate stories that counters the fictive testimony:

> Orality provides a counter-balance to the rather artificial and 'close' narratives in written literature. It allows the narrators much more freedom and space to bring in issues and events which, if not impractical, would weaken the written narrative. One of the most distinctive features of orality is the lack of pressure to include 'matching' scenarios, to somehow justify or to provide a 'balance' to a particular narrative. (Das and Nandy qtd. in Khan 107)

With the virtue of freedom to delineate the most personal reality, testimonies supersede the literature that contends to read the wound. Remembering and exorcising the most haunting past of dehumanization, testimonies are successful to relocate a woman's state of being, her existence and her identity. In other words, testimonies break the silences in the women's life and allow them to lead a life of sanity, dignity and self-esteem.

Although popular history celebrate independence of states and valorize death as martyrdom, Butalia, Menon, Bhasin and Verma have unraveled the truth that "the women's martyrdom conceals the men's complicity" (Butalia 288). They project that masculine design has forced women to choose death. These writers boldly present the women's stories in their own words. The testimonies represent women, as they are, with their pain, agonies, reluctance and privilege them to subject position:

> present the women's stories in their own words and at some length, in dialogue with ourselves, and severally, with other voices but in a privileged position; the

> women are always at the centre. our narrative is determined by their sories, and our analysis made possibleby juxtaposing their versions od particular experiences with other version, official or otherwise, and with available historical records. (Menon and Bhasin 42)

The plight of women during partition lay buried in the womb of history and these oral narratives explore the 'underside' of this history — the feelings, the emotions, the pain and anguish, the trauma, the sense of loss, the silences hidden in the national glory and heroism. Their stories challenge as well as complement the one-sided conventional national histories. They not only restore the silenced history but also create a new space by bringing them to fore from the periphery. There comes the progression from "compensatory" to "contributory" history (10).

Hence, partition in India is an archetype of destruction, disruption, dislocation, upheaval, massacre, bloodshed, riots and worst of all violence. No one rejoices remembering them. Even history forgets it but forgetting is no solution. Rather the more the traumatic past is worked through, and spoken out; the easier it becomes to forget and opens new dimensions up for healing. Written from women's perspective and hearing women's voice, these oral narratives make women's private stories public and heal the hidden wounds by enriching the prevailing historiography. They mirror partition in its real facades; represent women in history; supplement the national history with women's voice and reconstruct women's space of power in the national historiography. Clearly, these narratives carry a subaltern edge.

Alluded from the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, the term 'subaltern' literally refers to any person or group of inferior rank and station in terms of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion. The subalterns are the marginalized groups and the lower classes—people rendered without agency by their social status. Since the subalterns are socially,

politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure, they continuously struggle against hegemonic globalization in order to make their own representation. More particularly, a popular Marxist-feminist-deconstructionist Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak uses the term to mean those lacking the access to the hegemonic discourse mainly the gendered subaltern--women, also defined as object and non-person. In her famous essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Spivak critically studies "suttee", the self-immolation of women in India and reveals women's dilemma of being silenced between the double-oppression of hegemonic patriarchy as well as dominant imperialism (297).

The hegemonic mainstream discourse is built on knowledge of colonialism and Orientalism that mute the representation of the subaltern. As the voices of the subalterns are silenced, they can speak through their actions as to protest against mainstream development and create their own visions for progress. Subaltern groups are creating social movements that contest and disassemble western claims to power. These groups use local knowledge and struggle to create new spaces of opposition and alternative future. One of such conscious group that launches serious debates about the history writing of the Independence and partition of India is Subaltern Studies collective initiated in the early 1980s, led by the celebrated Indian historian Ranjit Guha. The aim of the project is to promote "a systematic and informed discussion of subaltern themes in the field of South Asian Studies" and hence helps to revise "the elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work in this particular area" (Guha 7). In the Indian national historiography, only Independence and the elites leaders are celebrated and the subaltern have been absent. The Subaltern Studies project is chiefly concerned with the representation and place of subaltern in national history. The project targets the recuperation of the subaltern voices and the revision of the national historiography.

The other side of glorious Indian independence in 1947 is a gruesome reality of partition violence. The hope, joy and dream of Independence turned into disillusionment of hope imbued with a "sense of failure" and a mood of "anxiety suspended between despair and expectation" during partition (Guha xi). The projection of Independence in the popular historiography is only an embellishment of achievement while the pain provoked by the bloody riots, murders, rapes, migration and displacement has been subsided. The real and major victim, the gendered subaltern —the women and their predicament of suffering has been missing, in fact, turned into merely statistics and numbers. Edward Said states, "the subaltern history, in literal fact, is a narrative missing from the official story of India" (7). Writing in the same vein, Gyanendra Pandey contends that Indian historiography gives a "little place for recounting the experience of the event for ordinary people" (qtd. in Veena Das 18). History never runs head over the heel to make visible and audible the hidden stories of tragic suffering of the subaltern rather it always shapes India as a masculine nation rejoicing the birth of two independent states. This sort of historiography has failed to "acknowledge, far from interpret, the contribution made by the people on their own, that is, independently of the elite to making and development of this nationalism" (Guha 2). So it is necessary to recover and include the voices of the subaltern into the history of India and meanwhile to provide "an alternative discourse based on the rejection of the spurious and unhistorical monism characteristic of its view of Indian nationalism and on the recognition of the co-existence and the interaction of the elite and subaltern domains of politics" (Guha 6). Guha reiterates the need to revise and rewrite the history from the subaltern perspectives.

When Guha emphasizes the alternative academics to represent the subaltern, in "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," Spivak expresses her surprise to find the

discussion of “woman” as subject scarcely appears in the Subaltern Studies project stating that it “overlooks how important the concept-metaphor woman is to the functioning of their discourse” (26). Spivak explains that women, who signify only “exchange-value” in the men-centered power structure—for example, in the aspects of territoriality or the communal mode of power—are represented as ‘instrument.’ These power structures are based on kinship and clanship, “notion of kinship [or clanship] are anchored and consolidated by the exchange of women” (28). Women are instrumental in the patriarchal narrative and the communal ethics. Sukrita Paul Kumar mentions that “male desire unleashes itself in utmost barbaric proportions and exploits the mass hysteria of dislocation on women” (104). The physical and psychological violation of woman is an important mobilizing point for reinstating the nation as a “pure” and masculine space. Spivak hence declares the absence of agency and passivity of women who consent the patriarchal ideology in the dominant patriarchy as: “the continuity of community or history, for subaltern and historian alike, is produced on [. . .] the dissimulation of her discontinuity, on the repeated emptying of her meaning as instrument” (31). Spivak further analyzes the double effacement and heart-rending victimization of instrumental women in history: “Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced . . . if, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (287). She specifies the predicament of women as victimized by double oppression of not only the class system but also patriarchy. “Male subaltern and historian are here united in the common assumption that the procreative sex is a species apart, scarcely if at all to be considered a part of civil society” (28).

Moreover, Spivak is critical to the European intellectuals who assume to have knowledge about the "other" and pretend to speak on behalf of them: "[I]ntellectuals must attempt to

disclose and know the discourse of society's Other" (3). In fact, through this act of epistemic knowing/violence, the essentialization of the ‘other’ is always the reinforcement of the menace of empire. As Spivak writes: 'There is no more dangerous pastime than transposing proper names into common nouns, translating, and using them as sociological evidence" (4). For Spivak all the transcendental cultural logic is intrinsically imperialistic. Spivak wants to expose the complicit nature of the western intellectual elites and their literary production that appear innocent in the political realm of oppression. The intellectual elite of the Western (and sub-Western) academy pretends to be blameless in the arena of colonialism. In other words, Western thought, "masquerades as disinterested history, even when the critic presumes to touch its unconscious" (7). Spivak writes, "I think it is important to acknowledge our complicity in the muting, in order precisely to be more effective in the long run” (7). Therefore, the subaltern as a mute subject is always labeled as a dependent being whose voice is unheard. Only the western intellectual creation makes the presence for the subaltern. In other words, the subaltern is always represented, stood for or spoken by the western intellectual community and hence the subaltern cannot speak.

Spivak investigates the instrumentality of women and their situation as having no agency to speak for themselves. “Suttee” or ‘sati’ was the sacrifice of the Hindu widow who immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. This practice, which was considered sacred by the Indian society, was regarded as barbaric and later outlawed by the British in 1829. This action brought about a conflict between the two groups: foreign and indigenous—the British took their outlawing of suttee as a case of “[w]hite men saving brown women from brown men,” whereas the Indian men claimed that “[t]he women actually wanted to die” (197). Spivak discovers that, in the two groups’ respective self-legitimizations of their views of suttee, “[o]ne

never encounters the testimony of the women's voice-consciousness" (297). The Hindu widows, protected without their saying "yes" by the British, became an instrument for the colonial power to justify colonization as a "civilizing mission" (Morton 64). On the other hand, the Hindu widow's self-immolation, an exception in a religion that prohibits suicide, indicates the oppression of women within a patriarchal domination. Women, who are silenced, serve as the "ideological battleground" of the British colonizer and the Indian male colonized. Hence, the Western approach to the subaltern is either to speak for or to silently let them speak for themselves. Both strategies silence the subaltern because they ignore the positional relations of the dominant to the subaltern. Consequently, neither the West, a signifier of colonialism nor the native Indian, the savior of patriarchy could make the real translation of the discourse of sati. From this "untranslatability" between the two groups, Spivak detects the limitation and problem of representing women (300). Women are represented rather than representing themselves; they do not have their own voice and agency. Spivak concludes: "There is no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak (307). Sati is re-presentation of what sati is meant to or how it has oppressed women, but we never hear from the sati-performing Indian women themselves- thus the subaltern cannot speak.

Spivak coined the term "strategic essentialism," which refers to a sort of temporary solidarity for the purpose of social action. For example, the attitude that women's groups have many different agendas makes it difficult for feminists to work for common causes. "Strategic essentialism" is about the need to accept temporarily an "essentialist" position in order to be able to act. By investigating and opening the discussion of the gendered subaltern, Spivak "expands and complicates the established concept of the subaltern" (Morton 59). On the one hand, the South Asian female intellectuals chronicle the oral testimonies to make representation in the

national historiography, while on the other they can deploy the silence and muteness as maneuver for resistance to unveil the savagery of the partition ravages.

The partition violence in India executed its barbarity and viciousness in torturing, killing and victimizing women but women are almost invisible in history. Decrepit old men, defenseless women, helpless young children, infants in arms, by the thousand were brutally killed by Muslim, Hindu and Sikh fanatics. Destruction and looting of property, kidnapping and ravishing of women, unspeakable atrocities, and indescribable inhumanities, were perpetrated in the name of religion and patriotism. Above all, the masculine control over the sexual and reproductive functions of women, the gendered subaltern, took place in various forms of violence during partition.

Firstly, the women were forcibly abducted and raped by the men of the Other religious community. Their bodies were mutilated and stripped off and they were forced to parade naked on the street. Here male desire was considered as “natural” hence “normal” and the female body as the nature site on which this desire was to be enacted. Women were not seen as desiring subjects. The intention behind such cruel inhumanity was to humiliate and inferiorize the othered male members of victimized women so that the aggressor would feel triumphant and the vanquished would feel insulted. The women were merely the puppet in the war of male ego and religious communism. Secondly, after abduction and rape, women were impregnated and their natal families were reluctant to accept them back since they were impure. Those women were even abused by the officers on the way while returning to their home. Neither the abduction nor the rehabilitation was their choice. Women were just victims whose bodies connoted the victory and defeat of the warring males.

Thirdly, when the women had accepted the new atmosphere and (un)willingly married

the abductors, the nation devised an strategy to rehabilitate all the abducted women. Despite their grudges, the women returned to their natal homse where they were rejected or humiliated. Some women chose to live alone in ashrams. Their dreams of happy life never were materialized:

> The process of repatriation objectified them only as bodies marked by religious affiliations and placed these bodies under the protection of the state. Moreover, insofar as the state was intent upon restoring victims of crime to their families, it was again negating the freedom that these women never had. Possibly some women wanted to be reunited with their families, but not all. Neither the liberal nor the Hindu politicians could respect the actuality of the situation. (Mookerjea 150)

Here too the nation encroached the rights to choice and decision because the ideologies of nationhood have always been inescapably gendered: "the rights of a woman to decide her future course of action were taken away by the state to protect the honor and purity of the nation" (Butalia 142). Fourthly, many pregnant women took abortion as an alternative so that they could resettle. Those who had children were forced to forsake their kids with the natural fathers. This sacrifice of the mothers not only left them bereft of the motherly love, but also questioned the children's identity and citizenship. Here the intrinsic right of a woman to be a mother is denied by the patriarchally inspired nationalism. Similarly, the patriarchal notion of honour and purity also caused the death of numerous women. The patriarchal social structure cultivated the notion of purity in women so deeply that they consented suicides on their own:

> Their own notions of masculinity were those of prudent management of public occasions through restraint. . . . that one's honour had to be preserved by careful management of the narratives about one's family in public spaces was indeed part

> of the rhetoric of life. . . . one's honour is in one's own hands—all these exhortations that spiced everyday conversations referred not only to culturally appropriated behavior but also to the control over one's own narrative. Yet such is the uncertainty of relations within families and within kinship groups that appear to have solidity from the outside that there is always a precious balance around issues of honour and shame. (Das 81)

Women were the passive recipient of the command of the nation and the patriarchy. They never resisted the patriarchal domination as they had already internalized patriarchal ideology of the state. Sarcastically the honorable Gandhiji himself had applauded the self-killing of the women as courageous acts. Hence, women were the territory to court dishonor as well as to mark victory against the Other community. These stories of pain of women are absent in the grand-narratives of the Indian partition.

The grand narratives of partition violence repeat the "age-old pattern of males as actors and decision-makers and women as passive acceptors" (Butalia 142). The patriarchal discourse denies a free will or freedom of choice to women. It is either the nation or the family or the men decide for women in their every concern whether it is rape or abduction or marriage, bearing or aborting children or rehabilitating. Women are just dolls that men can use to serve their base desires and needs. Notwithstanding these meta-narratives of nation, the igniting personal narratives of critically acclaimed Indian female writers such as Urvashi Butalia in her *Other Side of Silence,* Ritu Menon and Anita Bhasin in *Borders and Boundaries,* and Meenakshi Verma in *Aftermath*, provide "radically alternative understanding of partition, with vital implications for current conflicts and peace. [They] . . . place at the center otherwise silenced subaltern subjectivities of women . . . they re-interrogate partition, the exchange of populations and

violence that accompanied it" (Bacchetta 567). These oral narratives amass the most subjective, private and individual stories of women that were hardly ever scripted in the historiography. The books are written in such deeply personal styles that highlight the emotional nature of the narrations. The horror, shock, fear, pain, tear and silence were all chronicled. The oral narratives consist the "debates on women; agency; speech/silence; subaltern interrogations of dominant historiographies; feminist research approach;" ethnic communism and representation (568). They concede the intersection of previously unheard, variously positioned subjectivities invoking a radical criticism to the prevailing official partition historiography. These authors not only speak for the female partition victims in partition, but they also critique the mainstream Western representation in which "India is often produced either as site of naturalized violence and disorder in accordance in accordance with colonial administrative discourse or in equally oppressive terms of romantic nostalgic spiritual essence in continuity with orientalist discourse" (568). The three writers directly confront violence rendered upon women shocking the uninformed Western audience. On the one hand, the oral testimonies make laudable representation of the South Asian writings in the western hegemonic discourse, while on the other they strongly challenge the chauvinist patriarchal representation of women in Indian national historiography. Bachhetta would rather call their collection of oral stories as "a new outlaw genre . . . a critical-intersubjective-feminist-historiography" (570).

The three authors personally interviewed the women victims even within their own families, moved from one recommended person to another, participated in family occasions, became friends so as to churn the otherwise negated female experiences. Oral testimony provides the women an opportunity to speak and reveal the reality as well as tactful devices of male domination. In personal narrative, a woman is

> Free to tell her own tale to anyone who will listen . . . for the first time what would come to light, should the woman's choice become public. In private, force is sufficient. In public, however, [women's] voice, if heard, would make them equal. Enforced silence and imprisonment are the means . . . Tereus chooses to protect herself from discovery.. . . to speak to and be heard by her sister. . . . the woman's power, a form of community and communication/ the specific strategy of oral testimonies main for; to speak to and be heard by . . . (Khan 98)

When women speak and they are heard, they are empowered. Oral stories empower women with subject position and enhance their ability to representation.

However, needless to say, an institutionally marginalized woman's voice is always ignored. A meta- narrative of a nation-state most often sets down its own version of selective history that consolidates and furthers its collective identity. The voices that challenge this meta-narrative, for instance, women's voices are sidelined at best and totally ignored at worst. Therefore, that alternative histories to make presence through testimonies break the selective linearity of the state's version. Women's testimonies offer an insight into the individual and subjective experience of Partition taking into account the utter devastation resulted upon women. Pakistani writer Furrukh Khan discusses arboreal and rhizomatic models of thought by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Arboreal thought, according to Deleuze and Guattari,

> is linear, hierarchic, sedentary and full of segmentation and striation, which makes it a convenient and classic mode of discourse employed by the state. It is unbending and unrelentingly vertical in structure, hence providing no space for 'diversion' or debate. In contrast, rhizomatic thought is non-linear, anarchic, and almost itinerant . . . (a) rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between

> semiotic chains, organisatons of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. (qtd. in Khan 101)

Following the rhizomatic thought, Khan suggests the employment of oral histories to uncover the violence and maliciousness carried out upon women by nation, community and patriarchy. There are very few instances of women actually talking about their experiences. The minority discourse of women does interact through subversive ways with patriarchally inspired state's meta-narrative by

> add[ing]a discordant voice to the parochial, patriarchal and elitist meta-narrative of the experience of Partition. Their deliberate assertions fill the gaping holes not just in the social, but also in the political, construction of the recent past of [nation]. . . these women take the first tentative steps to bridge a hitherto missing link to the collective imaginary. (103)

Thus, oral history has enriched the process of remembering and recording events of the past that include voices hidden from history. The erratic and disjointed memory confronts the linear meta-narrative of the state bringing into light the intentionally harnessed or ignored suffering of the chronological arrangement of historical events. Testimonies narrativize what can not be shared through reports: Sukrita Paul Kumar exclaims, "The greater the anguish of the woman, the greater the need to make this almost inexpressible pain accessible" (105). The absences, silences and different kinds of psychological deaths of women find voice in these narratives.

Oral narratives support and advocate for the existence of the Other. They teach us "about how we are defined by a profound otherness both within and outside the self" (Yusin 463). In that sense the language of testimony is also the "language of otherness" that is "so profound that it passes into the abstract. It is in other words, a language of alterity that seeks to grasp the

meaning of this otherness in the constitution of identity and in the meaning of he extensive empirical consequences of such histories" (Yusin 463). Supporting the similar view, Motsemme asserts that "testimonies are illuminating in that they not only tell us what happened, but also how and why it happened, centralizing the meaning of events" (913). Testimonies exhume the suppressed women's voices from the womb of history and make their presence visible.

Nonetheless, testimonies not only recover the mute voices, they also respect the silences, which at times, function as the landmark of resistance. Motsemme describes "silence as resistance and courage, silence as illusion of stability; and silence as a site for coping and the reconstitution of self" (910). In fact, because of the unimaginable pain, women are unable to participate fully in civic life as pain has destroyed their sense of formulating language. In addition, pain, suffering and humiliation do not necessarily only find their expression through verbal language rather they make other representations also via silence. While collecting testimonies, Butalia, Menon and Bhasin and Verma encounter certain moments of silence amidst memorization; moments of unspeakable pain and inexpressible suffering. These are the moments of survivors' impotence and powerlessness and bitter sense of humiliation. Yet for many people, silence is viewed as a gesture of resistance and defiance: "silence and invisibility becomes strategies that function to both deny and acknowledge the matter of living with everyday acts of violence" (921).

Silence is an example of Spivak's strategic essentialism that is about the need to accept temporarily an "essentialist" position in order to be able to act. As women are assigned secondary position, a space of invisibility, in a male-dominated society, their silence is their reality that they always live with. Julia Kristeva brings in the term 'abjection' which literally means cast off, away or out as a woman is abnegated and differentiated from the agency. In fact,

the lack of agency creates her existence:

> for Kristeva, abject is what constitutes the self, and also opposes it. It involves abjection or rejection of what was central to one's early experiences, and in that rejection, the self comes to re-establish its subjectivity anew. This constitution is never stable or unproblematic since it involves a self-splitting, or abjection of prior events/ experiences that may surface any time. It could be argued that an abducted woman's identity is also established through an analogous process. (qtd. in Niranjana 926)

Because the abducted women have their lives engaged (un)willingly the abductors of Other community, they were negated by the society and nation that highly valorize the patriarchal notion of purity, honour and chastity. They become 'alien' and 'other' to their own kinfolks who ostracize them, which results their continuation of their life in silence. Hence, the silence constitutes the self of abnegated women though negatively:

> The label 'abducted', for instance, marks one such dreaded domain of identification; this is an uninhabitable position, for any kind of normal social life is exceedingly problematic, if not impossible, for such women. Silence about the past would therefore be strategy whereby a woman refuses to acknowledge certain subject positions in order to forge a new self. In this sense, the notion of abjection and self-constitution makes it possible to ponder the silence of the abducted woman, who, in expunging the experience, seeks to remake and reinsert her self into ongoing societal discourses/practices . . . Put differently, abjection becomes a mode of re-sexualisation of the female body, enabling her recovery by the community. (926)

When the nation rewards its female subjects the life of abnegation, alienation, otherness and loneliness, women choose to explode silence as a strategy of resistance. Muteness speaks louder than the voice. Silence consumes voice and absence becomes presence: “Tracing these silences in women’s narratives ironically highlights what has been textually and politically repressed. These repressed utterances then produce a counter-memory vis-à-vis official ones” (922).

Concisely, oral testimonies, whether through the mechanism of silence or through the endowment of speech essentially personal and subjective, re-interrogate the Indian national historiography that silences the voices of gendered subaltern. On the one hand, the personal narratives chronicled by the South Asian female authors Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, and Verma astonish the Western intellectual society by directing confronting violence rather than assimilating the spiritual notion of exotic Orient, while on the other, these narratives rupture, undermine and revise the patriarchally inspired national historiography that annuls the representation of women’s experience in the partition violence.

Hence, to conclude, the Indian partition violence of 1947 was a moment of irreparable loss and unspeakable trauma that left Indian women homeless and physically and psychologically destroyed. The worst bestiality unfolded the different facets of victimization of the gendered-subaltern—women in the forms of abduction, rape, conversion, migration, displacement, marriage, conception, abortion, recovery, alienation and suicide. Women’s bodies were geoploiticized to express the victory and anger of one community over another. In every forms of monstrosity, the patriarchally constructed nation denied the right of choice to women. Either the men or the masculine nation spoke for them glorifying their death as martyrdom and ultimately the historiography nullified the painful experiences of women. This work carries ou an analysis of the oral narratives chronicled in Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin’s in *Border and*

Boundaries: Women in India's Partition; Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*; and Meenakshi Verma's in *Aftermath: An Oral History of Violence*—narratives that employ the prospective of subalternist feminist subjectivity to exhume the traumatic experiences of women partition victims hitherto absent in Indian national history. Using the ignored and trivial genre of oral narratives that are traditionally considered mediated and fallible, the female writers critique the patriarchal nature of the communal violence and explore an extremely subjective traumatic moment in women's lives that the history had consigned to oblivion. In other words, this work highlights the absent representation of subaltern women in partition history through the feminist perception of violence in personal oral narratives in which the protagonists are mostly women. They urge for the construction of historiography written with a concern for other and a sympathy with marginalized subaltern. Providing an alternative reading of the historical prejudices upon women, gendered bias and communal violence upon women's sexuality, the personal narratives of these oral memories re-examine as well as redraw the boundaries of patriarchal national historiography, and revise it from women's perspective, empowering their existence and identity.

Memory of Partition Violence in Oral Narratives by Women

Partition violence in India in 1947, the so-called glory of independent India is a mine of

misery, torture, humiliation, pain amidst the riots, massacre, dislocation and displacement, in other words, it is "the great convulsions of history" (Butalia 3). The homogenized history of heroism and valor has ignored women's oppression during partition and highlighted male supremacy. The stereotypical conception of women as inferior, servile, self-sacrificial and object of sexual gratification and reproduction has been perpetuated as women have been chiefly victimized during the genocide. The women's voices have been muted and their plight has been under-represented in the national historiography. Having lived with the traumatic experience of partition as transmitted by their senior family members, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin in *Border and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*; Urvashi Butalia in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*; and Meenakshi Verma in *Aftermath: An Oral History of Violence* present a radically alternative understanding of partition violence through the personal narratives of female partition victims and survivors. They posit the women- the gendered subaltern- in the subject position letting them to speak for themselves and keeping them at the centre. These writers have presented women's stories in their own words in order to "restore women to history and restore history to women" (Menon and Bhasin 9). They present women's most personal and private pain, emotion and psyche that are hitherto forgotten and challenge the gendered telling of partition. They make women visible by interrogating the women's asymmetrical relationship to nationality and citizenship. Providing history from female perspective through subalternist-feminist-subjectivity, these writers read against the grain of the traditional national history; they re-examine and revisit the conventional history; they render a separate space for women and fill the gaps created by the glossed national historiography. At the same time, as prominent South Asian female writers, these authors reconstruct partition history from the perspective of the subaltern subjectivity of the female victims.

The provocative event that triggered for the revision of national history was the assassination

of Indira Gandhi in 1984 by her own two Sikh bodyguards, which led people into madness and provoked disaster similar to that of violence in 1947. The war amongst the religious communities broke out; the bloodbath flooded away the sense of humanity and the victims were the same who were victimized in the partition violence. All three writers' grandparents lived the ravages of unprecedented partition violence and once again in 1984 the same survivors witnessed the trauma of violence. The writers realized the history that stressed the sacrifice of martyrs had elided the shocking history of bloodshed. These writers shouldered the responsibility of projecting the oppressed voices of the innocent victims—mainly the women. They projected history from the voices of the Other. Although the three writers cater to alternative reading of Indian history written from subaltern women's perspective and urge a paradigm shift of partition history, the concern of Ritu Menon and Anita Bhasin has been particularly the lonely or widowed female social workers living in ashrams, also labeled as 'unattached women' of partition, whose husbands were missing and whom their own natal families rejected after abduction and rape by the men from other religious community. Menon and Bhasin basically focus the upsetting plight of women who suffered abduction, rape and recovery. On the other hand, Urvashi retells the horrific experiences of many female partition survivors along with the memoirs of her own mother, maternal uncle, grandmother as well as children, dalits/untouchable women though her research confines to Punjab. Whereas Meenakshi Verma interviews victim/survivors from different social strata—a desperate mother losing her son, a prostitute, a woman with mutilated body, refugee and a hijra—a third gender. Despite the difference in the interlocutors to share traumatic experiences, all three writers offer an agency and subject-position to women to portray their history textured with bloody violence and thus revisit the prevalent patriarchal national history.

The national history of partition violence simply negated the victimization of women and

elided the life-stories of women. History only commemorated the sacrifice and martyrdom of women to achieve two secular states and forgot the unsettling destruction and the gendered and ethicized violence that functions as constitutive of national identity and ethnic nationalism. Death was valorized as the requirement for the existence of two autonomous nations. Because the Indian supremacy was rooted in patriarchal ideology based on male supremacy and a legitimization of women's oppression remaining unchallenged and unchanged, violence against women perpetuated during partition. When religious diversity became dominant, women were chiefly tortured and exploited as the patriarchal social structure conventionally treated women as emotional, weak, nurturing and submissive. As a result, in partition, women were abducted, raped, converted and killed; their bodies were violated wherever possible either in public places such as markets, holy places such as temples or gurudwara or trains or in their own homes. Violence took the most heinous form in partition. Mainly the women belonging to Other community were subject to "stripping; parading naked; mutilating and disfiguring; tattoing or branding the beasts and genitalia with triumphant slogans; amputating breasts; knifing open the womb; raping . . . killing foetuses" (Bachhetta 571). Patriarchal ideology is responsible for the oppression of women. But the celebrated national history nullified those suppressed voices of women. Their death was transformed into the mere statistics and treated as the requirement for the revolution:

> Official history has stored statistics of numbers of migrants/ refugees, rapes, murders, etc. also, there are records of political debates and positions of leaders regarding the partition in the country. [It was the moment when] the gory reality [and the] . . . gruesome past, especially when the present urgently required their full energy to construct not only new homes but also a new identity. Amnesia served as a survival strategy. . . . millions of people traumatized into silence found voice in

> the writer's use of memory that negotiated the present, in the light of the past. (Kumar 35)

The patriarchal structure and gendered social construction were the reason for the absence of marginalised voices. To present the women and their prdicament is to reveal the flaw in manhood—thier inability to protect the honour of women. Contradictorily men have written history to rejoice their patriotism and devotion to preserve the honor of motherland. Men would never unveil thier own impotency rather than simply forget the pain of women. But Menon and Bhasin, Butalia and Verma have vividly projected the parochial patriarchal ideology of nationalism and communism that victimized innocent women and muted their voices as well as the effiminated characters of so-highly applauded men.

Menon and Bhasin offer agency—subject position to women victims of partition violence to share the most personal experience of the cataclysm. National history was constructed as per the design of male leaders to preserve the ideology of patriarchy. In fact men never considered women as human beings rather they treated women's body as a terrirtory to play a bloody game of reprisal and retaliation. They took women's body for granted and executed the severest torture on them. It is patriarchy that forced women to suffer silently. It is again patriarchy that helped men to be monsters. Nation too was silent and the politics was corrupted, unable to ascertain the safety and security of its female subjects. The brutality inflicted on women by men of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities left them in perpetual mental and emotional disturbances. But in the oral narratives, Menon and Bhasin allowed freedom to tell the women's history in their own words respecting their speech, silence and gestures. These collections of personal history juxtapose the official history and unsettle the notions of patriarchy that allocates the men to protect the honour of women in their family.

The notion of honour prompted men to violate women both physically and emotionally. The

victimization of women by the men of Other community often tormented and humiliated **the men psychologically** throughout their life. Because the physical violence of women directly asserted the identification of Other predator community in thier body, men felt insulted at their failure to protect their own womenfolks. Women's body was a site where men of one community challenged the manhood of other community. As the patriarchal ideology of purity set women's body either to be preserved or conquered, the aggressor men felt superior to leave permanent mark on women's body of other community indicating the pollution and appropriation of their body. Partition became a foul play of revenge and retaliation and women were the mere puppet in their bloody game. Men in one community took revenge upon the other by exercising territoriality over women's body. Unfortunately, it was always women at the receiving end. They were killed by their own families and a large number were forced to commit suicide to protect the ‘sanctity’ and ‘purity’ of religion. Having treated women as sexual objects and patriarchal belongings by both the state and their relatives, history has been spiritually unjust and cruel to women.Women had to sacrifice their lives to perpetuate and preserve the masculine honour but they were never allowed to confess that the sacrifice was not thier choice. History as well as conventional literature maintained certain silence around inhuman male violence that turned female bodies as objects for inexplicable physical and psychological dismembering, on the contrary, the oral narratives set the women to retell their stories: "partition narratives . . . with a conscious focus on women protagonists, help us towards a sensitive mapping of the inner terrain of the female psyche” (Kumar 94). The narratives have brought women at center as protagonist to ascertain their space the religious communalism had denied them.

The testimonies record the personal stories of the unacknowledged experiences of suvivors of partition violence. They make critical and conceptual intervention in charting the complicated situation of women as victims as well as agents for action. Sharing the subjective and confessional

realities, the writers expose different dimensions of same experience and question the prevailing delineations. For instance, religiosity and communalism were highly spirited. The nation was indifferent to the pangs of victimised women. History had to mark that a nation was not only configuration of men's heroism but also of female sacrifice and contribution. Moreover, women's body has been compared with nation-state or motherland and the conquest over female bodies refers to conquest or domination over nation. Even the separation of India into two nation-states is frequently compared to dismembering parts of motherland:

> the woman's body sexually abused by the rival community in the Partition riots becomes a representation of the fallen nation. Through the initial accentuation of the chastity of Hindu women as a marker for the superiority of Hindu culture, together with the later expulsions of women in contact with the other, the chaste woman's body functioned metonymically as the integrity of the nation. 'Nations are symbolically figured as domestic genealogies." . . . the purity of the family mirrors the purity of the nation, and the raped woman cannot be the vehicle of the familial metaphor that enables the narration of the nation.' How women's citizenship in the nation is contingent not only on residence in the right country, following the right religious faith, but also, on their possessing the right (i.e. inviolate) body. . . Death, national honour, patriarchal values, and communalized identities conjoin here with nationalism that celebrates murder and suicide. Furthermore, Gandhi's views here implicitly sanction and rationalize violence as patriotism by interpreting women's chastity as the reservoir for national honour and their deaths as the articulation of their free choice. (Mookerjea 149)

But the patriarchy forgot that the violation of women's body is more than geographical division of motherland. The condition of women during partition riots was so much vulnerable that they threw

themselves into burning houses to escape molestation:

> Their women that in both the communities, women were either forced to commit suicide to pre-empt the humiliation of getting sexually assaulted and dishonoured, or they were actually murdered . . .all this male savagery used the woman's body as an easy site to dishonour the other community. Ironically, to safeguard their self-respect, the members of the target community too, preferred to kill their women (Kumar 98)

In addition to the horror of self or enforced immolation, there was the horror of abduction, too. The traumatic experiences of forced abduction, rape and unwanted marriage that ruined the lives of thousands of women were more painful than any of the other violent activities that occurred in the wave of partition.

After the physical violation and vicitmization of women the vulnerable women had to undergo even more unbearable situation. They were considered impure and were regarded as black spot in the honour of their community. The situation turned more horrible when women were tormented both by the foreigners and kinsfolk from own community and family. Women were abused as a means to vent out their anger towards other community. Most often, they were abducted, raped and converted by the outsiders who were different from them in terms of religion and caste. After molestation, they were left out and got stigmatized. The women were forced to commit suicide because their families who at priori had reported their missing were not in the position to accept them any more. They believed their daughters were polluted by the men of Other community. Their reluctance to accept these women back showed that the tortured women were thought to be a huge burden, for they had been defiled and had become impure beings in the eyes of their relatives. Even at this juncture of life, women committed suicide again. Women were vicitimized in different ways

firstly by foreigners and then by own people. Both forces compel women to commit suicide. History failed to acknowledge the compulsive suicide and sanitized their death as martyrdom whereas Menon and Bhasin underscore the emasculation of nation and its male designers

Menon and Bhasin bring forth the testimony of Bimla Bua who explains the abduction and rape of seventeen year old girl who was subsequently thrown into river by her own brothers and husband:

> Then they caught hold of a beautiful 17 years old and her sister who wouldn't let go of her hand. They dragged them for a long distance and girls kept calling out, 'Bacha, bachao . . .'the two girls already there . . . Night fell, they kept raping the women, then dumped them. Divided up the gold. They wouldn't leave the 17 year old and she decide she would commit suicide. But how to kill herself? She asked for a rope—but where to get it from? Her brother and husband then got hold of a scarf and decided they would strangle her with it. They were unarmed and helpless. She survived, despite their efforts to strangle her all night. During this she fainted, and in the morning they decided to throw her in the river. We didn't try to stop her—we, too, thought we would do the same, but we had the children to think of.
>
> The next day they took her to the river, accompanied by the *kabailis* who kept saying, 'Give her to us, we'll restore her to health.' When she stirred and opened her eyes they tried to catch hold of her. Her brothers and husband then picked her up and threw her into the river. (52)

So innocent were the women like this girl whom men brutally violated her honour and vis-à-vis destroyed her existence. Was it necessary for the men to molest women to vent out their anger while they were demanding a separate state? The nation and its male subjects were directly responsible for

such violation on the bodies of its female subjects. The men simply forgot that women also had life and they felt pain when they were tormented. Women's existence had been nullified or rather commodified in the bloody madness of partition. Women were pawns in the construction of each nation and state. It is unfair for the nation and its history that mark invisibility of women when the independence itself was an outcome of sacrifice and victimization of innocent women.

The victimization of women in the partition also ended the dreams, desires and aspirations of young women like Taran who wanted to live life fully, wear beautiful clothes and remain cheerful but partition brought an end to all those expectations:

> We would listen stealthily and overheard them saying that all of us should be locked up in a room and burnt alive . . . Muslims had done to the women, raped and killed them. The ones who escaped and came back were in such bad shape—disfigured, mistreated. They felt it was better to kill their women than have them go through this. Should I tell you what I felt when I heard this? I loved life, was in love with it. And I saw death staring me in the face. Just a few days earlier there had been a wedding in the family and we all had new clothes made. I started wearing a new suit everyday, along with all the jewellery. I would dress up and call my friends over. I was going to die anyway, what difference did it make? . . . why shouldn't I wear all my nice clothes now? Why should someone else wear them when I'm dead? (47)

Partition left women in despair. They had to expect death before the real arrival of death. Partition was nothing but the death of life, happiness and dreams. Some mothers would disfigure their young daughters who were attractive by smearing ash or mud on their faces to prevent them from victimization. Partition let women do unimaginable things since it was another name of cruelty and

barbarity upon women. Indeed "Partition produced a colossal tragedy that changed the destinies of vast numbers of people living in the subcontinent" (Datta 2229). Menon and Bhasin declassify the bloody facets of gory violence through a construction of corrugated history which articulate the angst and anguish of women.

Another reason for the death and exploitation of women during partition violence has been the patriarchal ideology of honour. The concept of honour itself is a male social construction of nation. Women must maintain their honour. They are not to be defiled. They need to be clean, chaste and pure. Women internalize the patriarchal concept of honour deeply comprehending better to die than to be dishonoured:

> Through the initial accentuation of the chastity of Hindu women as a marker of the superiority of Hindu culture, together with the later expulsions of women in contact with the Other, the woman's body functioned as a frontier safeguarding the nation and the community's collaborative interests . . . the purity of the family mirrors the purity of the nation, and the raped woman cannot be the vehicle of the familial metaphor that enables the narration of the nation. (Mookerjea 39-40)

The ideology of honour is highly sanitized. The responsibility of men is to preserve their honour of women. A man must save his woman's honour; a father must preserve his daugher's chastity and a brother must protect his sister's purity. Their failure to preserve the honour of the women is regarded as their insult. Such concepts intimidate both men and women in the community. Due to such social thoughts, men manipulated women as vulnerable and wherever the occasion was found, men violated women sexually during partition. Women's body became an easy site to dishonour the Other community. In case men could not save them and if they were defiled, they had to die. Ironically, women were doubly subjugated. Sarcastically enough, women had to die before they

were molested to prevent molestation and they had to die even after they had been violated. By either way, women were the victims. Thousand of women died and became homeless. Violation of women's body became a symbol of men's triumph and ownership that Menon and Bhasin strongly depict in their collection of testimonies.

Appropriation of the reproductive power of their kinswomen germinated a sense of humiliation that forced men to kill their own wife, daughters, sisters and themselves as presented in Menon and Bhasin's testimony of Charanjit Singh Bhatia whose father Mangal Singh killed seventeen women in his family and he himself committed suicide:

> He had six daughters, all of them very good-looking. He was well-to-do and also had very good relations with his Muslim neighbours. They told him to give his daughters in marriage to their sons-- that way, they would all then be related and his family's safety assured. they could continue to live in the village without fear. he kept listening to them and nodding, seeming to agreee. that evening, he got all his damily members together and decapitated each one of them with his talwar, killing 13 people in all. he then lit their chita (pyre), climbed on to the roof of his house and cried out; *"Baratan lai ao! hun lai ao baratoan apniyan! merian theeyan lai jao, taiyaar ne vyah vaste!"*(bring ont he marriage parties! you can bring you grooms now. tkae my daughters away, they are ready for their marriages!) and so saying, he killed himself too . . . [Partition] was a terrible time, people were made to do terrible things. (48)

Truly it is unbearable for a father to kill own daughters just to safeguard their honour. Menon and Bhasin assert that it is mainly the patriarchal idealogy of honour and purity that victimized women. Male ego would be splintered when men of Other community sexually violated their womenfolk.

Women's bodies were territorialized either to be conquered or to be preserved. In the game of male supremacy women were merely their quary.

Ironically, men glorified their killing of their own female family members as the only alternative to protect women and their honour. By killing women before their vicitmization, men had become saviour to the women as Dr. Virsa Singh proudly remembered that he shot 50 women personally:

> Virsa Singh claimed he had shot 50 women personally. First he shot his own wife because the Muslims came to get them . . . all the women into he neighbourhood gathered around saying “viran, pehle mannu mar, pehle mannu maar”. (brother, kill me first). Some would push their daughters forward, saying, “shoot her, put a bullet through her now.” He says he just kept shooting and shooting. “they kept bringing them forward I kept shooting. There was shooting all around. At least 50 or 60 women I shot- - my wife, my daughter, mother . . . I wasn’t a murderer, I was their saviour. (49-50)

Sardonistically, Menon and Bhasin underpin that by fiegning murder as protection, men were hiding their own weakness of failing to protect thier women from the enemy. They were just saving thier manhood. In fact. a man has a duty save a woman but if another man appropriated his woman, it was worse than self-murder. To prevent that humiliation they either killed their womenfolks themselves and told the women to kill themselves before their violation by the men of the Other community. And the women had ingrained the male ideology of honour so deeply that they simply obeyed what their menfolks said. Thus Menon and Bhasin indict patriarchal nation that persuades women to sacrifice their live for the prestige of Hindu honour.

Moreover, the patriarchal construction of society has taught women to die rather than to

submit to other men. Women themselves internalize that they must be chaste and clean. Only their relation to legal spouse was valid and the rest would defile their character. So death was more preferable to women during partition than conversion and abduction. Women carried opium or poison for immediate death. They would set the pyre and jump into the funeral fire, they would drown themselves in wells. Daughters would beg their fathers and brothers to get them killed first. The fear of stigma compelled women to choose death:

> how many of them have been forced to die- at the hands of men in their own families, or by their own hands, poisoned, strangled or burnt to death, put to the sword, drowned. It was made abundantly clear to them that death was preferable to "dishonour", that in the absence of their men the only choice available to them was to take their own lives . . . notions of shame and honour are so ingrained and have been internalised so successfully by men and women may quite easily be considered a 'willing sacrifice' even by women themselves . . . many women lived with the fear that each day may be their last and carried their poison packets around their neck. (46)

Definitely women internalised the concept of honour so deeply that they willingly sacrificed their life. They never regretted their death for it was saving their honour and avoiding thier abduction, rape and conversion. Women retained their silence, suppressing the pain in their body even though they lived with the mark of torture in their bodies. And the national history portrayed their sacrifice as martyrdom.

Hence Menon and Bhasin critique the concept of martyrdom was nothing but a lame excuse to hide the feminization of the women's male counterparts who failed to protect the honour of own women. A girl is always subjected as the 'other'. She is always denied freedom of choice. She is

forced to choose death to maintain the honour of the country but men always justify women's suicide has been their own choice. The repeated remarks of Iqbal when the women committed suicide to prevent sexual violation, "the decision was theirs" show that men were defending themselves from the accusation of failure to protect the women (56). Women sacrificed their lives and men projected the event as valour and heroism.

Menon and Bhasin present the historical event in Thoa Khalsa where ninety women drowned themselves to save their honour. These women inculcated the patriarchal thought of chastity so deeply that they would rather die than get defiled:

> very large number of women were forced into death to avoid sexual violence against them, to preserve chastity and protect individual, family and community "honour". . . when women themselves took their lives, they would either jump into the nearest well or set themselves ablaze, singly, or in groups that could be made up either of all the women int he family; the younger women; or women and children . . . many women and girls saved their honour by self-immolation. They collect their beddings and cots in a heap and when the heap caught fire they jumped on to it, raising cries of 'sat sri skal' . . . and the story of 90 women of Thoa Khalsa (Rawalpindi) who jumped into a well on March 15, 1947, is too well known to bear repeating. (42)

Women had cultivated the patriarchal concept of honour and they proudly accepted death. Butalia has presented the same incident of suicide by drowning into the well in the words of Bir Bahadur Singh Bhatia who witnessed the same incident in which women jumped into a well to take their own lives so that they would not be abused by the men of Other community.

> Mata Lajjawanti, who was also called Sardarni Kaur, she said two words, she

> jumped into the well and some eighty women followed her . . . they also jumped in. The well filled up completely; one woman whose name is Basant Kaur, six children born of her womb died in that well, but she survived. She jumped in four times, but the well had filled up . . . she would jump in, then come out, then jump in again . . . she would look at her children, at herself . . . till today, she is alive. (164)

Where history valorize the death of women, Menon and Bhasin criticize the patriarchal bias of women chastity, honour and purity had directly or indirectly forced the women to make such decision. Bir Bahadur Singh in Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence* mentioned how his father killed own daughter Maan Kaur:

> My father then killed him. He killed two, and the third was my sister, Maan Kaur . . . my sister came and sat in front of my father, and I stood there, right next ot him, clutching onto his kurta as children do. I was clinging to him . . . but when my father swung the kirpan (vaar kita) perhaps some doubt or fear came into his mind, or perhaps the kirpan got stuck in her dupatta . . . no one can say. It was such a frightening, such a fearful scene. Then my sister, with her own hand she removed her plait and pulled it forward . . . and my father with his own hands moved her dupatta aside and then he swung the kirpan and her head and neck rolled off and fell . . . there . . . far away. I crept downstairs, weeping, sobbing, and all the while I could hear the regular swing and hit of kirpans . . . twenty-five girls were killed, they were cut. (163)

Partition was the horrible moment when fathers boldly killed daughters to save their honours and daughters had consent on their father's decisions. Menon and Bhasin disclose that although such steps seemed their choice but factually they had cultivated the masculine specificity of honour so

deeply that they felt compulsion of self-immolation as their choice. The national history described partition as glorious sacrifice in coherent master narrative incorporating “many singular voices into a whole but women remember it differently” (Menon and Bhasin 55). These testimonies are space where women became the real women without the manipulation of male consensus. Similarly, Butalia also depicts the pain of women in the men’s fabricated stories:

> So much violence, so much pain and grief, often so much dishonesty about the violence . . . killing women was not violence, it was saving the honor of the community; losing sight of children, abandoning them to who knew what fate was not violence, it was maintaining the purity of the religion; killing people of the other religion was not murder, it was somehow excusable. (284)

Thus, the oral narratives explore the unexcavated reality of women's volition and reluctance to die. Their silenced voices have been given space to be heard and thus women's position has been empowered in these testimonies. The orality ruptures the linear projection of history to render realistic understanding of partition. The testimonies identify the flaw through the subjective articulation of agonising experience of loss as well as the inhumanity in the domestic life of women whereas the history smoothly cherishes the glorious historical moment. Hence, Menon and Bhasin testify how even in women's choice of death they just perpetuated the inherent masculine interest that history feigned to be indifferent.

Despite the charismatic valorization of martydom of women that the testimonies explore that not all women had volition to die some of them resisted to dieMenon and Bhasin present the story of Mangal Singh's sister who denies to take poison:

> Only three women stood firm and refused to kill themselves or their children, despite the fact that packets of poison were ready for them all. "No more," they said

> "we're not going to kill our children." One aunt (Veeran) refused to take poison or give it to her 13 year old daughter, in spite of the menfolk urging her to do so. Later she justified her for the men if they survived", but she was made to feel ashamed of her "cowardice", her lack of courage in embracing her death. (54)

The patriarchally-motivated society elided the rejection and resistance of women to die because the history would be more fulfilling if it would sing the songs of sacrifice, heroism and martyrdom. But the oral narratives present the hidden nuances of life that history ignored. Butalia also presents an event with Prakashvanti whose husband hit her on head so that she would die and the other men would not pollute her. Lucky that she just fainted and survived:

> When Partition began to seem like a reality, Hindus from her village gathered together in the local rice mill for safety. Shortly afterwards, the mill came under attack, and the attackers began to loot the place. Prakashvanti's husband came to her and suggested he kill her, else, he told her, 'they will dishonour you'. She remembers little after that, except that she was hit by her husband, and she lost consciousness. The attackers clearly left her for dead and, later, when she recovered, she and two girls hid behind some sacks, waiting for the attackers to leave. Later, Prakashvanti found the body of her husband, and her child lying with many others. Did she not feel anger at him, I asked her. She said: 'what could he do? He was alone.' She did not defend her husband, but she did attempt to explain what she saw as the 'logic' of his action . . . But for those who recount these stories today as stories of heroism and valour, of sacrifice and honour, there is another, more realistic agenda. (170)

Although women in general submitted to normalising discourse of men, not all women were submissive. Every woman could not suppress the love for life and some of the women even resisted self murder. Thus choice of death was not always real choice. Men force women to die and submissive women conformed to thier commands. The personal narratives have revealed the confusion between choice and coercion among the women. Sarcastically Bir Bahadur Singh Bhatia rightly said, "Partition is how families tried to barter their daughters for freedom" (50). Partition is gendered telling of violence in heroic mode. National historiography constructed by men valorized such death as martyrdom. History transformed the vulnerability into heroism and bruatality into martyrdom, negating the impotence of male responsibility to save the honour of women.

Like abduction, rape and suicide, the recovery operation was also an agenda of the patriarchal nation that suppressed the women. Another day that national history celebrates is 6 December 1947 when two newly formed nations, India and Pakistan, came to an agreement to recover the abducted women and rehabilitate them in their native place. Here, the act of recovery means to bring back the women, who had been taken away by other community, to their own community where the concept of belonging and otherness for women, indeed was defined by the men of respective countries, women themselves did not have a choice. In fact, Menon and Bhasin dig out the reality that although the recovery operation was intended to shield the women's happiness, it absolutely went against their will and choice.

From the perspective of abducted woman, the recovery operation was the double dislocation, a repetition of trauma. When women were abducted, in course of time, they had some how managed themselves in the new environment, but after that in the name of recovery they were ordered to return to their earlier place. Such act once again questioned their identity as it reminded them of the terrible violence they had faced. Women were not subject agents who could decide on their own.

Indeed decisions were imposed upon them and they had to act as per the words of men's decision. Women were denied of their agency, subjectivity and identity. Women in partition were faced with dominant conceptions of where they should be and where they should belong. Partition taught women to live with thier gendered identity and existence.

The decision to recover and rehabilitate the abducted and unattached women was truly another facet of subjugation to women. Even the expression of Gandhi and Nehru was a ploy to continue the conventional masculine practice. The patriarchal consensus of the women's purity becomes explicit in Gandhi and Nehru's notion of purification of women: "[J]ust as a flowing stream purifies itself and is washed clean of all pollutants, so a menstruating woman is purified after her periods" (Menon and Bhasin 100). The deployment of menstruation as purifier in this crisis situation is quite ironic in light of upper caste Hindu notions. Menstruation is generally viewed as shameful and unholy practice but the same mark of pollution becomes the determinant of purity of women during mass recovery of partition victims. The orthodox patriarchal Hindu society denies the system of premarital sex and remarriage but during partition, the same conventional society ignored all these social taboos and organized mass marriage. This is ridiculous that patriarchy changes its norms frequently as per the requirement. It means patriarchy itself is not stable that expects the stability in the stereotypical gender roles. It changes its values for its betterment and its victims are just the women. Patriarchal ideology is responsible for the oppression of women.

But the irony with recovery is that it could not settle the women who had to live a fallen life afterwards. Treating the abducted women as victims the state in some cases redoubled their sufferings. Nation functioned at database to recover the women-- they did not bother where and how the women were living. Whether women had interest to live or not, nation totally negated the freedom of women and forced them to rehabilitate. Questions of the women's security or well-being

were of little consequence- whether they made their “home” in brothels or orphanages was irrelevant, the state was only concerned with ascertaining that these new “homes” were located in the right country. The process of repatriation objectified them only as bodies marked by religious affiliations and placed these bodies under the protection of the state. Moreover, insofar as the state was intent upon restoring victims of crime to their families, it was again negating the freedom that these women never had. Possibly some women wanted to be reunited with their families, but not all. Neither the liberal nor the Hinduist politicians could respect the actuality of the situation. (Mookerjea 151)

The women were important only insofar as their recovery and their return to the place where they belonged, a belonging that was determined by the state. It was nation's hypocrisy to materialize the state’s claim regarding protecting its citizens.

Another ridiculous task of the government to rehabilitate the abducted women was deployment of symbolic element of the epic Ramayana in which Rama accepted back Sita although she had been kidnapped by Ravana for many years. The legislators claimed: “As descendents of Ram, we must bring back every Sita that is alive” (Butalia 178). Here Ravana represents hypersexual Muslims while Rama stands for Hindu male honour that is determined by Hindu male control over Hindu women (Sita). The legislative of the nation was again highly masculinist, serving and preserving the interest of masculine national interest.

Nonetheless some of the women had certainly been advantaged for recovery operation had got them resettled as they were remarried and they led happy life forever. A Hindu woman was kept by a Muslim Inspector who was married and had three children. In fact her own father had left her with him. She did not wish to return because her own parents had bartered her for their departure to India. Kamlaben Patel brought her back to recovery and got her remarried. She was happily settled:

> She got married later, but not in Pakistan, obviously. We did it in Amritsar afterwards, with the proper arrangements. The boy got a posting to Simla after a transfer from Pakistan. Her parents also came to the wedding. Five or six of us, friends, got together and arranged a tea party for her. (Menon and Bhasin 79)

With the efforts and dedication of female social workers, many women were resettled. Their dreams of happily married life materialized however. Yet not all the victimized women were rescued or resettled.

Another interesting reason for the acceptance and resettlement of women indicates domestic violence to women. After mass migration, refugees remained without women. Their houses were not clean and domestic chores were undone. Because there were no one to do household works, they took their women back:

> For the people had come from there as refugees, they did not have any money. They did not have a woman to do the housework – a housewife. But there was a woman available. So forget everything, let's take her. They accepted them out of helplessness, not out of broadmindedness. It was not so important for the muslims because they didnot think of the woman as impure, but the Hindus did. With Muslims there was no problem about women's impurity and they hesitated much less when taking tham back. (77)

Here too women had been taken for granted that women were to serve male desire, to make their life easy and help them. Women were not considered worthy to be valued. Women were devalued one way or another.

During recovery operation women had to undergo another form of violation from the police officers. More traumatic was the life of those women who were abducted by the officers who came

in the guise of saving the women: if so how could and why should women trust men? Men turned animalistic while the entire country underwent an impossible rupture. They had an insinuous fear whether the so-called helpers were real helpers or the plunderers who came in the guise of police officers. Similarly, Butalia quotes Anis Kindai whose husband was killed during partition riots in Mussorie while he refused to leave his office and employees. She explains how girls were victimized from one person to another, for one officers to another as if they are good stuff to please them. “It was complete helplessness, they had been transferred from one set of butchers (kasais) to another . . . what could they do?” (92) Girls were victimized from one person to another, for one officer to another as if they are good stuff to please them. After being kicked off by several male hounds, the girls finally would find one abductor who would marry them as rescuer and would settle with them.

Partition was political obfuscation causing rupture to the Indian continent but the real victims were the women. Partition tore the life of women into irreparable pieces. Seriously women themselves had internalised the fear of being dishonoured so deeply that they simply adjusted in the new atmosphere so well. Even when the families were ready to get abducted women back, women were unwilling as projected in Butalia's story of Satya devi whose brothers reported her missing at the time of her marriage. Some pathans had abducted her, she had been trained as a dacoit; to use rifle and to ride horse even better than the male dacoits. Damyanti Sahgal, a social worker had taken immense hardship for Satya's recovery but the latter herself was not ready for it. When she was brought to the train station, the entire city stood for her denying her recovery. Satya herself was so furious that she cursed Damyanti, "Who has come to take me? This bastard woman? . . . This woman has come to take me away? I will not go . . .Bastard woman what do I care and what business is this of yours? ' She managed to get her shoe in her hand and was shaking it at me (122-4)." Partition forced women live a broken life adjusted at many junctures. There were examples of many women

who had no interest in getting back to their natal home. An abducted woman resisting recovery said,

> "Why should I return? . . . 'Why are you particular to take me to India? What is left in me now of religion or chastity? And another said: 'I have lost my husband and have now gone in for another. You want me to go to India where I have got nobody and of course, you do not expect me to change husband every day." (117)

Patriarchy cultivated the ideology of masculine supremacy in women so deeply that they were unaware of their submission to patriarchy. They were happy to be good and obedient women. They never pondered on the loss of their identity, existence and their root. Some women just cursed their own fate while the other blamed the female social workers to change their husband daily. Women were so ignorant of the fact that it was the race of the women who had been victimized either by their own or Other community. One young recovered girl confronted Mridula Sarabhai thus:

> You say abduction is immoral and so you are trying to save us. Well, now it is too late. One marries only once—willingly or by force. We are now married—what are you going to do with us? Ask us to get married again? Is that not immoral? What happened to our relatives when we were abducted? Where were they? . . . You may do your worst if you insist, but remember, you can kill us, but we will not go. (Menon and Bhasin 97)

Like Mridula, victimized women always accused most of the social workers with vexation that "who are you to meddle in our lives? We don't know you, what business is it of yours?" (97) National history only presented that nation was highly concerned to rehabilitate the abducted women. Nation never tried to read the real reason behind such rejection for recovery. Nonetheless, the testimonies attempt to indicate the real suffering of women in every move in the life of abduction, adjustment and recovery. The example of abducted women and their return underscores the intersection of

gender, polity and violence within specific communities, and between different communities. Women experienced violence and considered commodification as the gendered property of their

> community, and repositories of its honour both within their own communities as well as from men of other communities. The strong identification of women with their community (as property and as signifier) makes them vulnerable to violence, especially at times of social instability, and cultural and moral anxiety. . . all exemplify the inscription of cultural identity and honour upon the bodies of women, turning them—as embodied signs—into literal and figurative battlefields. (Banerjee129-30)

The orality explodes that national history is largely a masculinist enterprise that paints violence as the desire of ethnic and religious community. The oral narratives question the status of nation that negates the status of subaltern consciouness.

While exploring the suppressed subaltern subjectivity, Menon and Bhasin enlist the women who rejected recovery because of the better lifestyle that women had lived their entire life in poverty and these new men had gifted them colorful life. They did not wish to come back to poverty again. Some women were pregnant who wanted to live with family at present. Women were the mute victim whose body had been means for bloody game and they had to suffer beyond expression even though they were innocent.

> there has been hardly any case where, after these women were put in touch with their original fathers, mothers, brothers or husbands, any one of them has said she wanted to go back to her abductor . . . a very natural state of feeling in the mind of a person who was, by exercise of coercion, abducted in the first place and put into a wrong environment. (Butalia 210)

Women learnt to live feigning their life at present as their choice. They pretended their present life was blissful. Presenting these hidden stories of cruelty, harrassment and violence, Menon and Bhasin unveil the veil of silence of the gendered national historiography.

Women had found happiness in silence after so much deprivation and suffering in life. They could never imagine going back to their natal home again. In addition, they were so well-settled in new atmosphere that even if they agreed to return, they decided to continue living in loneliness renouncing all the joys of life. Krishnaji Thapar collected a story from her colleague, Dayawati Kalra that B- was traveling with her father who was killed and a tahsildar looked after her. He contacted the police but there was no useful response. After a year, the tahsildar got her married to his son. She was happily settled with him. Later on, her brother came in search of her. Due to recovery operation, she went back to India leaving her family because of her brother's insistence. But she was not happy to leave her husband. On the one hand, she lived alone in silence without talking much to anyone and her husband lived heart-broken:

> She came to the Ashram and refused to go to any relation. The brother tried his best but she said, "Main aithe aa agayee aan, bas. Meri jo tabaahi honi si ho gayee hai." (I have come here at your insistence, that is enough. I've lost everything now. I have lost whatever I had to lose. I will not go anywhere.) She brought up three children. The third child was born in Lahor camp where she spent six months. (94-5)

Recovery operation could not be as successful as it had been expected to be. The nation wanted the happy settlement of women but some women had to live the entire life in alienation after they were recovered. The recovery operation did not pay attention to the choices of women. It only imposed decision and forced women to get back to their natal homes unwillingly. K's story was the mirror

image of B's :

> K. was 16, and had gone to visit her grandparents in village Hattiyan Dupatta (Muzaffarrabad distt. of Azad Kashmir) when she was picked up by the tribals. She was passed from one man to another, tried to commit suicide by throwing herself off the roof of one captor's house, but was caught and taken away by a zaildar. She was finally rescued by her parents' erstwhile neighbor, a patwari, who kept her in his house for some time before he persuaded her, for her own safety, to marry his son who was in fact younger than her. Her father went to Lahore and tried for three months to trace her through the Red Cross, but failed. When they finally managed to make contact with her, he went again to Pakistan and tried hard to persuade her to return. She did indeed journey to Lahore to meet him, but refused to return because she was carrying her husband's first child. Her father returned, heartbroken, and died shortly thereafter. (95)

Hence, Menon and Bhasin expose that the recovery operation was another agenda to torture women. Before taking a giant step of recovery, the nation had to scrutinize its after-effects. But it, as always, ignored the sentiments of women and imposed women to act as per its decision.

The decision of nation was so harsh that it pierced the life of many women. There were many women like Somavati who were denied by their family and were bound to stay in ashrams, learning to sew, stitch clothes and lived a meager life. Some women even never recovered from the loss. They were so nostalgic that their beautiful past would never be retrieved. Partition made their life "meager and bereft in every respect" (Menon and Bhasin 220). Partition turned out a symbol for

> loss of place, of property, of people, of peace . . .I have no country now. This is not ours. Earlier we had a home, a country, because we belonged there. Now we belong

> nowhere. How can you have a country without a home, a job? How many different places we have lived in since Partition! The real country is the one we have left behind. That was our real home, the home we loved. Relationships were stronger, families looked after each other. All that has also finished. Now no one cares. There is no hunger now for food, only a hunger for people gone. (220)

Thus, partition violence in 1947 left people bereft of home and security. Women lived a life of dislocation and rupture. The blissful past would never be back, "with Partition, order, freedom from fear and contentment were replaced with instability, death, permanent dislocation – emotional, physical and psychological—ceaseless toil." (Menon and Bhasin 221). Partition gifted women the insurmountable grief of dislocation, instability and alienation. It affected many innocent people out of the joy of life.

Partition forced women to change the religion and to remain silent. The freedom of expression was tampered on as with Butalia's grandmother Ayesha bibi who simply preferred to live in silence. She was an orthodox Hindu woman but was forced to convert into Muslim: "A strong believer who derived comfort from her daily routine of prayer and fasting, what must it have cost her to convert overnight to a different faith, a different routine?" (34) She had to live without her family members. Partition not only raped women physically but also left its impressions in different walks of life.

The excavation of such dramatic episodes of the partition violence against women denote that the patriarchal agencies like family, community, and the state were involved in sexual and reproductive violence during the partition period. It also shows that the gendered violence of the partition was essentially an outcome of patriarchal convention of taking women as the Other. It is a result of an effort "to keep women within their aukat, their ordained boundary," relocating "their

actions . . . into the comfortably symbolized realm of sacrifice" – the symbol of the honour of the family, community and nation in which the women's sexuality occupies a territorial but subordinate significance in all patriarchal arrangement of gender relations between and within the religious or ethnic communities (Butalia 171).

Nevertheless, partition also transformed women's lives in a positive way by enabling them, as new heads of households, to enter the workforce and become relatively economically independent. Education for girls too enjoyed an unexpected spurt as part of the modernizing process of both India and Pakistan. Partition an event of inexplicable horror has been an opportunity to step out the domesticity and embark a fresh start:

> Many women, who had never before stepped outside domesticity, now out of sheer exigencies of survival, joined the workforce after the Partition in a scenario when most of them were not adequately skilled or equipped to undertake the arduous task of sustenance (at times single-handedly). They rose up to act as direct sustainers, carving out new avenues of earning and supplementing family income, to cope up with new challenges. Many of them became dependent on state help who set up various transit camps, relief centers, rehabilitation homes, vocational or training centers and co-operative societies for this purpose. (Datta 2229)

Partition was a new beginning to be free from all fetters of patriarchy. It was a chance for the women to make their destiny on their own. It was a moment to be at par with men socially and economically. Partition 1947 had been an opportunity for women like Inder Kaur to lead an independent life. She studied well and made a significant lifestyle:

> Personally I feel that Partition instigated many people into finding their own feet . . . In Karachi I had only studied upto class VIII. My husband allowed me to learn

> sewing but not to study. Once he went out to war for a year and during that time I did Punjabi Honours . . . I started teaching in a school, then I began teaching Punjabi at Miranda House . . . [later on] I got a lectureship in Punjabi M.A. classes at Khalsa College and started living in a Working Girls' Hostel . . . there are millions of women like me who want to do something but cannot. I managed to because Partition gave me a chance . . . I had spread my wings. (207-215)

Every woman is not as lucky and ambitious as Inder Kaur. Every woman can not be happy separating from the husband. Yet, the personal narratives have chronicled the stories of pain by social workers such as Damyanti Sahgal, Kamlaben Patel, Mridula Sarabhai who became social workers during partition in India. The testimonies have bestowed subject position to women to empower the bereft women. Kamlaben Paten was a woman who tried her best to resettle the abducted women by getting them remarried. When a woman's attempt goes to raise the lifestyle of another woman, the empowerment of women no longer remains just a dream. Like Bibi Inder Kaur, Butalia posits the life-story of Damyanti Sahgal who dedicated her entire life to recover and rehabilitate the victimized women in partition.

Butalia's compilation was the first attempt in which Damyanti Sahgal spoke for herself about her past meddled with partition violence. This act renders agency to a woman, a representative of marginalized group to express those small stories. In the interview with Sahgal, Butalia explored how partition had left her to live alone. Previously she had a dream to look attractive, to wear beautiful clothes but the after effects of Partition forced her to live only as a social worker. Her untold story got a path and so completed the gap national historiography created. She described the horrors when people stopped trains and killed each other. She described a moment in Dharamshala when a group of people wanted to kill a young boy if he did not convert into Hindu. On the contrary,

the boy was denying to be a Hindu. She traveled from one place to another alone and forlorn from one dharamshala to another, distressed, shabby, penniless and yet saving herself from riot and killings. She even exposed how even older women were abducted for when their husbands and son would be killed and the rioters would ask the old women to become their mothers as to get their property. Damyanti became the director of recovery organization with the support of Miss Mridula Sarabhai. She ran an adult education class so that women would stand on their own feet. Having spent entire life in rehabilitating women, Damyanti successfully gave meaning to her life.

Likewise, Mridula Sarabhai, the chief social worker to conduct rescue and recovery operation explained some abducted women returned their home and were resettled. She dedicated her entire life to resettle the worn and torn women. Sometimes single-handedly and sometimes with Mrs. Remeshwori Nehru, Mridula submitted her entire life to recovery and rehabilitation of the victimized women.

Women like Inder Kaur, Mridula Sarabhai, Damyanti Sahgal and Kamlaben Patel turned down the axiom, “a woman’s place is in the home” (Tyson 104). It was completely against reaffirmation “of men’s ownership of women’s sexual and reproductive capabilities” (104). These women were the examples who went against the patriarchal convention.

Patriarchy never consigns women decision-making rights but during rehabilitation, these women did serious and responsible job to recover and resettle the abducted women. Damyanti Sahgal wrote to Minister Iqbal Ali when she needed help. She even manipulated the age of the old women when she ran adult education class. Mridula Sarabhai had a good connection with highly revered politicians such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Nehru. Women held position such as director and worked with police-officers efficiently. These women social workers worked much better than the male workers did. For instance, male police-officers requested Kamlaben Patel to forward the

rescue operation in their assistance. These women were never phony nor frivolous. They were dedicated, hard working and responsible in their duties. They performed their transgressive role proudly and perfectly and proved that women were more powerful than men were if the opportunities were provided.

Along with the voices of women that the personal narratives retrieved, the representation of children was also overshadowed in the national history that Butalia has addressed. Women and children were genuinely related. Like the women, children were also other vulnerable victims of partition violence. Children who are regarded as blessing of God became useless during partition since their birth was considered unwanted. After abduction when women turned pregnant, they gave birth to the children whose existence was questionable. The girl's family would accept the girl but not the child since that would be the production of unwanted, unholy and forced union. But the child was not guilty for his birth. In such situation, both mother and child suffered: "If such children are illegitimate on this side, they will be illegitimate on the other side too and I think it would be a matter of shame for the girl to take the child to that place. If such children are taken by the girls they would be murdered or done away with" (216). Innocent were both the mother and child and both were fated to suffer. The women were not accepted by their family even though the country wanted to rehabilitate them. The states policy of recovery was indeed a callous solution to the problem because separation of women from their children by sending them away brought grief and dislocation on the part of these women denying them of the right to decide their own future or mould their life. The real blame should be accused on the nation who could not give a flawless solution.

The context of the Indian recovery of abducted women and children, women were unable to pass on Indian citizenship rights to their children if they had been fathered by Pakistanis. An ordinance passed at that time decreed that babies born in Pakistan had to be left behind if the

mothers returned India. The nation obviously took responsibility to take care of such mothers and children that the child would remain with natural fathers but there too, women suffered. These women, faced with the dilemma of abandoning children and husbands, never could participate fully in their citizenship:

> The question of children was perhaps the most vexed on in this discussion- deeply emotional: in Hindu society, she said, a child born of a Muslim father and a Hindu mother would not be acceptable, and if the relatives of the recovered women did not accept their children, the government would then faced with the problem of large numbers of destitute, unwanted children. This was perhaps the rational behind the suggestion that children be left with their 'natural fathers'. (144)

Here too, the women as a person or a mother did not count, her wishes were of little consequence She had no right to resist, to defy nor even to appeal, for the act denied even that basic freedom.

At the same time, the oppressive decision deprived women of the most precious gift of being a mother. Motherhood endows women a superior most position which partition again denied them:

> The mothers of illegitimate children somehow forsaken their claim to legitimate motherhood. The purity of the mother, her sanctity, and the suppression of her sexuality, were thrown in question by the presence of such children or of their (the mother's) wish to keep them. Just as abducted women had to be brought back into the fold of their religion, their nation, community and family, so also their children had to be separated from them, rendered anonymous, so that the women could once again be reinstated as mothers, and the material proof of their liaisons made less threatening or dangerous by being taken away from the mothers. Perhaps the greatest irony of all was that it was the State that was now defining something as

> private as motherhood, with, of course, the tacit support of the community and the family. (Butalia 219)

The state turned so unjust that it deprived mothers of their motherhood. The nation took a harsh course for the mothers. Those women were torn between two sides: they could not leave their children behind because of their irresistible motherly love towards them, at the same time they could not return to their own community because of the children born out of unholy union. In such condition, these women were often forced to choose between their children and their families. Butalia impinges the reluctance of women to return because they were torn between two sides in the name of recovery, either to return or separate from own children. They could not decide for themselves as the nation decided for them. Everywhere women were subjugated as Other.

To add to more exploitation, during partition, some of the women had to abort children.They were forcibly violated and then forced to abort children. Why had women to suffer that much trauma in life? Even if they gave birth to the unwanted babies, they couldnot keep them. Most painful is the reality that the girl children suffered the most and ended their life living as prostitute. Butalia ridicules the nation that failed to accomplish the responsibility of maintaining security for its girl children. Although the nation organized recovery operation to undo the consequences of forced marriages and illegitimate children, the operation turned out to be an application of force on the female victims.

Partition forced the victims to live in loneliness, away from own birthplace. Dislocation, homelessness and identity crisis defined partition. Butalia's maternal uncle Ranamama who preferred to stay in Lahore in the temptation of his mother's property suffered severely from alienation and homelessness. He converted himself to a Muslim, married a Muslim woman and bigoted Muslim babies. Yet since the first day of marriage, he realized as if he had committed a

blunder in his life. He felt he was an Indian at heart and India was his home, not Pakistan. His own children were suspicious towards him. He lived a lonely life in a big house. While watching cricket match, he always secretly supported Indian team. His own decision of remaining in Pakistan tortured his entire life. He had become a Muslim and he described his loneliness: "Somehow a convert is never forgiven. Your past follows you, it hounds you. For me, it's worse because I've continued to live in the same place . . . People whispering, "Hindu, Hindu". . . They never forgive you for being a convert" (Butalia 29-30). The desire to go back to his own land is uncontrollable. Butalia adds "It was to India that he turned for a sense of home. . . Some longing for a sense of place, of belonging, of rootedness" (30). He found himself alone in his mansion, "he was only the inconvenient owner of the property, to be dispatched as soon as possible"(32). Ranamama regretted his decision but he could not change his life ahead. This partition rewarded people with broken family ties. Partition not only raped women physically but also left its impressions in different walks of life.

Like Ranamama, Butalia depicts the love story of Buta Singh who had to face a tragic death because of partition. Buta Singh loved Zainab, a muslim girl who was abducted and later married to Buta Singh. They were happy with each other. Later the girl's family discovered her and she got back to India, married another man. Buta Singh crossed the border to get her. When she rejected to recognize him, he committed a suicide running under a train and expressed his last wish to be buried in Zainab's village but that wish was never granted: "Buta Singh put himself under a train and committed suicide. A suicide note on his pocket asked that he be buried in Zainb's village . . .Zainab, meanwhile, continued to 'live' her silence surrounding her" (Butalia 103). Buta Singh's story denotes the flux in women's identity determined by ethnic religiosity that it changed wherever Zainab went. Her communities, family and politico-economic terms fixed her existence. Hence partition in India not only ruptured the Indian territory into two but also created many breakages in

life. Those scars never got healed.

Butalia also chronicles the fate of Dalit women that was strikingly different from other middle-class counterparts. Dalits did not identify with Hindus: they had no property to be plundered. The Dalit women were not raped because they were outside the boundary of honour and revenge. Maya Rani, dalit a child during partition described cheerfully the robbing of dilapidated houses during partition, for fun and development of dowry:

> Weren't we frightened? No, we weren't frightened—everyone tried to scare us, even our parents. But all the children of that area, non of us was scared . . . then we all got together and started to go into people's houses. In some we found rice, in others almonds, sevian . . . we began to collect all these and pile them up in our house . . . Our father also told us to stop, and each time he said that we'd say, yes, we'll stop. But as soon as the men went away to sit down and talk, we would start again . . . I kept lots of new utensils, hamams, etc., for my wedding. I brought a lot of utensils with me when I got married . . . But we thought, who's going to take us away, who's going to kill us? We call ourselselves Harijans. Hindus, Christians, no one can take us away. (236-7).

It means Dalits were so marginalized that they stayed in place during the cataclysmic moment when people from other community had a great suffering. Rather they utilized the opportunity to collect the forsaken wealth of the victims and to raise their social status. This reality of Dalits was not addressed in any other history but Butalia uncovers the curtain and brings forth the truth of suppressed untouchable groups.

Through the women's accounts of violence they had faced, Butalia explodes the "underside of history—the feelings, the emotions, the pains and anguish, the trauma, the sense of loss, and the

silence in which it [history] lay shrouded" (275). If the national history remains as biased as it is today, the change and progress will never occur. Calling the ordinary voices of people in margin, Butalia re-reads the past against conventional factual histories and recovers the silenced and hidden voices.

Like Butalia, Meenakshi Verma also collects the memories of women surviving the reality of partitioin in order to bring the disturbed psyche to normalcy. She examines "how social and individual memories of genocidal violence are intertwined with identity politics and political practices" (xxiv). The stormy madness to kill during partition genocide crumbled many lives as chronicled in oral narratives by Keshar Devi or Adhdha, Shobha Rani, a prostitute and Vachan Kaur, a distressed mother who lost her first son in bomb explosion in a bus, Madhobi and Moyna, the Bangladeshi refugees and Gulab Bai/ Bhai, a third gender representative. Uncertainty of psychological and social death of insecurity hovered the Indian atmosphere as portrayed in testimonies.

Meenakshi Verma brings the testimony of Keshar Devi alias Adhdha or halved as her breasts had been mutilated in partition violence. Her half body became her identity. Partition appropriated the bodies of many women like Keshar Devi who survived partition and lived a stigmatized life. Keshar's family that lived in Gujarat district in Pakistan had to reach Hindustan to save life but on the way to India, her husband was killed. She along with her two sons survived but her breasts were cut off. Where goes the manhood of men when the latter mutilated helpless women's body. In fact, this shameful act on the part of men disqualifies the potency of men. However, a woman had to live the shameful reality. The disfigured body insulted her existence. The government did not give her compensation of her husband's death. By sewing clothes, she met her ends and raised her children. Adhdha lived her entire life with shame and pain of being ashamed. Even when her sons were grown

up, if she put padded underwear in her old age, her daughter-in-law laughed at her. Partition had rewarded her so badly, firstly by sending her out of her home for belonging to next community. Secondly, she was forced to live a life of a socio-political object, Adhdha, a metaphor, an object to be ridiculed:

> The violence committed upon her body reveals that acts of physical violence reduce a human being to an object. Moreover, the memory of violence is commemorated by the further reduction of the human being into a metaphor, an innuendo . . . therefore, surviving violence also means surviving the continuity of the violence in everyday life. The violence does not end with the moment in which it was committed. After the initial pain has subsided, the violence continues to persist as trauma and perhaps a stigma. (96-7)

Partition forced women to live a stigmatized life. Where partition had to be a condition for freedom, it made Adhdha lose her beauty as well as importance and forced her to live with a loss of her identity. She did not die but she had to continue to live a desexualized life that was like living death every moment. Unless Verma has brought forth the pangs of mutilated women like Adhdha, the history would have always been a story of glorious victory.

The testimonies also demonstrate the life-history of those women who chose to live those reality that history always overlooked or criticized as the coward who did not dare to sacrifice. Not all women could choose death so easily as the ninety women in Thoa Khalsa did; some of them just chose to live as prostitutes like Shobha Rani did. Shobha Rani was another victim of partition who lived alone as a prostitute, far away from her other family members. She was beautiful and was in love with life. Partition snatched freedom of women. To safeguard his daughter, Shobha Rani's father got her married to a man who himself sold her and forced her to be a prostitute. Attractive

women were victim to every community as she said,

> In my case, my own community brought me where I am today. A woman's body sells and there is no religion involved there. Any body and everybody likes to have his share . . . in my case, Partition meant partition from my family. I am not what I was. I cannot meet them. My sisters and brother can sit together and share tears and laughter. I cannot do that. I am a creature of a faraway world. In that sense, partition was mine, not theirs . . . This is partition. There is nobody to mourn my death. This is partition. (Verma 107-110)

Women were nothing but objects to please men. Men executed their most animalistic instincts of lust and sexuality when they saw attractive women and the harmless innocent women simply fell prey to their lustful desire. Partition was the occasion when men communicated with each other victimizing women. Because of partition, women lived without family members. They were just objects of pleasure and reprisal. Once the women were victimized, they had no wish to go back home since they believed they were defiled. In addition, even if they returned, their family would not accept them. Consequently, women [un]willingly chose to stay away for their family. Shobha Rani decided to live alone and still mourned the loss of her self: "I am not what I was. This is Partition" (112). Women like Keshar Devi, the halved and Shobha Rani, a non-self, have even no language to express. History never analyzed the painful experiences of individual like Keshar Devi and Shobha Rani but Verma's collection of personal history enters the most personal albeit traumatic experience; shares it to people and empower the women via sharing.

Where Keshar Devi lost her husband and was forced to live her life struggling alone for her sons, Vachan Kaur lost her first son Avatar who was killed in a case of a transistor bomb attack in Punjab and Haryana Roadways bus in Sangrun. Neither he was an activist, not a rioter, he was just

traveling in a bus where a bomb exploded and he was lost in the air. During violent atmosphere, life was uncertain. Abduction, murder, rape became so ubiquitous. Those who were killed were the innocent ones. State failed to certify the security of life of its subjects. Thousands people were killed and several mothers lost their young and promising sons. Vachan Kaur, a bereaved mother bemoaned her son's death:

> we got to know about the bomb attack in the evening on the radio news and the television. We got to see Avatar's body—or whatever was left of it—only the next morning. We brought him in polythene bags . . . blood and crushed limbs. His face was in tact but his torso and legs were gone. There was blood splattered on his face and the expression on it was one of surprise. (138)

How desperate and desolate was the moment when a loving mother saw her handsome son torn into pieces and packed in a polythene bag! His existence was of no significance. Timely death can be coped easily but death of a young man with dreams, desires and hopes is unacceptable. Partition violence gifted Vachan Kaur and her family a life with the memory of pain, grief and anguish of the death of her beloved son. Although the glossed history merely celebrates the creation of two separate nation-states, the oral narratives signify the losses of mothers and disappearances of dreams and ambitions of the sons. The commemoration of independence should not undermine the tragedy of hundreds of women who suffered irreparable damage and were paralyzed physically and psychologically:

> Partition had affected women deeply. The deconstructed and demolished selfhood would have to be re-membered. The story would have to be told again and again to locate fresh connections, for life to move on, for the hearts and heads to be in their assigned place for directions and resolutions, for history to not repeat itself. (Kumar

105)

Through personal narratives Verma exposes the hypocrisy as well as callousness of men that generalize and normalize the brutality. Having repeated the subjective stories of nation's injustice, the testimonies have given new life to continue in future despite the history of tremendous displacement.

Partition was a moment of mass migration. Overnight people had to cross the borders for safety of their lives. When the entire nation was in upheaval, refugees could not be safe, too. At the time of displacement, refugees lived in constant fear and uncertainty and ultimately fell victim to prostitution:

> the refugees definitely got shelter far away from home and communal hatred, but scarcity of water, lack of proper healthcare and irregular supply of dry rations made their lives unbearable . . . Many such displaced persons had to spend years and years in refugee camps before they could even think about a decent life and living. Many of them could not even return to their original occupations and, therefore, felt a sense of alienation and irreparable occupational loss even after partial rehabilitation . . . the women among those displaced faced a double jeopardy in such a situation—first as refugees, and then as women but along their route to West Bengal, many of them not only lost these neat and dear ones, but also their own dignity and womanhood. Even when they were given shelter in camps, with other women as well as men, their private space became merged with the public space. Whatever privacy they had enjoyed in their ancestral homes, seems to be a sweet memory of another life. (Chaudhury 158-9)

In the post-Partition period, the migrants and refugees thus remaining on the margins of the post-

partition state system were ignored and eternally peripheralized. Verma projects the personal narrative of Madhobi and Moyna in which the daughter fell into eternal sexual servitude. Sixty-year-old Madhobi spent her life talking to people and singing bhajans with destitute widows. Her husband was arrested in the allegation of smuggling betel nuts. She went to police to free him but it took time. Her son turned out a thief, was deported and later returned converted. Her daughter Moyna was coming up age and it was difficult for fulfil her demands of new clothes, bangles, shoes and coconut oil. Later on Moyna developed relationship with Nimai Chandra, a middle-aged married man. She then eloped with Gagan Das to fulfill her desire of reaching city who left her in Benaras. Moyna lived a profane life and had two sons who became spare-time mechanics. Both Madhobi and Moyna lived separately and thus partition rewarded the refugees with irreparable grief throughout life. Hence, Verma has presented the life of those marginalized refugees who were unrepresented in history.

At the same time, Verma projected the suppressed voice of Gulab Bai/Bhai—a hijra—a third gender whom the history always ignored. S/he always cross-dressed. S/he remembered the past in which s/he had to migrate from Rohtak to Lahore, penniless, tired and hungy. Hijras were not victimized but robbed of their property and were tormented with crude jokes. Gulab Bai/Bhai survived as s/he was a hijra. Thus Verma showed the violence through all the suppressed voices—a hijra, a refugee, a bereaved Sikh mother, a prostitute and a mutilated woman.

Hence although all three writers had the familial experience of trauma transmitted from grandparents and parents, Meenakshi Verma collected stories not only of women but also from male victims, prostitutes and a third gender Gulab Bai/Bhai. Ritu Menon and Anita Bhasin basically targeted lonely women who spent their lives in ashrams working as social workers while Urvashi Butalia included her mother's as well as uncle's oral narrative along with the interviews of social

workers. Whosoever these writers have chronicled, their collections have interrogated the national history that superseded the male power position and rendered secondary position of marginality, subservience and nonentity to women. As such, women were always relegated to the virtues of gentleness, forgiving and stability and ultimately labeled as weak, passive, less rational, more emotional and dependent. These writers unconventionally exposed women in real pain, their stories in their own words and exorcise for the sympathy for the subaltern Other. Furrukh Khan has valorized the task of these writers:

> Patriarchy allocates secondary status to female body as well as the men berate and belittle the women. Men are unrighteous and beastlike in their treatment to women. Women obeyed the wish of men without question and conformed to the patriarchal ideology. Till now women have been silent but these testimonies allow them expression. Till now, women had no one to represent them nor had they been able to collectively are hardly heard in the archive we have; instead it is the voices of those who purport to speak for women. But these writers created space for the speeches to be heard. Women's narratives add a new dimension to the hitherto existing 'layer' of someone else describing their experiences. These narratives assert first steps . . . to claim their subjectivity, to talk about their loss. How their private domesticity was suddenly shattered by the events taking place in public where they exercised little or no influence . . . Women's sharing of private grief would add a human dimension to the sterile and reductive version of events which is expected to be accepted by the populace as the only 'authentic' version of what occurred during partition. (113-4)

Giving the space to the ignored stories of female partition victims with their predicament and

precariousness, the oral testimonies have overturned the role of women who were always confined to the traditional roles of wives; mothers and homemakers disappeared in domesticity. These writings abolish all repressions; undermine as well as subvert the fixed signification. These testimonies are the compilation of harrowing tale of the female victims of brutal violence. The writings challenge the rhetoric of nationalism and statehood designed by patriarchy. These narratives are in contrast therefore to the fixity of official versions of the Partition. The testimonies reveal all the nuances of partition through these narratives, they not complement the holes in the national history but they also make public hearing. They become therapeutical and generate new hope for the better future in the upcoming generation. The studies of partition trauma open new avenues for correction, improvement and transformation. The Partition occurred in the shadow of the independence of Pakistan and India in 1947, and resulted in the largest mass-migration in human history. The writers put light to the darkness of heroic independence of India. The testimonies are commendable for the balance they maintain between the personal element in documenting the traumas retold by the victims themselves and its analytical discourse. With the tools of testimonies that are the non-linear, hesitant, defiant, grief-ridden and interwoven with past and present, the writers challenge the official history, revisit the national historiography and create a new space for the women's representation. Juxtaposing the official history with subjective and private stories of destitution and victimization of gendered subaltern—women in partition violence, all three writers Ritu Menon and Anita Bhasin, Urvashi Butalia and Meenakshi Verma challenge the national history to restore the history of suppressed voices and construct a new world for the marginalized subaltern.

3. Conclusion:

Partition violence was an overwhelmingly traumatic experience of individuals and groups that left deep physical and psychological scars as well as embodied long-lasting social and psychological effects. It was not only the moment of the birth of two independent nations—India

and Pakistan, but also was a culmination of massacre, bloodbath, violence mainly carried out upon gendered subaltern—women, in the forms of abduction, rape, conversion, migration, murder and suicide. The hegemonic history normalized the genocide and mediated the cataclysm into heroism, sacrifice and martyrdom. But the feminist non-fiction writers Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin in *Border and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*; Urvashi Butalia in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*; and Meenakshi Verma in *Aftermath: An Oral History of Violence*, with subalternist feminist working through, project the nostalgia and mourning in their transformative memory work or personal narratives of female partition victims and survivors. Triggered by the harrowing assassination of Indira Gandhi by her own Sikh body guards, the writers, traumatized by the Indian partition violence of 1947, juxtapose the most intimate and personal stories of pain, emotions, fear, loss, horror and reflections against the factual and conventional official history that muted the voices of subaltern Other—the women, in their collection of oral testimonies. Rather than speaking for the Other as the popular literature does, the writers allow women to speak for themselves so that the manipulated linear history is broken and the real fragments of life make true representation. They unveil the multi-layered subjugation that patriarchy carried out upon women and interrogate the history that effaced the representation of the subaltern Other.

Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin posit history genealogically, exposing the ruptures and breakages in the national history. They allow the lonely widows living and working in rehabilitation centers to speak for themselves and expose the heinous cruelty and barbarism that patriarchy marked upon women. Exploiting the stereotypical role of sexual and reproductive role of women to inferiorize the self-esteem and ego of men of other community, men physically and psychologically violated women through the atrocities of abduction and rape. Menon and Bhasin

put forward Taran's story to show how partition shattered young women's cherished dreams. They also depict the way women were raped by men of other community and forced to die by own community. The patriarchal social construction indirectly forced women to commit suicide to avoid rape and abduction, at same time, valorized their self-murder as martyrdom. In case the women were physically violated, they were rejected as a black spot in the religious community and the women had only an alternative to commit suicide either willingly or reluctantly. Women internalized the patriarchal ideology of honour so seriously that they committed suicide to preserve their chastity and avoid the impending physical violence. Through the projection of suicide at Thoa Khalsa where ninety women drowned themselves and the narration of Bir Bahadur Singh Bhatia where his father killed more than twenty female family members, Menon and Bhasin underpin the undercurrents of patriarchy that treated women as scapegoat to vent out the anger and revenge of men. They render the gendered telling of the masculinist strategy in which men persuaded women to die and accused women that death was their own choice. They uncover the truth that history never attempted to represent the victimization of women and that it denied women their right of choice. In the like manner, Menon and Bhasin also comment on the ploy of national history of the rehabilitation operation which overlooked the desires of women and ordered them forcibly to return own natal homes. Women were treated as objects whose bodies were a battlefield to execute the effeminated manhood of patriarchy. The state deprived women of their motherly love through abortion. Women were forced to live alone yearning for a beautiful past. Women were violated then and there and the plethora of inhumanity was absent in national history. Through the oral histories of female victims, Menon and Bhasin demonstrate the politics of exclusion and inclusion of women in the massive partition violence and represent the muted violence of women. Not only violence perpetrated upon women, Menon and Bhasin

also highlight that the violence in extremity took place in trains where blood flooded and corpses were gifted to other community. They undercut the socio-political milieu where untouchability and discrepancy between Muslims and Hindus existed which spurted, bloomed and blasted in the partition violence. Overall, Menon and Bhasin bring subaltern subjectivity to the forefront allowing the silenced voices to express their suppressed pain, forgotten memory and, hence, they reconstruct the history that hitherto marginalized women.

Butalia too reconstructs history presenting the same experience through multiple perspectives. She uniquely includes her mother Subhadra's and maternal uncle Ranamama's testimonies to mark rootlessness and homelessness patriarchy endowed in the form of mass migration and displacement. Butalia's mother missed her mother Ayesha bibi who was a strict orthodox Hindu widow and later converted into a Muslim. Partition forced people to live away from family members and mourn the loss forever. Butalia brings Damyanti's testimony to mark the loss of dreams in women while unfolds Somavati's story to denote the eternal loss of happy life. Besides, she uncovers the veiled stories of the marginalized dalits and children, particularly the girl children who ended their lives as prostitutes. Hence, Butalia excavates the solidified notions of nationhood or community in national history that underwrites violence. Transmitting trauma through women's testimony, Butalia re-reads history from the vantage of empathy and morality for women and interrogates the ideology of state-centered national history that elided the representation of women.

Like Butalia, Meenakshi Verma also brings a collection of oral testimonies from different social strata in contrast to the redemptive and fetishistic narrative of national history. Unlike the formal and organized master-narrative, through the words of Adhdha, Verma digs out pain of a mutilated woman surviving the consequence of partition—the way society ridicules her existence

and her fate to live as an object or a metaphor. Verma raises a curtain from the national history that excludes women's doomed life of exclusion and inclusion through the depiction of inexplicable suffering of a prostitute. Shobha Rani, a prostitute lived alone away from her relatives because partition rewarded her a legacy of prostitution—a filthy and contaminated life. Prostitution was not her choice but was her way of life. Verma unearths the silence of history with the tragedy of Vachan Kaur, a Sikh mother whose plight was not different from others since she lost her promising son in a bomb blast during partition for no reason. Many innocent sons lost their lives and many loving mothers lost their young dashing sons. Likewise, Verma recounts the suffering of Madhobi and Moyna, the refugee mother and daughter who lived away from each other, one in temple and another in brothel amidst poverty and pollution as partition connoted a mode of separation among family members. Verma questions the history of partition for nullifying the agonizing trauma of women and subverts the dominant generalization of history that ignored individual suffering. With all these testimonies, Verma indicts the national glory of independence as a fake hypocrisy that sings sovereignty of nations. Lives were torn apart and the history was just a chimera that forgot the heart-rending trauma of women. Through the memory of horrendous past of women, Verma revisits history letting women to make their private sphere public, empower their position and reconstruct their lives with new hopes and dreams.

At the same time, all four writers recover the moments of tremendous changes and transformations that partition provoked in the lives of women. Those women who were exploited transformed into successful to lead an economically and educationally independent life. Women like Inder Kaur became academically strong, and Damyanti as well as Mridula Sarabhai as social workers devoted their life to empower women effectively. Partition was a turning point for

women to spread their wings and embark their financially strong career. The partition violence, however, was a blast of hopes and possibilities.

Summing up, all feminist writers through the chronicles of personal narratives revisit the shockingly biased representation of history where the two warring ethnic communities of hatred and feud ignored the pain and suffering of women. They destabilize the unjust as well as traumatic past delving into the testimonies that highlight grief, confusion, shock and numbness of female victims of Indian partition. Memorizing the dismembered histories of women and their bodies rather than commemorating 1947 as the time of birth of two-nation states, the authors employ the politics of memory to undermine history, to fill the gaps and uncertainties, to call for social justice and return to normalcy of everyday life. The personal narratives work through subalternist feminist subjectivity to recall the acts of violence against individuals and ethnic groups; transmit trauma effectively, lead to emphatic listening by retraumatizing the readers and restore women's pain to history with a sense of human compassion. In other words, the oral narratives read against the grain of national history that glorified community and nationhood and present the history through feminist subalternity with the retrieval of the muted voices of women directing the reconstruction and representation. The boundaries of national history are redrawn to restructure the patriarchal social structure, thereby giving space, voice and empowerment to the gendered subaltern women.

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