

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Feminist Reconstruction of Memory in *Aftermath***

**A Thesis submitted to the Central Department of English  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master  
of Arts in English**

**By**

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**August 2009**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mohan Bikram Shapkota has completed this thesis entitled "The Feminist Reconstruction of Memory in *Aftermath*" under my supervision. He carried out this research from June 2008 to September 2009. I hereby recommend this thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "The Feminist Reconstruction of Memory in *Aftermath*" submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U., Kirtipur, by Mohan Bikram Shapkota has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my thesis supervisor Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari, a lecturer at the Central Department of T.U, for his invaluable guidance, genuine suggestion, warm response and encouragement which helped this thesis come into this present form. He had played prominent role for the completion of this project.

I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of the Central Department of English T.U., Kirtipur, for providing me the opportunity to conduct my research work.

Similarly I thank Dr. Beerndra Pandey, Mr. Harihar Gawali, Mr. Saroj Ghimire, Mr. Pam Gurung for their assistance and co-operation in framing my intellectual growth. I would also like to thank everyone at Central Department of English for providing me this intellectual platform.

I equally remember my reverend parents Ram Lal Sapkota and Til Kumari Sapkota and all my family members. I would like to remember my teachers, Ram Bahadur Chand, Bhumi Raj Acharya and Naindra Chand for their inspiration and invaluable suggestion. I also remember Anup Paudel, Lokendra Chand, Top Bahadur Shahi and Jaganath Ghimire For their kind help.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Ramesh K.C. of Nature Computer Center for computer work.

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September 2009

## **Abstract**

This research explores the feminist reconstruction of memory in the Meenakshie Verma's *Aftermath*, an oral history of violence. In 1947 British India was divided into India and Pakistan. Millions of people were killed and displaced in partition. Many women got physical and psychological torture in the partition violence but the national history of post-partition neglected these facts. The historians did not include the memories of the partition victims. This research claims that *Aftermath* tries to question the mainstream representation of the partition violence. It reconstructs the memories from the feminist point of view to write about the real trauma of women and war victims and to rewrite the partition history as more inclusive and whole.

## I. Women and Partition

The partition of British India in 1947 was one of the most cataclysmic events in world history. It was one of the several partitions that were carried out in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East since the eighteenth century. It resulted in more casualties than any other partition. The number killed; displaced and dispossessed in the partition of India known anything around twenty three million people lost their lives. During the partition some nine million Hindus and Sikhs crossed over into India from Pakistan and about six million Muslims went to Pakistan from India.

Partition studies, a term covering various aspects of the study of the partition of British India in 1947 can perhaps explain the most pressing question that faces us in this context on which are the groups, individuals, organizations or ideologies that gain most from the discourses of partition. One of the most significant things is that when one foregrounds a historical event in an anthropological exercise, the responses generated in the field contribute immensely towards a heightened self-critical attitude.

Many women were badly affected by the partition violence. They were forced to die at the hands of man in their own families. During the riots women were subject to stripping, parading, rapping, mutilating, disfiguring, tattooing, and knifing, of course killing fetches. Menon and Bhasin in their book *Border and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, say that "women's bodies were taken as territory to be conquered, claimed or marked by the assailant" (49). They further say, "Some acts are simultaneous or continuous, they may begin with stripping and culminate in raping, branding or tattooing" (26).

Women were violated across spatial location in public spaces, in sacred spaces and in their own homes. But Indian mainstream history is always silent towards women's casualties in the partition violence. Women had suffered in many ways, for

example, they were given tortured in India and Pakistan for having different religious identities. They had to take the burden to bring up their families. They had to bear all the responsibilities in the new refugee camps after the death of their male members. In the rehabilitation camps the women were discriminated because of their gender. The government officials were also biased in the compensation package. Many women were also compelled to take poison for suicide because it was better to die rather than bear the mental and physical torture. After the partition government constructed the visible marker (monument) of the partition of 1947. But it did nothing for the speechless women. So many feminist historiographers reject the mainstream history and try to correct the 'wrong' of the history. This research is mainly concerned with the reconstruction of survivors' memory and questions the Indian main stream history through the feminist eyes.

This study takes Meenakshie Verma's *Aftermath* and sees how she reconstructs the memory of partition from the feminist point of view. Females, the main sufferers of violence, are taken as an *Adhdha* (half) by the mainstream history. She says, "Addha could well be a metaphor for people who have been uprooted and dislocated and have had to reconstruct their lives and their identities in new surrounding" (87). Many people who are compelled to leave their country were taken as a refugee and they had to reconstitute their identities and relocked themselves as citizens of a nation state: "The local people were not willing to listen to tales of death and destruction" (88). Many people who have experienced the violence seem to live with the stigma of having been branded with it. The nation of course chooses not to talk about such incident in the larger and noble project of nationalism these are aberrations to be overlooked or glossed over. In the act of glossing over the event of physical violence against women, the women are often eulogized and given a larger than life or

mythical treatment. The data and statistics taken about the causalities of the women were reduced by the women because these statistics then become tools in the debates on 'honor' with the community or the nation to which the perpetrators belong.

Meenakshie Verma visits many refugee camps to observe how the partition victims survived and analyzed their position in the national history. Many victim women do not want to remember about their past because it was very much painful. One particular woman Keshar Devi's son says that "my mother is an old woman, she does not keep the well and she does not even remember her past. She is not the right person if you want to talk about partition" (91). Many women feel shame of being survived instead of their husband because they had to take all the responsibilities of family.

We are concerned not with the exploitation of women and their privacy, their silences, the places where memory refuses to enter speech but also their accuracy. But the women's position in the post-partition narratives because they are marginalized while constructing the national history. They are not sure about whether to reproduce the personal narratives intact with commentary or without. But we felt that without context or commentary, such a presentation might leave their testimonies as defenseless as the women themselves, open to skepticism, dismissal, disbelief, to charges of exaggeration and nostalgia, not to be trusted. Finally they decided to use a combination of commentary and analysis, narrative and testimony to enable the women's voices to be heard, sometimes challenging, sometimes agreeing with, sometimes probing historical 'facts', insinuating themselves into the text and thereby compelling a different reading of it.

When we analyze the socio-political situation of the period of partition, destruction and looting of property occurred on a massive scale for several weeks.



The fears generated among the heavily outnumbered Muslims were such that a great number were unwilling to return to their home even three months after the initial outbreak of violence. During and immediately preceding days many women and children in many areas carrying little bundles of their belongings and running away from their native village. About the condition of women and other victims of the partition Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin in *Border and Boundaries* says, "in partition during enemy attacks women collectively took poison jumped into fire or off bridges or drowned themselves in wells men framed these acts as a willing sacrifice" (46).

They question the national history and feel themselves excluded from it. They say in the same book: "In history books, only the names and data are correct not the rest" (8). Another woman writer Urvashi Butalia in her book *The Other Side of Silence Voices from the Partition of India* says "The majority of women who were raped were poor women because the wealthy had meant to travel by air, car, under escort seldom on foot" (26).

Women in partition face dominant conceptions of where they should be and where they should belong, albeit differentially so. The Indian government was highly preoccupied with Hindu women allegedly abducted by Muslim men but not with Muslim women allegedly abducted by Hindu or Muslim men presumably because here no offence against community or religion had been committed, nor anyone's 'honor' compromised. Here the coincidence across scales of individual male, religious community, and national honor is particularly visible. This patriarchal logic informs the state practice to the point of Hindu male unconscious complicity with the masculinity of the Muslim male, as evidenced in the decision by Hindu males at the need of India's government that all children, born of marriage or abduction/rape, would belong to the father whatever his original conduct might have been."

Women's stories of partition are denied by any mode of official transmission beyond their private space and issues of violence, sexual brutalization are rarely allowed to be passed on the next generation.

Many scholars make the research on the reconstruction of history. History is only the official out-look of the event. It generally fails to carry the real part of affected. Jill Didur in her essay "At a Loss of Words: Reading the Silence in South Asian Women's Partition Narratives" opines that "*Border and Boundaries* and the *Other Side of Silence* encounter [. . .] a silence about the actual details of the violence" (14). Didur appreciates the researchers of these works for their attempt to collect and make sense of the testimonies of people who lived through the event of partition violence. She further praises the works for their interest in representation of women who experienced social alienation. In the same way Bipin Chandra's *Modern India* expresses the colonial ideas saying:

On 15 August 1947 India celebrated with joy its first day of freedom.

The sacrifice of generation of partition and the blood of countless martyrs had borne fruit [. . .] But the sense of joy [. . .] was mixed with the pain and sadness [. . .] even at the very moment of freedom a communal orgy accompanied by indescribable brutalities was consuming thousand of lives in India and Pakistan. (305-6)

Anasua Basu writes:

When women left their respective homes on the other side of the border they started their uncertain journey along with other member of their families. But along their route to west Bengal many of them not only lost these near 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 public space. (159)

The proposed thesis studies Verma's *Aftermath* using feminist historiography as theoretical methodology along with the trauma theory, memory and feminist historiography at the same time. The female pain and suffering during the partition and exclusion of their speechless voice in the national history. Due to the partition violence many people memorize the event on their own first hand experience. This memory puts a huge question on the main stream history since it has totally failed to address this memory. The mainstream historian constructs the visible marker (monument) to memorize the victims but women have not been given any space. Females are historically taken as a second sex by the so-called patriarchal society. They are suppressed and this impact is also shown in the partition violence. Meenakshi Verma speaks for these women and strikes against the national history. Until and unless it doesn't include these marginal voices it is not complete, the Indian main stream history is incomplete in the eyes of feminist advocator.

Dominant historiographies of partition function together somewhat like a chronoscope in the sense of Mikhail Bakhtin in their ability to contain certain elements (dates, the deeds of "great men") while effacing others (subaltern subjective, emotion, 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. It is by now well known that 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. Yet, these statistics fail to tell the fact like these both books. They reveal, history has the potential to shift the paradigm of partition history altogether as social worker. Gulab Pundits told Menon

and Bhasin that, "in history books only the names and dates are correct but not the rest"(28).

So, we come to conclusion that without the mainstream representation of the partition memories of the women, Indian national narratives becomes never complete because historian of post-partition period marginalize these voice and writes history only from the male perspective. Only the visible markers can not do anything for them. History ignores the most sensitive part of violence i.e. women. Like historians, generally various teams of independence investigators visiting various parts, have been eager to obtain the official account in order to establish overall picture in the midst of anther confusing investigation.

## **II. Trauma, Memory, and Feminist Historiography**

### **Trauma**

In the aftermath of the war the government collects the account of the death and destruction of the disaster. The winner country held the commemoration ceremonies. All the loss and grief are overshadowed by the national glory. The state celebrates such kind of ceremonies with a great pride but the returning soldier has the different kinds of experiences because they have fought the war with their first hand experiences. They can not express their pain in words. The civilians who experienced the war also hunted by nightmare and flashback scene of unimaginable horror. After the war finish there is the huge pain on it is survivor. Both survivors and perpetrators both get traumatized. Survivors are traumatized because they have experience the war and many of their family members get killed and destroy their properties. On the other hand perpetrators also get traumatize because they have the first hand experience of the war. Their business it to kill as much as they can if not dies themselves. Many of them are injured and lost their physical organ and even their group member.

The experience of trauma suffered during the war represents a theoretical and political preoccupation with the lived and witnessed reality of men. The position to articulate them is constantly challenged not just by the community but also by the state. It is felt that interviewing of many survivors would evince them multiplicity of their narratives not just for themselves but to add even a discordant voice to the parochial, patriarchal and elitist meta-narratives of partition. Their deliberate assertions fill the gaping holes not just in the social but also in the political construction of the traumatization of the war. The forcibly denied space to talk about their experience in their own voice is expected to push their lived experience into the unconscious and imaginary realm of the victims.

Jenny Edkins accuse force and violence is the main cause of the trauma because involuntarily use of violence by force creates the trauma on the civilians. She further says:

Events that give rise to what we categories today as symptoms of trauma generally involve force and violence. Often this is a threat to those people whose involved lives and integrity involve in rape, torture or child abuse; sometimes it also involves witnessing the horrific deaths of others for example in wartime combat or in concentration camps. The victims of trauma feel that they were helpless in their enforced encounter with death, violence and brutality. Witnessing violence done to others and surviving can seem to be as traumatic as suffering brutality oneself. The victims feel complicit in the betrayal perpetrated by others. In this sense, the victim of the war is ashamed for the protagonist of violence against them as well as for themselves. Events of the sort, we call traumatic are overwhelming but they are also a revelation. They strip away the diverse commonly accepted meaning by which we lead our lives in our various communities. They reveal the contingency of the social order and in some cases how it conceals its own impossibility. They question our settled assumptions about who we might be as humans and what we might be capable of. Those who survive often feel compelled to bear witness to these discoveries. (3)

The feminist reconstruction of partition violence has received central attention in the revisionist historiography of 1947 by women writers. Such as Ritu Menon veena Das Urvashi Butalia who focuses on the double subordination of women through

abduction and recovery rape and murder. The revisionist feminist history in the words of Mirinal Pandey "has developed a third subaltern eyes that glosses over accepted social moves and eminent personalities of the day for the working class women's version of what history and society look like from a women's point of view" (120). The spot light falls on investigating how far the gendered identity is subordinated to the needs of the religious or the ethnic community and what this means for a concept such as secondary citizenship. Honour - whether family or national-turns out to be the major factors in the subordination of women to the status of secondary citizenship.

Women are traumatized and get physical and mental torture in the war. Huge number of women gets martyrdom in the partition violence. Urvashi Butalia in her book "*The Other Side of Silence Voices from the Partition of India*" appreciate the martyrdom of women she says:

The violence that women faced in the aftermath of partition is surrounded in many layers of silence. If we here little about the rape and abduction of women in historical accounts, what we do know about violence in general relates only to men of other community. There is seldom if ever any acknowledgement that Hindu and Sikh women could have became the targets of Hindu and Sikh men. Yet in the upheaval of the disruption of everyday life Hindu men could have hardly have become miraculously innocent one of the myths that survivors increasingly and tenaciously hold on to is how communities and families held together in this time of crisis: how then can they admit such disruption from the inside and by their own member. (153)

In the process of taking the interviews with the survivors, it is always tension between the horror of atrocity and the controlled suppression which had very rarely been

allowed to surface. It was apparent how this sustained pressure had accentuated the chasm that ironically separated a number of survivors from their own experiences. They repeatedly raised questions about the legitimacy of their own witnessing and suffering. With the many interaction with the survivor they had to constantly grapple with a moral dilemma at what point does recording the borne and witnessed traumatic experiences of human suffering cross from documentation of the critical memory to the manipulation of the survivor for cold academic dramatic effect?

Oral history has enriched the process of remembering and recording events of the past because of its ability to include voices as Perks and Thompson describe "hidden from history" (97). This particular methodology has resulted in a comparatively more democratic portrayal of social and political events. Oral narratives of partition are circumscribed within two major emotional boundaries which are explained by Dipesh Chakraberty as:

The sentiment of nostalgia and the sense of trauma, and their contradictory relationship to the question of the past. A traumatized memory has a narrative structure which works on a principle opposite to that of any historical narrative. At the same time however this memory in order to be the memory of trauma has to place the event the cause of the trauma in the case, the partition violence within a past that gives force to the claim of the victim. This has to be a shared past between the narrator of the traumatic experience and the address of the narration. Yet it can not be a historical version of the past one that aims to diffuse the shock of the traumatic by explaining away the element of the unexpected. (151)



The erratic and disjointed memory confronts the linear meta-narrative of the state, whose collective suffering is harnessed or ignored to produce a chronological arrangement of event with clearly defined victims and villains. Such categorization is rather simplistically cast along religious lines as each state's discourse aims to be linear and selective with stereotypes that perpetrators the myth of the 'other'.

On the other hand, individuals because of the comparative proximity and experience of culturally mixed existence offer versions of events that are rarely as unsophisticated as that of the state. As a result of such shared experience, the narratives presented by individual are complex and because of their traumatic nature are difficult to re-call. Janet Walker points out about the trauma:

History of trauma, a history of events that are forgotten in their experiencing. The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experience at all . . . for history of trauma means that is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully received as occur(803-26).

After September 2001 the human life becomes worldwide traumatic because of the terrorist action shown in the U.S.A. The violence was played out and protest against it was shown in the landscape of the New York City and Washington D.C. The human life was treated with the utter contempt. The fully loaded aircraft was flung into the two buildings and they were demolished within a second. The office worker army personal fire fighter and many others's attempt to rescue the people but it was all in vain because of the huge destruction of the property and people. The only aim of the terrorist is to destroy the symbolic heart of the U.S.A. which is in fact symbol of the world heart. The trauma of that day can not hide form the public because of the

media. The event was broadcast worldwide, rumor and counter-rumor was prevailed. There was chaos and confusion on the life of the people. As in traumatic nightmares or flashback, the scene were endlessly repeated, the incredible unbelievable events were relived time and again as if in an attempt to overcome the shock and surprise of what happened. But later on when the nation was constructing the monument in the name of those civilian, their memory, ambition and complete aspect of the life can not be addressed. Rudolf Giuliani in his book *In Memoriam New York City* says:

I think we are going to have to remember other horrific events in our history, because, somehow I think it pushes the human consciousness towards finding ways of avoiding this in future. But if you censor it too much, if you try to find too many euphemisms for what happened then I think you rob people of the ability to actually re-lived it and therefore motive them to prevent it from happening in the future. (25)

The modern political communities of the west are the productive of and produced by force and violence. This fact is correctly applied in the case of women because they are long been deprived to separate their notions of safety from the patriarchal structures in which they live. Battered women would not recognize the picture of the family as a source of protection and stability. The contemporary form of political community the state relies for its existence on the assumption that it can compel its citizen to fight for its sovereignty. It proffers security in return for obedience. The state found the violence whatever it takes the form of war revolution or civil conflict. 'Marx Webber's' in *Political Writer* expresses "The state is that human community which (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a territory" (126).

The relationship between two sexes is like a war according to some feminists because they are traumatized with the casualties being rape victims, battered wives and sexually abused children. The parallel between women and war fighters was used in the 1970s and 1980s to draw attention to the plight of women and the widespread exploitation of the patriarchal power by men which held, apart from the early work by Freud and Joseph Breuner on hysteria, been neglected. If we push the similarities further taking the insight gained from the study of sexual abuse in families and applying them to other events categorized as traumatic what do we find? What if instead of likening family relations to a war, we compare the treatment of populations in wartime with the treatment of women in families? It turns out that we have a parallel exploitation of power in political communities, which we might call political abuse. Political authorities are using their power over their citizens to abuse and torture them or to compel them to take part in abhorrent acts, which violate their sense of self-worth and which provoke intense shame, humiliation and anger.

We can also connect the violence with trauma that produces by the political community. The power the social order and the person are constituted in the contemporary west which is in the center of the political community. Through a study of practices of trauma memory and witness we can clearly draw the link between violence and trauma. It examines how practice of trauma or memory may have been exported except the geographical bound of the western paradigm. The western practices of memorization and testimony arises out of and is framed against a more general interest in the formation of sovereign power and western subjectivity or personhood. The form of the power that is used by modern state as a form of political community causes the violence which is the main cause of traumatization of civilians. The political community possesses power which can also be violence in this sense

state legitimize it. However, according to the Foucauldian view, power is not centralizing but dispersed; it is not something that can be possessed but a relationship. We should understand power in relation because it is a relation of power always exists alongside resistance. So, this play out in the trauma situation. As far as memory is concerned, how we remember war for example and the way in which we acknowledge and describe what we call trauma can be very much influenced by dominant views that are by the state. However, it is not determined by them; their influence and the state structure itself can be contested and challenged from of statehood in contemporary society as forms of political community are themselves produced and reproduced through social practices, including practices of trauma and memory.

So, any kind of violence causes many more casualties which is mainly known as a trauma. Either it is the two great world wars or the consequences of many violences or even the partition violence the life of civilian is difficulty traumatize especially the women the most sensitive part of violence and most victims of the trauma in the after math of violence.

### **Memory**

Memory is the engine and chassis of all narration. Memories are objected that tumble out unexpectedly from our mind linking the present with the past. A traumatized memory has a narrative structure which works on a principle opposite to that of any historical narratives. A historical narratives after all concentrates on an event explaining its causes and the timing but what it perhaps can not explain is whether the subject belongs to the 'marginalia of history'. Like accidents and consequences or not perhaps that is why one sociologist has rightly pointed out that memory being where the history ends.

Even the ideological function of 'Partition' historiography has been very different from, say that of Holocaust literature. The investigation has not, in this instance, been primarily concerned with assigning guilt to the opposing sides. The chief object has not even been to consolidate different ethnic/national identities in South Asia, though there is certainly an element of this especially in right-wing discourse. Rather, it has been aimed at justifying, or eliding, what is seen in the main as being an illegitimate outbreak of violence, and at making a case about how this goes against the fundamentals of Indian and Pakistani tradition and history. This framework makes for some what unusual accounts of violence and of the relationship between violence and community, an account that is not readily available in the literature on similar events.

But the question that this research attempts to raise is: Can memory really capture the truth of violence? One may ponder over this question while, exploring the minds of those few surviving people who attempted an escape from the violence of the partition of their home-land partition of their soul and partition of their identity. Truth may elude a person more when she/he delves deep into the minds and memories of women who had tryst with the violence of partition or the trauma associated with violence. Many writers, photographers, historiographers would narrate their tales of dispossession, dispossession of their childhood, womanhood and parenthood and narrate the incidents of violation of their basic human dignity or the way they would like us to know how partition related violence changed their identity over a period of time may really put us in a very difficult position.

It is known that narratives are always related to same sense of self and are told from someone's own perspective to take control of the frightening diversity and formlessness of the world. Through the narratives the self finds the home or it would

perhaps describe the process better if we say that around a particular home they try to point a picture of some kind of an ordered intelligible human and intelligible world. Her self tells the story to an audience in this case the author and thereby creates a kind of relationship with the listener. In the process the historical self configures memories differently from the way the historical self does.

Amy Hungerford explains in her memoir 'fragment: memories of a wartime childhood' published in 1995 by Benjamin Wilkomirsky says "memory is the moving account of the author's experiences as a child during the violence like Holocaust an account whose disjointed narratives and simple, almost abstract style was said not just to represent, but actually to demonstrate the effect of trauma of the victims. But at the same time of the German publication there was already question about the authenticity of the history writing as a story. Hungerford makes a review of the book 'New Republic' and says incomplete or mistaken reading of reality accompanied by rude, painful awakening while this style could be attributed. She suggests to the writer's desire to describe the event of the Holocaust purely from the child's perspective.

Most of us are familiar with writing on the suffering of the people because of the partition violence. Both social scientists and creative writer have extensively and touchingly highlighted such memory of suffering of the human beings which is partial in fact compared to that of the experience of the violence has been discussed in a very few books and articles. Jasodhara Bajehi and Subhoranjan Das Gupta have in their book *The Trauma and the Triumph, Gender and partition of India*. They discuss about the partition of Panjab was a one time event with Mayhem and forced migration restricted primarily to three years (1947-50). The partition of Bengal has turned out to be a continuing process. They added that "displacement and migration

from the east to west make the victims of many people whose life became traumatic in a refugee camps. They have the memory of the war and it is not picked up in the aftermath of the war" (41).

Amy Hungerford shows the relation between language and experience that plays an important role in memorizing the memory. In her essay "Memorizing Memory" she says that 'memory is the experience of the survivor'. In order to understand how trauma theory could be useful it is necessary to know Wilkomirski's narrative models. It describes apart from its value as a kind of formal handbook it is worth nothing some of the feature of memoir itself. Features which echo and in deed rely upon some basic assumptions about the relation between language and experiences.

Hungerford cites the book from the two writer Felmans and Caruth that their book open with a lament for the loss of what the memory of Wilkomirski calls his mother and father tongue. He first introduced as an orphan because he is deprived from his own native tongue. In a book, *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*, Wilkomirsky says, " I have no mother tongue or a father either. The languages I learned later on where never mines at bottom they were only imitation of other people's speech" (3).

When we are dealing with the transmission of experiences, the story of memory does not make up the cover's invitation to 'experience' the memoir; the precedent for that transmission can be found in the very theory of that tries to account for the way language and narrative work in the texts like fragment that tries to account for why the story of trauma can not in fact but must instead be experienced. We can begin to see this kind of transformation in a peculiar parallel between Benjamin Wiikomirski's story of coming to discover his survivor identity and a story of the

many partition survivors is almost the same. Wilkomirski's interview has noted that he first begins to understand what had happened to him when he studied the Holocaust in high school seeing a film of the camps liberation. It was only then he claims that he realized that the war was over that he himself had not been liberated. In partition memory, many writers collect the memory of war victims living with their glorious past and painful present. Their memories directly contradict with the record document of the partition violence. Their identity is suppressed and neglected in the aftermath of the war. Because of the biased treatment of the national history, they do not feel liberated.

A state's narrative obsessively revolves around dates as this particular insistence provides a coherent packaging of historical event that may be read and interpreted with a particular bias. The dates are not so politically and historically loaded when we ask the victims. The strategically essentialist mode of the history of a nation requires selective placing of chronological events and clearly defined protagonist usually the political leaders and the same vain a block compartmentalization of the villains and the victims. Individual memory on the other hand offers a much less clinical separation of dates. The state's arboreal narrative has no mention of the characteristics of the daily events and condition that were faced by people who were caught up in partition's forced uprooting.

Shoshanna Feldman's *Testimony* actually deals the trauma without experience where actual traumatic suffering seems to be pertinent even crucial to the claims that traumatic memoir and trauma theory make about texts. No matter how far removed Yale graduate student may be from the actual violence of Holocaust that violence under-writes the substance of what they are said to experience and we see how Felman points to the undeniable suffering in the life of any individual that is directly



reflected by his/her writing. Indeed, the implication of that deconstructive shift from language as representation to language as performance apparent in the idea that survivors can be produced on the basis of trauma that is experienced by being read suggest that Flemans evident concern with the actual violence experienced in the Holocaust may be unnecessary to trauma theory at its abstract level. Memory thus becomes not only a subjective internal construction of the past events but a necessary imaginative component both in the telling of larger collective history and in the development of personal identities that defy attempt to forget and to busy the wartime past. Memory is thus a key for the ethnical representation of past and literature as a mechanism for collective memory which opens up the past to scurrility can alt ethnically by resisting dogmatic fixed and close narratives.

In the coincidence between memorization and the construction of identities centered on trauma that trauma theory can be seen most clearly to take up question characteristic of post-war novels that in imagining American culture in the wake of a large scale nuclear war attempt in their own way to come to term with the relation between literature and what we can in the ordinary sense call traumatic event. In Ray Bradbury's 'Fahrenheit 451' (1953) for example, we find the protagonist Guy Montag joining a group of book memorizers who seek to preserve knowledge and literature in the face of a brutally repressive government and in the wake of nuclear war.

### **Partition and the Feminist Historiography**

History is produced ethically in the writing and representation of it. By putting one's foot back into the track of history, one's present position is reoriented by the direction of that track not to mention shaped by the track. The history is an 'impression' in the mind of generation. History is also the case of filling out that impression. The material of history is not bounded or limited by received wisdom. It

is as much the form of the narratives we tell, as the events that are related. The moral function of history is to compel us to confront what is all around us. Julia Kristeva clarifies the ethical imperative that is a constantly negative procedure, a persistent unfixing of positional and identity; and in which an ethnical text is a lying bare of a signifier a text which opens up the process of its own production to scrutiny by the readers.

Walter Benjamin, thinking ethically in his theorization of history, argues: "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it the way it really was. It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (256).

History stems not from the motives of realism and record, but from the ethical need to use the past as a warning to others about future survival. In this respect Adorno is concerned with the ethics of representing the past as an art attempts to find a form of representation. In the *Survivor*, Terrence Desper argues that the literature of the Holocaust is not only a remembrance of the things of the past but a remembrance of things to come to an art of anticipation as well as re-collection. In this sense, critical representation of the past as a way of resisting collective memory and myth, refusing to allow history to be relegated to mythical paradigms which will strip it of its ability to disturb, forcing us to recognize some of the potentials that exist in our present society.

History examines the past event and correlates it with the present. There is the qualitative difference between the traumas of the much violence that occurred in the past for example the trauma of the Holocaust victim or the trauma of the bank clerk's dissociated sensibility. This shows the organic connection between the words and things and only finding fragments to shore against his ruins between the social alienation and dislocation brought about through severe psychological terrors induced

by modern warfare in trenches and the testimony of victims of an historic racial and ethnic marginalization. The traumatic literature we mean the literature that testifies to certain past events which have the power of disrupting identity in the present. Many war like violence have been studied in this regard. However, with the extension of this definition of the past, most literature about the past can be subsumed under the definition of trauma ranging from the slave narrative. Although the literature of trauma does overlap with marginalized voices these are not necessarily coterminous. This concept seems to result from psychoanalysis especially that of a Freudian persuasion in which the unconscious becomes the source of all trouble.

The female history during the partition violence is the main area of my research. Women, as eastern people, think are weak creatures. Any kind of violence that is caused by the man, the main sufferer would be the women. When we analyze the condition of the women during partition we find them most grief-stricken part. Their male partner leaves them. They are obliged to leave their child during the riots. They are abducted and raped. They torture according to their religious belief. They are sexually abused. Many survivor accounts convey a sense of personal confusions loss of identity and an increasing focus on the minute of life on the move a state of alertness to the particular which along might contribute to survival. A number of subjects said that they became much more aware of their surrounding factors like the presence of sugarcane plantation and the direction of the wind assumed critical importance in order to escape detection. They had to be very vigilant of water wells for a number of them had been deliberately poisoned.

Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries* explores women's experience of the partition of the Indian sub continent through feminist historiography and ethnographic and historical research. The text studies the violence against the

women including forcible suicide, rape, the experience of dislocation and relocation through forcible marriage and forcible recovery. They experience of widows in contrast to abducted women and the vigilance of women social workers. They begin with a study of violence against women. Men often convince mothers, daughters and sisters to commit suicide for fear of family dishonor, should the women be raped. The main focus is on the investigation of the recovery of 'missing' women who were abducted or forcibly married and converted during the chaos in partition violence. In legal discourse women's bodies are used to establish national honor, despite their personal desires. Many of these women wished to remain with the families but they have married and entered into uncertain future of refugee camps. Many widows, however, were perceived as victims of a national disaster who needed help to achieve economic independence as rehabilitated citizen of the state.

The written history after post-partition period misrepresents the women's martyrdoms in partition violence. Oral history holds the very real promise of exploring the social experience of women and retrieving it as compensatory and supplementary women history. The traditional history was grappling with the separation of subject and object interviewer and interviewee thought and Kamala Bhasin in their book *Boarders and Boundaries* question the accuracy of the traditional history. They say:

Then, there are related problems of accuracy and fidelity to the letter and spirit of the narrative, of interpretation, evaluation, selection and representation; the troubling is sue of "authorship" and the fact that, in the end, it is the researcher who controls the material, however participatory the research may have been. The responsibility for the distortions or limitations of our studies rests squarely with feminist oral

historians as does the dilemma of how much to tell. When confidentiality is enjoined, are we justified in presenting a life story in the interests of advancing historical understanding, especially when that story is deeply personal or traumatic?. (15)

The history which expresses the national or racial trauma which needs to be halted or cured is frequently offered as a reason for the retrieval of the past. Literature is one mechanism for effecting this ethical relation with the past. It provides a medium in which to imaginatively retrace the past and in exhuming the forgotten events and offers a means of overcoming any instability, insecurity or reification of the past. If forgetting is reification then remembering is an attempt to fracture that artificial unity, breaking open the metaphysics of a single homogenous version of the past. Literature functions as a way of combating the anesthesia of consciousness induced by homogeneous history. Story telling has long acted as a means of bearing witness to the events of the past history preserved as personal history. History is given shape and meaning through the interpretation of individual lives. It has nothing to do with the groups or collective memory. History is just made up of personal histories so too personal identities are formed in relation to a longer ethical and cultural context. Since in bearing witness to history, people are able to place themselves within a communal context defined by their community their very lives speak to a shared suffering and to a shared cultural ethos. Only then, can the skin of history be mended and the healing capacity of literature manifests itself as an ethical practice.

In this way, history is always based on the interpretation. It has to some extent, a fictional nature. It is developed according to the power holder and is never free from the shadow of main stream political structure. In this regard, it is always 'silent' towards the victimization of the powerless people. Certain kind of riots and violence

change certain mode of history. It becomes the document of the winner but not the voice. In the case of partition defeated violence of 1947 many women are victimized and their life would be traumatic but, the history does not include their voice. It has been written only from patriarchal perspective the real pain and suffering of the women in violence is always one step behind. The mainstream history is always silent towards these voices.

### **III. Feminist Reconstruction of Memory in *Aftermath***

Meenakshie Verma's *Aftermath: An Oral History of Violence* is the collection of memory from the survivors who have witnessed the partition violence by their first hand experience of violence. It is either the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 or any other Hindu, Muslim and Sikh riots, the nature of violence is almost the same in all places. Many people get traumatized in their life due to the sufferings given by war. They have been chased from their native homeland that becomes the most painful event in their life. They have been mistreated on the basis of their religious belief, and even compelled to leave their property. They have been brutally killed, tortured and suffered. Many people have spent their troublesome life in many refugee camps. Most of them have lost their family members in the violence. The people who have survived, witnessed many barbarous sights during their journey, which gives them psychological torture. Their life becomes more difficult and traumatic in the foreign land.

It is immediately after partition, millions of people were either coming to Amritsar or leaving. Hindus and Sikhs are coming to Amritsar and Muslims are leaving for Pakistan. During those days many people sell firearms and cartridges at very low price or even gives them away for free of cost. In return, one has to target the moving caravans. There are abandon house to which could be looted by the perpetrators. Most of the people are scare and it is easiest to rob the scared ones they would plead for their life in lies of valuables like jewelers. It is good for ran away people because they would not have to use bullets and then they did not have to share to booty with the people who gave us the firearms.

The people who have been suffering in partition violence face many problems in refugee camps. The memory portrays how their past, present is and would be their

possible future. They have the memory in their mind about their past which is to some extent glorious. But partition is the climax from where their fate begins to fall. They have been staying their own homeland and never think to leave it. But partition violence traumatizes their life. Now there is every thing lacking in the refugee camps. They suffer the minimum necessities of the survival. They do not have good nutrition, wearing, living home and the most important thing is they have not any social security. The post war situation is more dangerous than the previous.

Partition is not only the portion of the country and family members but also the partition of their soul. In the refugee camps they, become helpless and object of pity because they have nothing except the open sky. Females suffer the most in the violence. Their sorrow can not be expressed in words. They have been victimized because they are females. Many of them are physically and mentally tortured, many of them are raped and killed and have no chance to escape from the violence. Many women like Keshar Devi, Shova Rani and other women are some typical examples of the women who face the partition by themselves. The pillar of their family (male) according to the eastern culture gets killed and all the responsibility must be continued by the women. The main challenging for the women is patriarchal thought prevalent in the society. In the refugee camps also they get mistreated because they are females. Their identity is only the (Addha) half like the Keshar Devi in the society. Along with these problems the real question that the research picks up is the position of these painful memories in national history. Does it succeed to address the traumatized memory of partition victims? In the aftermath of the violence, what is the identity of these victimized people in the mainstream history? We can claim that the national narrative fails to address these questions because it is the male narrative from patriarchal perspective. The visible marker (Monument) like in wages border can not



address the traumatized memory. Without reconstruction of the memory, the Indian mainstream history becomes incomplete.

The women identity is the metaphor for those who have been uprooted, dislocated and have had to reconstruct their identity in new surrounding. The history of discontinuities is related to silence. Verma looks for biographical narratives in which the experience of partition has played an important role. Many elderly men in the society never accept the identities of the women so they are half women called (Addha). Many women like Keshar Devi have the real experience of violence. At first they never want to leave the country but instead they have to change their religion. Family kinship has been killed. Keshar Devi's husband gets killed in the journey to India. Likewise, Shova Rani has also lost her father in the same journey. Many Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India have lost their life. Shova Rani expresses her memory of suffering as:

When partition was announced we realized we did not have a choice. We had to leave for Hindustan which is unknown for us [. . .] So we decide to leave with the convey had several thousand people from different parts of Lahore [. . .] on the way we saw corpse rotten bodies and vultures that were preying on feeble old people or even infants who were not yet dead. I used to feel quiet horrified by everything I saw. On the way villagers attacked the passer-by for money, jewelers and women. (105-06)

This extract makes clear about the condition of women during the partition. People do not have choice but they are forced to have exile, go into the unknown country. They are totally unknown about both Delhi and Amritsar. Thousands of people leave the village and depart towards the India. As Shova Rani says that thousands of people

have been killed and their dead bodies are rotten. Vultures enjoy and in some sight they see some infants thrown in the heap of corpses. They are unsafe also because in many places, the villagers even attack them for money, jewelry and women.

Many women have the shame of being survivors in the ghettos because it is better to die rather than to struggle for the life. Many women have lost their husbands on the way to India. Keshar Devi says that on the way to India her husband was killed. Her two sons survive. It is the matter of shame for everyone having survived after the kinship's death. The testimonies of holocaust survivors and the studies on the survivors of Hiroshima indicate that most survivors feel a kind of shame. After the death of their husband they have the responsibility to bring up their children but this becomes the most challenging job for them. They have no one to help in this problem. Even community and government do not sympathize them. So, these days are humiliating for the women like Keshar Devi. Many women are attacked physically on the way. They even lose their consciousness in train. Keshar Devi is the one who has lost her breast in the most barbaric attack in human civilization. She expresses her memory like:

I was left among the heap of corpses they thought I had died, but I survived and was taken to Army Hospital near Kapurthala. I met my children after a few months in the refugee camp I had injured and people thought I had died. My children and I get trouble. (93)

Many women are victimized in the refugee camps by their own relatives. Their own people have been unfair towards them. The government declares to give some jobs but by the plotting of their own men, women like Keshar Devi are deprived from it. After the death of her husband Keshar Devi has had a hope to get the job in India but

her in-laws and brother-in law do not stand for her. They think that she has been already dead in the journey but they get surprised to see her survived. On the other hand, the women themselves play antagonistic role against the women. Keshar Devi's daughter in laws comments her mother-in-law is clear example of this thought. Keshar Devi has prevailed from Patriarchal thought. She directly controls her family affair. Her daughter in -laws are not satisfied with her. She is a psychologically deformed woman, though; she expends money in her make-up material. All her sons give her daily earning day by day. She never compromises on the things she wants. Keshar Devi's daughter in laws comment is a bit shock for any one because she thinks that a halved woman had forfeited her right her knees and her desire to present herself as a woman? It is her right to behave as a human thought.

Keshar Devi experiences herself in the way she chooses to represent herself as a survivor, a mother, a grandmother, a mother-in-law but she also experiences her being an object, a metaphor we have seen that she experiences the continuity of violence committed on her body reveals that act of physical violence to reduce a human being to an object. Moreover, the memory of violence is commemorated by the metaphor an innuendo we see that Keshar Devi is Adhdha (the halved). Therefore, serving violence also means serving the continuity of that 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, as a stigma.

Many women are compelled to work as sex workers in the new socio-political scenario. They are being mistreated by their family. The family would probably have died of shame and humiliation to accept them as family members. So, many women do not want to name them or talk more about family. They stay in the refugee camps. The family members never used to visit them in the camps. Shova Rani in her

memory tells the story of isolating from her family. After her father's death in riots, her life becomes the life like film story. Her family is the very much prosperous family in Pakistan. But their day begins to fall when her father returns home from the war after losing his legs. They leave homeland and come to India. On the way she loses her father later on in the camps she marries with an old man who used to marry the girl and sell them as a sex worker in brothel. Several young people come there and she has to serve them or make them happy as customer. Other-wise, they are beaten brutally by the (kothi) brothel owner. Trauma of their life has to be hidden and make themselves happy. Shova Rani attempts to resist but it becomes meaningless for her. She says:

I earned my living on G.B Road before reaching G.B Road I was passed around to several men once I realized what had happened to me I resigned myself to my fate and tried to concentrate on (Surviving in) my new situation.[. . .] Several time I was considered to be rude and was beaten. I used to bruise very easily because of my complexion [. . .] I was denied food and water punishment. A woman body sells and there is no religion involved there. Anybody and everybody likes to have his share in my case my own community brought me where I am today. (107)

This memory from Shova Rani clearly shows how they forcefully work as sex workers. She attempts to protest against this situation but it is meaning-less. Community brought her in that condition because she believes in the society and marriage with an old man. But this man used to push the beautiful women towards prostitution. In the case of Keshar Devi also, the community plays antagonistic role to

them. They never accept women as full women. They used to tell them half identity creature. We can say that this is the sexual violence refugee women.

The women's life is so traumatic that their soul cries every time. There is nothing to give them mental and spiritual solace. All of them have faith in God so they used to say that all that happens because of God. What God does is never questionable. Some of them like Shova Rani used to listen to music to get the solace from the traumatic life. She says that she might never cry with tears but her soul cries silently. She finds the solace from traumatized life. Religious songs, songs from old movies are the only source of peace and inspiration for her. She use to keep a radio for the past several years. She has been listening to the song on that radio. She usually sets her mood. When the radio plays the sad songs, her soul cries through her eyes. She is sick in the camps. There is no one to help her. She is suffering from the dry cough. She is suffering form the nostalgia of her young age. She says in a meeting with Verma that *mere bachpan ke sathi dekho bhool na jana dekho hasain na zamana* (my childhood friend do not forgot do not let the world mock us) (71).

Then there are women, the Muslims, are doing unspeakable things just a few miles away in Lahore and inside Pakistan. The Muslim women are also abducted and sold. The Hindu people do not buy them because of their rigidity about the pollution by touch. But a lot of Sikh men take care to the abducted Muslim women as wife or concubines. Several people, make selling and buying abducted women. Later on when the recovery team comes from Pakistan to search their families, there was a problem with Hindu men. They would commit rape and then abandon the Muslim women or sell their off after dishonoring women. They would sell her off. After dishonoring a woman, they did not have the guts to kill her. They would sell off so what they say about Hindus is true. They are chicken hearted beanies.

There are many dangers for women that they have to face in the post-partition period. Women in every family used to get bulk orders for embroidery work .Many women in Rawalpindi would go and stay almost all the whole day and not get any work. Because it is very difficult to find work for the opposite religion and even very dangerous to save their life. Idle young men of their neighborhood would hang them. So it is very difficult for the fathers to save their daughters from such situation. They make the fence some were artificially hang the caution for dog. The word dog signifies pun in this expression. If they would know the dog men may not enter their house on the other hand, the dog here is the men who are always haunting the girls. The caution might be indicated to those women who feel danger from those people. Shova Rani's this expression make more clearly about the situation:

After some time my father asked us to put up a simple fence a round the house. We managed the fence with some sticks and the branches of a tree. After that he painted a tin plat in black and white and wrote "Beware of dog (Kutta se savdhan) and made a crude picture of a black and white dog with his teeth bared and tongue hanging art. The reality was that we could have leftover at home. We were all growing up and were hungry all the time [. . .]. There are two reasons for this sign [. . .] the first is that people will know we have a ferocious dog which we keep locked up during the day (He thought of the dogs in the army) and they will think twice before messing around this place .At the second reason is that this sign is for your three daughters [. . .]. This sign will always remind them to keep themselves safe from the two legged human dog. (104)

The communal bloodbath, which deluged Indians and Pakistani women and their body, becomes an important locus for men to communicate with each other. This interaction gets intensified under the different kinds of cultural and social codes that were then in operation. The codes of honors and shame, purity and pollution, stigma and heroic sacrifice demand women and their bodies should be subjected to a certain kind of reading and discourse. For the new states of India and Pakistan, the recovery of abducted women and children becomes a matter of national honor. Taken at face value, it would appear that honor in the orders of the family, the states are mutually supportive.

Shova Rani is not abducted. She is married to a man who sells her off. Her community tries to find a home for her but it turns out to be a perfidious arrangement. Many such women find the plate where their woes could be addressed but individuals like Shova Rani, Keshar Devi do not have even a language or discourse in which they can express their grief. The stigma of being a halved self or a non self ends speech. Shova Rani mourns the loss of her self: "I am not I was this is partition" (42).

As the sex workers, many women get physical and mental torture. They blame their body that led them to become sex workers but that it is their body that let them survive even in the midst of violence. For example, Shova Rani mourns her lost self which she probably accesses through old Hindi film songs: in her younger days, it was more personal when she carried herself to sleep her, mourn her inability or lack will to die.

"Death doesn't come easily to die you really have to try hard "(43), she tells in one occasion. This expression is especially ironic glorification of violent time and heroic death for women particularly during the partition when male relatives killed the woman or when the women themselves opted for the death in a bid to die with honor.

Shova Rani and Keshar Devi is lives require a tremendous amount of courage and spirit can spirit. But no amount of courage and spirit can promise them hope because they know that their losses are so severe and grievous.

When we are addressing the trauma of those women who are computed to work as sex workers in brothels they have very much heart touching, traumatic experiences. They always want that somebody would come and rescue them. They want to be re-united with the families and they used to weep, cry in the initial period. They have to suppress their personal happiness, personal life and desire. They must perform artificial happiness with the customer, since looking sad is strictly prohibited in the brothels. They can outpour their pain only in the time of the rest. Shova Rani works as a sex worker in her youth. She has such kind of bitter experiences which she says:

When I was trapped in a brothel nobody come to rescue me. I wanted my mother and my sister nobody came. In the initial years I used cry myself to sleep because sleep eluded my eyes. I would often get to sleep in the morning my body was not accustomed to sleeping at such odd hours. So, to sleep I would think about my family and tears would trickle down the corners of my eyes. Several times it happened that the tears would trickle down into my ears causing heaviness in my ears and sometimes I could not hear properly. But one of the rules of the brothels is that during business hours you should not cry or look sad and unhappy. So it is only during the time you rest that is from early in the morning till about mid afternoon that you have time for memory and sadness. (108)



From this traumatic experience, we can anticipate their suffering inside the brothel where many partition victims were selling themselves. They do not get means to outlet their pain and suffering. The most dangerous problem inside the (Kothi) room is the possible transmission of the HIV/AIDS. Many so-called human hounds attack (sexually) the young girls. They are always thirsty for sex. Many of them have been suffering from the diseases that were transmitted to the women through unsafe sexual relationship. Among many customers, some use to be a bit kind and have some kind of reasonable relation with the women. One of the male customers use to visit Shova Rani with fruit and other small gift. She receives emotionally attached gift items from that man. He even loves her and some times promises to marry her. She also feels solace with him. She used to express her pain and suffering with him. She also embroiders a few handkerchiefs for him. Suddenly he stops to visiting her and she feels that all things in her life have gone. Her dream for future has been spoilt within a second.

People find reasons to live even through their darkest hours; after partition millions get killed or die of accidents or illness. Human beings are like that. They know to live how to survive. It is in human nature to dream about another day when they go to sleep. Very few people go to sleep thinking that they will not get up the next morning. Partition is bad for every woman. Millions of Hindus Muslims and Sikhs suffer but they have sprung back and have done well for themselves. To follow the same formula, many women works in brothel with the next day dream.

The women like Moyna and Madhobi are also compelled to sell their body for their survival. They had not any option that makes them comfortably survive. So prostitution becomes only means from which they survive with their family. Drivers, soldiers, men are their customers. When they adopt the prostitution their life style has

been changed. They begin to wear new cloth and be fresh for new customer. For example, when Monya begin prostitution her family starts eating rice twice a day. The quality of her skin improves. She smoothes her hair with fragrant Jaba Kusum oil which gives strong smell. Meenakshie Verma finds so many young girls who have lost their guardians in the partition violence and has the responsibility to take care of their family. Prostitution is not their choice but compulsion. They have not any option except prostitution for their survival.

In the case of women, who claim themselves the women of masculine nature again the categories of the treatment offenders the ranges from sexual abuse to rape to auctioning off to the recent in Gujarat also. Sexual subjugation of women has been widely as an instrument of violence. There are reports every-where of gang rape of young girls and women often in the presence of members of their family followed by their murder by burning alive or bludgeoning with a hammer and the case with screw driver.

Ethnocidal violence in its extreme form utilizes the training it has gained in what to do with bodies of men and women particularly if they are the enemy. Rape in this context becomes a counterpart to the physical examination of men asking them to strip for investigation and the exploration of the body. The desire to investigate the bodies of any enemy also suggests the deeper anxieties about the self.

In order to maintain family ties, one should resort to family, elders to address this question or else the family would break. They should bear any situation of domestic violence, incest and material rape. Many women's bodies are appropriated by the over arching discourse of maleness and aggressive masculinity. In this case also they have been treated according to the religion. The Hindu women's body gets violated by a non Hindu and non Hindus by Hindus. Therefore, overlooking the

sexual crimes committed against women by the members of their own community is always the matter of shame for everyone. The masculine in the female body is invoked in response to a perceived threat from the others. The women must not cross the traditional bonds determined by the society. Many women struggle against the wrongly established norms of the society.

The memories of the past can be recounted in the present and it can not be explained. The violence that erupted at the time of partition is also the result of a lack of preparedness on the part of the two newly formed nation states. This lack of preparedness gets reflected in other fields. Statesmen like Nehru and Jinnah are more concerned with the theoretical aspects of administering a nation state as is reflected in the speeches and debates that followed before and after the formation of the two new countries. The memories related to the violence that accompanied partition fall short of explaining the state of recurrent ethnocidal India and South Asia. There was hardly any preparedness on the ground to deal with the need of the millions of people who were soon going to be citizens of India and Pakistan. While celebrating newly acquired freedom and autonomy, religion-based identities were looked up on as residual categories that became the cause of the stunning violence. People very quickly assume the role of figure citizens of the two new nations. They kill tattooed and mutilate inscribing each other as Hindustanis and Pakistanis. In most of the cases, women's bodies become sites of violence because they are physically and mentally weak then the man. Violence is inscribed on the bodies of the Hindu Muslim and Sikh women.

Up to now the research discusses about the traumatized female history and Women's memory that they bear during the partition. Meenakshie Verma's first hand experience with the partition victims. Now the research relates the traumatic memory

of women with the politics of national identities. The memory serves as a ground for determining identity and means for explicit identity construction. When we analyze this memory to understand devoid of obscurities in our memories ambiguity is the rule. So while memory should support the dominant view of our identity, the trouble is that it always threatens to undermine it either by obvious gaps and uncertainties or by the glimpse of the past that no longer seems to be ours. When we observe our texts the memory of Shova Rani, so-called Addha, Madhobi and Moyna should support the identities of these women but it always threatens their existence and struggle to survive as the human beings. So we can find ambiguity in their identity because on the one hand, it clarifies the harmfulness of their life, and struggle for existence while on the other hand, this memory also appeals the national historiographer to address their identity but it is totally neglected by the state holders.

Memory of the many victims emerges into consciousness. In forging links or continuity between past and present, between who we are and who we think we are, memory operates most frequently as threads of narrative. Memories express their first hand experiences that they bore during partition and their present measurable condition in refugee camps. So this gap between past and present reveals the treatment of nation towards these victims. Their narrative shows that they are being neglected. Even the ideological function of partition historiography has been different from the Holocaust literature. The chief objects have been to consolidate different national identities in South Asia.

These ideas provide an opportunity for historians and other social scientists to contemplate how one should go about writing the history of violence and survival should it be done in the same way as has not already been done in the writing of the history for nationalism and national movements. In the case of the partition history

also, the historiographer should address the history of violence and survivor and it should give the proper addressing to the women's memory. Do memories match with the history? What is the gap between memory and history? There are several questions regarding this issues. The present India and Pakistan's history neglect the real fact of the violence; rather they are composed as per the interest of the state holder. The Indian history totally forgets the victimization of the Pakistani especially Muslim women and even the Indian Muslim women and even the Indian women also and same as to the Pakistani history.

So at last, we come to the conclusion that without addressing these memory or without reconstructing the memories of women and without including the traumatic experience of women in the main stream history, the national history of India and Pakistan remains incomplete because the present existing history is only the male narratives of the violence and mainly Hindu narrative. So without the representation of these narrative the mainstream narrative becomes incomplete.

#### IV. Conclusion

Meenakshie Verma's *Aftermath*, an oral history of violence is the collection of the memories from many victims who witnessed the partition violence by themselves. It is the lively record of the violence where millions of people lost their lives and property. This book clarifies that the partition of the British India was not only the partition of the countries but also the partition of the families and even their soul. It was the significant event of the history of both India and Pakistan but, the histories of the post-partition periods neglected the memories of many victims. The book *Aftermath* is the collection of those memories which were neglected by the national narratives. Therefore, until and unless, the national narratives do not address these memories, the representation of the partition victims is incomplete.

The partition of British India is an important event that ever occurs in India and Pakistan. Many families had been destroyed because of the death of their family member in riots. *Aftermath* shows how people were compelled to leave their native homeland and flee away towards the foreign land. They were taken as second class human beings, "the refugees". They had love, faith and respect to their country but violence distorted their dream. In the refugee camps, their life became very much painful because there was not any means of livelihood for them. Many of them were compelled to engage in illegal work to solve their hand to mouth problem. Even some of the young women were working as sex workers to take care of their families. *Aftermath* explains this kind of compulsion of Moina Keshar Devi and many other women. The government was totally neglecting towards these victimized people. Women were the ones mostly affected by the negligence of the government. Because of sexual discrimination they had to fight inside their communities and outside the camps as well. They lost their male partners in the riots and they had to take care of all the responsibilities of the family.

The event partition violence generated the traumas on the people who have been displaced and marginalized from their countries. People are existing with a memory of

their past. They also experienced violence and also had a memory of riots. *Aftermath* is the lively record of such events. They examine their presents link with their past and their possible future would be more pessimistic. It gives the real picture of partition and post-partition period, thereby explaining their effect on women.

National history also collected the events of the partition period. It suggested that the partition of British India was primarily a new political arrangement which did not deeply affect the central structure of Indian society or the broad contours of its history. But *Aftermath* suggests that the partition amounted a sundering, a rapture inauguration of the whole new beginning and thus a radical construction of the community and history in India, Pakistan and elsewhere in South Asia. There is some force in this argument because there is no such thing as impromptu memory. Memory is always the interaction with society and culture. However, historians reject all the memories that are based on fact. Similarly, in the memories of the partition of India and Pakistan there are several cultural and political tropes through which partition and memories are associated. But the national narratives remain always silent towards these facts. It never associates the facts that had happened in the violence. The constructed history and historians are always biased towards the victimization of the women. Therefore, these mainstream histories of India and Pakistan are incomplete. To give the real shape to these histories, we should reconstruct the partition memories according to the feminist point of view. Without including these forgotten memories of the victims like Shova Rani, Keshar Devi, Moyna, Mudhabi, the national narratives never become the representation of all people.





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