

*Analyse The Other Side of Midnight from the point of View of Women as the marginalised*

Women who lived through the Partition often felt lost and had their ideas of home turned upside down. In the fourth chapter of the book "Women," Butalia narrates the narrative of Zainab, a young Muslim woman, and her Sikh husband, Buta Singh. Butalia said that Zainab had been kidnapped as her family was moving from India to Pakistan. She had been transferred around a lot before being sold to Singh. They got married, and they loved each other. "They had a family with two young girls" (127).

Singh's family thought that Zainab and her kids would take away a bigger piece of the Singh's ancestral property. The search group has been told by Singh's brothers and nephews that Zainab was with them. She has to go back to her parents' house with the hope that she would move back in with her husband and kids. Singh also found out that her parents wanted to marry her cousin so that her property would stay in the family's male line. He chose to become a Muslim and move to Pakistan to be with her. Zainab was already married. When Zainab said she would never talk to Singh again. He killed himself later. There was a note in his pocket that said he wanted to be buried in Zainab's village. "This wish, however, was to remain unfulfilled" (130).

The story shows how Partition was complicated by gender, sex, religion, and class. Zainab was stuck in different systems, such as religion, family, and patriarchy. She was initially identified as a Muslim woman and thereafter co-opted by the patriarchy. Additionally, she is situated within familial and political-economic contexts: her birth family required her for financial purposes. They took her and married her to a cousin so they could keep her possessions. The story showed a lot about how her family members controlled women.

Butalia looked at violence against women in their own families. To protect the family's honour, the males burned or killed the women so that men of "other" religions would not take them or hurt them. To escape this terrible assault, several of the women drank poison and jumped into wells. All women are affected by the fact that "nowhere in the different discourses on Partition do such incidents count as violent incidents; instead, they are constructed as valorous acts, devoid of the violence and coercion that must have led so many women to their deaths" (214). Specific

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gender constructs were utilized to interpret these occurrences; the women could not be identified as "violent beings." Their behaviours are perceived within the comfortably symbolic domain of sacrifice, particularly regarding their domestic roles. To actively remember these women as symbols of the honor of the family, community, and nation is to strip them of both violence and agency (216).

Butalia contends that the matters about women's 'suicides,' compulsion, or intentionality must remain unsolved, as their voices are irretrievable (212).

Butalia also talks about sexual assaults that happened across different religions during Partition. She says that most of the women who were raped were poor women because the rich women could travel by plane, vehicle, or under escort, but not by foot (328). To make the recovery of abducted women seem more real and natural, the Indian government used certain symbols. One of the most important examples came from the epic Ramayana. Rama had to go through a lot of trouble to get his wife Sita back from the evil Ravana. During Partition, Indian lawmakers in Parliament said, "As descendants of Ram, we must bring back every Sita that is alive" (174). They think of the people of Pakistan as Ravana, and the Indian government sees itself as secular or pluralist instead of Pakistan.

The sixth chapter of the book, called "Children," is about how children were left behind during Partition. A lot of kids are separated from their parents when they move. There are no data on the number of people who were abandoned, kidnapped, lost, or even adopted, but anecdotal stories show that gender played a role in their fate. For instance, males who were kidnapped were commonly employed as troops against the enemy in "killing sprees," and girls who were kidnapped were often "sold into prostitution" (261). Adopted boys were frequently reared as the biological offspring of the family, while girls were utilized for auxiliary roles, such as domestic assistance (250). Muslims who lived in a mostly Muslim region thought that Hindu and Sikh kids were smarter than their own kids. So, Muslims take Hindu and Sikh youngsters and adopt them. Hindus, on the other hand, thought that Muslim kids were considerably stronger than their own kids when it came to physical skills. So, they sought to get those kids to join their religion.

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The seventh chapter of the book, "Margins," is largely about the problems that marginalized people, especially Dalits or "untouchables," face. The common narrative of Partition mostly focused on the issues that middle-class people, mainly Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, faced. Butalia writes: Among these are stories of a lot of people who live in a world that is wrongly thought of as being on the outside. I think these histories have been concealed because so much literature about Partition has centred on Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim men, as if no other identity existed.

(297) The Partition had a very different effect on Dalit women than it did on middle-class women. The upper-class Hindus did not see them as their equals. They did not identify with Hindus; the social invisibility that characterized their lives in stable times persisted over centuries. Butalia says that "they had no property to be looted; and, perhaps, too, Dalit women were saved from mass rape because their male relatives were outside the honour/dishonour/revenge circuit" (326).

A lot of Pakistani Hindu immigrants have found shelter in Dalit communities since the Partition. The Dalits were forced to move because of their arrival, and many of them even found shelter in the jungle. The Indian government took in these refugees there, but now the dalits, or individuals who are on the outside, are being moved or kicked out. Butalia says that when Anis Kidwai and Sushila Nayyar traveled to Bihar, they saw a group of old Harijan men standing on the edge of the hamlet and looking at their old homes, crying at what had happened to them. They were getting their community ready to welcome the Hindu immigrants who would be coming from Pakistan. "But what about us?" they asked. "Where will we go?" Who will take care of us? And there really wasn't somebody to take care of them because they didn't meet any of the criteria that would have allowed them to get aid. (302-03)

Butalia says that women "seldom spoke about women" during Partition (126). She thinks that certain women's writing on Partition is ignored, whereas the writing of males or their valor is celebrated in modern history. *Other Side of Silence* has a lot of powerful consequences for historiography. It can be described as a diverse form of subaltern writing that unintentionally contests the conventional nature of historiography.