

Trauma studies in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* by Urvashi Butalia

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Article Received: 09/08/2023

Article Revised:10/09/2023

Article Accepted:12/09/2023

Published Online:16/09/2023

DOI:10.47311/IJOES.2023.5.09.85

Abstract

The field of trauma studies in literary criticism gained significant attention in 1996 with the publication of various works. The initial period of literary trauma theory gives the idea of trauma as an unrepresentable event. A theoretical trend was introduced by scholars like Caruth, who suggests trauma is an unsolvable problem of the unconscious. But Lacanian approach crafts a concept of trauma as an intermittent sense of absence separates knowledge of the extreme experience. This project focuses on the real trauma of people in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, along with religious violence and people's experience on pain and sufferings. This research explores the real traumatic experience faced by people during partition especially on the side of women. This paper focuses on how trauma plays an important role in human minds and people experience in the book *The Other Side of Silence*.

Keywords: Partition, trauma, violence, struggles and People experience.

The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India is a book written by Urvashi Butalia. She was born in Haryana and was from Punjabi heritage. In the early age she was an Indian feminist writer, publisher and activist. Butalia is known for her work in the Women 's movement of India. She is the founder of Zabaan books in the year 2003 and also co-founder of Kali for Women along with Ritu Menon, which is one of the first feminist publishing house of India in 1984. She won Padma Shri award in 2011 for her contributions in literature and as well as in education, this award is India's fourth highest Civilian award. Her major works are *Women and Right-Wing Movements: Indian Experience* (1995), *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from Partition of India* (1998), *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir* (2002), *Inner Line: The Zabaan Book of Stories by Indian Women* (2006).

The Other Side of Silence: Voices from Partition of India gives a clear picture on partition and is one of the best historical oral narratives on the division of the country. The book revolves around the survivors who lived during partition violence and captures their experiences. Butalia interviewed each and everyone individually about what had happened during partition. She reveals how the people on the margins of history like children, women, ordinary people, the lower castes and the untouchables were affected by this upheaval. It stimulates multiple dimensions of partition, Butalia examines not only on recent developments in the expanding field of partition studies but also the ways in which this massive tragedy continues to impact our lives.

“A magnificent and necessary book” said by Salman Rushdie

Trauma studies was first developed in the year 1990’s and depended on Freudian theory to develop a model of trauma that creates an excessive experience which challenges the limits of language and even meaning altogether. Trauma studies explores the impact of trauma in literature and society by analysing its psychological and cultural aspects. The ideas of traumatic experience challenged the limits of language and the psyche.

The effect of violent gives traumatic experiences among people during partition and real impact can be seen between different religions and communities. Freud says that “neurosis also can be equated with a traumatic illness” and its experience is powerful. Mainly trauma studies focus on the identity and memory in literature.

The book *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from Partition of India* gives a clear view on trauma studies. The author deals with the partition experiences and the struggles people faced due to violence. As the author mentions “The purity of women was of much more importance within India, to Hindu religionand pollution.” (p:161) The above lines explain the situation of women in the society where women are considered as objects. As the writer qua line from Ramayana and Mahabharata about “the story of Sita’s abduction by Ravana, showing how she remained pure despite her time away from her husband.” This shows how women were portrayed by their own family members and by their society. The women who were raped by other religious men in violence and they are said to sent away from their own family. Due this reason women became violent in their behaviour.

“Adding his voice to the concern for the double trauma women would have to face, Shri Mahavir Tyagi said that these girls had already been the victims of violence.” (p: 181)

“The very formation of the nation of Pakistan out of the territory of Bharatwomen.” (p:183) This all are the examples of women’s trauma during partition. Their children also affected by partition in various ways, they left their mother and spent their lives in the ashram.

“If it is indeed true that children were abducted for this reason, it is both tragic and ironic that, just as the bodies of women became vehicles for the honour and dishonour of the race so the bodies of children, and in this case of male children, became the vehicles for the passage of something as nebulous as intelligence.” This show how children were affected by partition trauma.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the article portrays the real trauma of women during partition and the impacts of violence on women. It studies how women and children were affected by partition trauma. The article explores the traumatic experience of people as a whole in the book *The Other Side of Silence*.

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