



Available online at www.jlls.org

**JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE
AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES**

ISSN: 1305-578X

Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 17(2), 1157-1161; 2021

INDIA'S PARTITION: DEPICTING ANGER AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN *ICE CANDY MAN* AND *SUNLIGHT ON A BROKEN COLUMN*

Dr. Pragti Sobti¹, Dinesh Kumar^b

^a Assistant Professor, Department of English, Maharaja Ganga Singh University, Bikaner (Rajasthan).
sobtipragti@gmail.com

^b Research Scholar, Department of English, M.G.S. University, Bikaner (Rajasthan).
dksonienglish@gmail.com

APA Citation:

Dr. Pragti Sobti, Dinesh Kumar (2021). INDIA'S PARTITION: DEPICTING ANGER AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN *ICE CANDY MAN* AND *SUNLIGHT ON A BROKEN COLUMN*, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(2), 1157-1161.

Submission Date: 20/02/2021

Acceptance Date: 15/05/2021

Abstract

In the minds of the people of the Sub-continent, the partition remains ineradicable due to its negative impact on them. The love for the nation and the struggle for freedom gradually took a form of communal fury that destroyed innocent people and marginalized the society. India's sudden and rude shock – Pakistan Partition unnerved women, and they became a particular target of communal fury. And in the crisis ravaged days they were the worst sufferers. The reports about the partition show the psychological pain, the emotional abuse the women have endured. Many female authors have emerged to describe the pain that the Sub-Continent's inmates endure. Surprisingly both the novel *SUNLIGHT ON A BROKEN COLUMN* by Attia Hosain and the *Ice-Candy-Man* by Bapsi Sidwa portray female characters who were the sufferers of the socio-political upheaval but who naturally revolt against the prevalent fundamentalism of the times. They both chose courageous characters to express their agony and pain in their writings. These novels analyze the ill effects of partitioning through the eyes of women narrators.

Keywords: Communal fury, Trauma, Psychological trauma, Partition, Agony

¹ Corresponding author.

E-mail address: sobtipragti@gmail.com

Introduction

India's partition continues to be one of the most traumatic human tragedies which can not be washed out from the people memories of both Pakistan and India too easily and too quickly. The partition's rude and sudden shock panicked the people, killed their human qualities, and turned them into feral beasts, perpetrating extraordinarily barbaric cruelties toward their fellow humans. They plundered shops and homes and burned them, killed little children and women. Women became a special object of the communal fury. And in the crisis ravaged days they were the worst sufferers. Also, women were kidnapped, raped, and paraded nude with shaven heads in the streets. The pain was not a brief one for them; they have persistent to bear their burden even since the partition. Partition has stimulated many authors' artistic imagination and desire. The novels which were written during the partition period expose the psychological trauma and the mental torture experienced by the women.

A Feminist perspective

Many Female authors have emerged to describe the pain endured by the women in our SubContinent. Among them, Attia Hosain, an author, feminist and a large caster, born in Lucknow in 1913, holds as the first female Muslim author to portray the partition, and her novel *SUNLIGHT ON A BROKEN COLUMN* is the only novel about partitioning written by a Muslim woman. Attia Hosain agrees to carry out impartial research into the whole situation. They were thankful to the Hindus for safeguarding Muslims from the brutal violence. This novel depicts the effect of the partition among the members of the family living peacefully and safely in a hut like house "Ashiana," far away from the real life of bloodshed and violence at Lucknow.

In her novel *Ice-Candy Man*, Bapsi Sidwa, who is a Parsi living in Pakistan during partition, portrays communal conflict and partition through the eyes of an eight-year - old Parsi girl Lenny, who lives a relaxed life with her four members of her family and the Hindu Ayah Shanta. Although Attia Hosain is capturing the Muslim suffering at Lucknow whereas Bapsi Sidwa is trying to portray the terrible condition at Lahore, they are giving us a clear picture of women's struggle during the prevalent adverse political historical conditions of the country. Yet surprisingly both Attia Hosain and Bapsi Sidwa represent female characters who are the center of the socio-political instability but who obviously revolt against the prevailing fundamentalism of the times. In all the situations the girl-child is the protagonist of the book.

They argued that India had a harmonious, tolerant society in which men and women of all religions lived peacefully together. Wide upheavals have destroyed a society that made the lives of women insupportable. Both Laila and Lenny are aware that, apart from an intense fight against dogmatism, there are no easy solutions for communal holocaust. Attia Hosain supports Laila 's intense attempts to break

from traditional practices, reject discontent and accept suffering. The heroine narrator takes no shelter from mysticism or the glorification of the past.

Similarly, in the religious holocaust of the partition, Bapsi Sidhwa said there was no winner. Her book is a fitting warning of the dangers of the social folly, written in a time in history when religious and racial strife is at risk of disintegration of the continent. In her novel *SUNLIGHT ON A BROKEN COLUMN* (1961), Attia Hosain deals with India's struggle for independence and it describes the horrific action of communal violence and demonstrates how Indians' struggle against British rule has become the struggle within themselves, and tries to diagnose the pain and untold effects of the partition.

The memories of Laila's child narrator beautifully portray life after partition. As Laila grows up, she finds in her thirties, under Gandhi's leadership, people in both communities engaged in the national fight for independence. Hindus and Muslims came out on streets in the true veins of freedom, parades and processions to announce liberation slogans. Countless young men and women participated with all their hands in these upheavals. Asad, a family member who believes in the principles of Gandhi is fully committed to freedom. But then the unified battle unfortunately degenerated into a group. Asad, the voice operator, sees and exposes his latent motives and intentions in the dark game of the alien leaders. He states explicitly that the British sent us the message: "*Hate each other-love us.*" (SBC.56) when Zahid expresses his fears that a riot might take place during Muharram, Asad says, "*It might be because there has been none for too long, not even Hindu-Muslims.*"

Asad's words make Laila sleepless and panicky. The Indian freedom movement had been going through a setback as religion's bigotry entered politics. Envy, hate, and aggression have become commonplace and Lucknow's conventional courtesy is completely lost:

"No one seemed to speak anymore, everybody protested and not in the elegant style of our city ... It was as if somebody had sneaked into the live ammunition of the fireworks" (230).

Hamid is failing in his attempt to keep his family together and sees his hopes and aspirations destroyed. The ethnic conflict leads not only to the division of the world, but also to individuals and families. Saleem wants to go to Pakistan, though Kamel is profoundly grieving the family's division in India. Asad, a committed supporter of the Mahatma Gandhi, advocates non-violence and works hard in the disturbing regions of the South in 1946. Asad continues to serve and thus carries the message of peace, non-violence and tolerance, even after the death of his brother, with horrifying community violence. Laila is aware of the acts of abuse, murder, rape and mutilation on both sides of the border that have always been used. She wishes to thank the Hindus for persecuting Muslims. She then goes on to say:

"Where were you, Zahra, when I was sitting at night watching village after village being set on fire, closer and closer every day? Sleeping in a comfortable house, guarded by police officers and sentries? Do you know who would have rescued my child and me? Sita, who took us to her home, even though she risked her own life with ours. And Ranjit, who came from his village when he learned of what was happening in the house."

He accuses Muslim leaders of hate and abuse fanning, and then fleeing to the safer side of the border. She went on to say,

"Do you know who saved all the others who didn't hav(Hosain)e Sitas and Ranjits? Where were all the members? The only people left to save them were the very Hindus they ran against. Stop the murderous mob at any cost, even if that meant shooting people out of their own religion."

Ice-Candy Man (1988) is the second analytical text by the Pakistani writer Bapsi Sidhwa. Ice-Candy Man makes public all the invisible suffering of the separation between the Indian subcontinent and its effect through the polio-ridden child-narrator Lenny, who says, "my universe is low." I understand the meaning and purpose of things. "(ICM,28) It was Sidhwa 's turn to equip Lenny with every device that made it possible for the narrator to see and narrate the dangerous brutality of the partitions event. Bapsi Sidhwa shows the brutality and the terror of splitting through the eyes of the narrator very expertly.

In her novel, "Ice-Candy - Man, The entire world burns. It's so warm that the air on my skin is so hot, that my cleansing and body will catch fire" (137) Similar to the novel of Attia Hossains' novel, Bapsi Sidhwa recounts also the violent nature of collective hysteria through children's protagonist Lenny in her novel Ice-Candy: Man: the whole world is burning.

The eight-year - old girl Lenny tells of the events that surround her from the perspective of a child. She depicts increasingly growing children, and becomes more aware of changing environments around her. Viewed from the lenses of an oppressed girl-child minority, she reflects on the deteriorating social climate during pre-partition days.

Bare figures are a sign of the absurdity of the greatest social collapse in history. Bapsi Sidhwa aptly depicts the Partition's inexorable logic that keeps citizens and friends both poor and inefficient. Partition is expressed as a sequence of human suffering and anguish representing events. *"Over the space of three months, seven million Muslims and five million Hindus and Sikhs were eradicated in the greatest and most devastating merger of peoples known to history" (159) (English version)*

Lenny's understanding of Lahore's demographic change accurately shows settled life's dislocation. She observes in astonishment, *"Lahore is suddenly drained from yet another hoary dimension: there are no caste-marked Brahmins — or Hindus with bodhis in dhotis."*

As always, Ayah's admirers are united around her for love, for a moment, sidetracking religious sentiment and Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Parsi. Others willingly come together without such agendas, to stand up for cultural and religious identities with members of their own culture. Brahmins form an exclusive circle of their own.

Admirers of Ayah who maintained a mask of solidarity by cracking ribald jokes about the features of the group have become violent and succumb easily to collective insanity. Indeed, the psychology of the Partition horrors in people lives is cleverly described by Bapsi Sidhwa. Group hysteria affects people distortingly and causes mistrust, rumor and resentment.

The narrator is aware that the massive population exchange is causing difference and pain. Sidhwa demonstrates that during group conflicts people's emotions and past relationships are ignored. The

friends and colleagues of Queens Park in Lahore have spoken over and over in their hometown about the irony of violence against each other.

This makes the effect of separating children well-known, as we can see from the narrators' expressions that make them feel that India is scared of division and its consequential impact. These are the evidence that we see from Lenny and Laila's fair eyes, who are children without religious discrimination.

Conclusion

Both the authors offer a realistic insight into the distress that In their contributions to fiction both have remained critical and attempted to expose human nature and their propensity to commit aggression and barbarism in their own culture. Of course the novels show that their authors have been shaken up by a traumatic experience of the partition and reject indignation at the appalling Holocaust that claimed a huge loss of innocent human lives. It also clearly shows that, on the one hand, men attend a party to have fun, and, on the other hand, women attend parties to appease and invite their husbands. Almost every female character tries to save her place and does not give up under male surveillance.

In Sidhwa's novel, during the Ayah's abduction and forced marriage, she suffers the worst possible humiliation and in the words of godmother, is "Used like a sewer" by "Drunks, peddlers, sahibs and cut throats." Her name, identity and religion are taken away from her, but nothing changed her indomitable will and spirit. As soon as the opportunity presented itself, she seized it with both her hands and opts for her freedom from the man she does not love. Whereas, Attia seems to uphold Marxist feminists in her depiction of the oppressed proletariat, "Gender oppression is a product of class oppression, overthrowing capitalism is the means for unending women's oppression."

The novels describe thoughtless violence dividing and commenting on its socio-historical effects on women.

References

Anand, Mulk Raj. "A Profile" Sunlight on a Broken Column. (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1979) p.xi.

Amin, Amina. Tension between Restrictions and Freedom: The Purdah Motif in Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column. P.119. in Margins of Erasure. Eds. Jasbir Jain and Amina Amin. Cowasjee, S. and Duggal, K. S., eds. Orphans of the Storm: Stories on the Partition of India. New Delhi: UBS Publishers, 1995.

Das, Veena. "National Honour and Practical Kinship: Of Unwanted Women and Children." In her Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India, pp. 55-84. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1995.

Gupta, P. S., ed. . *Towards Freedom: Documents on the Movement for Independence in India, 1942-1944*. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1997.

Hosain, Attia. *Sunlight on a Broken Column: A Novel*. A. Heinemann, 1979.

Jalal, Ayesha. "Nation, Reason and Religion: Punjab's Role in the Partition of India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 32 (8 August 1998), pp. 2183-90.

Menon, Ritu and Bhasin, Kamla. *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998.

Philips, C. H. and Wainwright, M. D., eds. *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives 1935-47*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1970.

Sidhwa, Bapsi (1989). *Ice-Candi-Man*, penguin books, Delhi.

Sidhwa, Bapsi (2000). Interview with mini kapoor, *Indian express*, jan. 9 , 2000.

South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, vol. 18 (1995), Special issue, "North India: Partition and Independence".

Talib, G. S., ed. *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*. New Delhi: SGPC, reprinted 1991.
