Sacks of Mutilated Breasts: Violence against Women and Body Politics in Partition Literature

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Abstract  

South Asian writers’ partition accounts attest that women from all backgrounds of culture and religion were the worst victims of the newly-created India-Pakistan border of 1947. Women's bodies were kidnapped, stripped naked, raped, disfigured (their breasts were cut off), engraved with religious symbols, and slain before being transported in train carriages to the "other" side of the border. Taking the romantic example of Bapsi Sidhwa’s Ice Candy Man/Cracking India (1988), we will look at the symbol of women's breasts, following on the theories of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault on power and governmentality, framed within the rhetoric of Mother India, where violence against women is a commonplace Bapsis Sidhwa’s theory of women’s rights. As a result, we will examine the passage of sacks of damaged breasts as a horrible testimony to Partition history and as a metaphor for border crossing, undermining the nation's stability. In light of Julia Kristen's abjection theory, we will view female corpses with damaged breasts as abject who push the bounds of normative society, exposing its frailty. Finally, the novel covered in this document can be seen both as a disgraceful condemnation of a brutal de/colonial process and as a witch for feminist resistance (doing Herstory). The agony and grief of mutilated women's bodies are depicted in authors such as Bapsi Sidhwa to reveal the dialectic of history/body (the trajectory of the violation of women's rights).

Keywords- Mutilated Breasts, Rape, Partition, Women, Violation, Cultural, Religion.

The present study explores the rhythmic articulation of the nationalism of Bapsi Sidhwa’s novel, Cracking India (1988). Partitions by South Asian writers show that the newly built boundary between India and Pakistan in 1947 was mainly affected by women of all ethnic and religious backgrounds. In particular, Cracking India exposes the degrading sexual assault that women have suffered on this historic occasion. According to Mohanram, a study has only recently focused on the predicament of women refugees during the 1947 partition. The horrific statistics concerning refugees—between 75,000 and 100,000 Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh women who have been kidnapped and subjected to numerous rapes, mutilation and forced Marriages or conversions by men from other communities—are matched by the treatment...
of the women kidnapped in national hands. According to Das, 8,000 of the 50,000 Muslim women kidnapped across India have been returned from the 1949 Constituent Assembly, while 12,000 out of 33,000 Hindu and Sikh women kidnapped have been found (20-21). Sexual crimes against girls and women are undeniably a direct result of the seizure of women's bodies in the dialectics of patriarchal communalism. Cracking India presents women as sexual objects and cultural symbols that underlie ethnic, sexual violence.

**Mutilated Breast Sacks: Violated Women's Bodies as Messages**

*Ice Candy Man* awaits his sisters at the railway stop in Lahore during Partition Communal Disputes. When the train comes from Gurdaspur inadvertently carry mutilated Muslim women's bodies and breast sacks, he shouts, everybody's dead. They're all Muslims. Among those who died, there are no young ladies. Only two gunny bags are full of breasts for women. The mutilated breasts can be considered, in nationalistic terms, a declaration that the enemy's community is intended to be removed, but not the so-called “six” according to Menon and Bhasin: “If they amputate their breasts at once they disagree with a woman, and they deny her as a wife and mom” (44).

The narrative of the Sikhs' assaulting and kidnapping of numerous women, including his mother and sisters, and his survival and arrival in Lahore is also remembered by Ranna, who was the victim of this novel Ranna. “They slaughter all Muslims. Putting fire in the middle of communities and mosques, plundering and displaying Muslim women naked in the street—rape and mutualise them. [...] There is an awful hunger, the bodies pulled up in curves. Ranna was assumed dead by the rioters, taken in a lorry full of dead bodies to the Mosque, the spectator of” guys who were copulated with mourners—old and young women. He noticed a naked woman hanging her head down from a ceiling fan, the pale Kashmiri skin damaged with violet and slashes. [...] jerky males set fire to their lengthy air. He saw kids taken from their moms, struck down walls and savagely raped and killed their hurling mothers.” This fictional passage resembles a true catalogue of Menon and Bhasin of the special characteristics of community crimes against women during riots in the partition: stripping; parading naked; mutilating and defamation; breast tattoos or branding and genitalia with triumphant slogans such as “Pakistan, Zindabad!”, “Hindustan, Zindabad!” Since the awful historical occurrence, authors and artists of both sexes have talked about the kidnapping, murder and transport of women's bodies to the other side of the border by carriages.

The novel turns the Ice Candy Man into an uncontrollable beast to witness the sacks with mutilated breasts: “I lose my senses when I think about the mutilated bodies on the train that night [...], I went craze, I say to you: I lobbed grenades through the windows of Hindus and Sikhs I knew for my whole life!” (156). This brutality is spurred Ice Candy Man on Hindu and Sikh women to violence, and Ayah becomes the victim he most cruelly afflicts even though he is reportedly in love with her. By capturing her and making her a sexual slave, he satisfies his hunger to take vengeance and forces her to become Muslim and marry him. Ayah is depicted merely as a body; therefore, his admiration for her is translated into contempt he feels for Hindus now. He is separated from all identification. He is taken by her band—to avenge his damaged pride with a group of fanatics. Ayah (when she has a name, she is always called 'nanny') has no personal identity after this incident; she becomes a Hindu lady who needs to be punished for the horrors committed by her community. Her name is always called 'nanny'.

When it comes to empathy, the difference between being in pain and seeing another person in distress, according to Scarry, is the difference between apodictic certainty and radical doubt, as she states that when “one hears about another person's pain, but forgets that the trauma that happens inside the person's body may seem to have the distant character of some profound subterranean fact [...] it may seem as distant as the inability to see another person in pain [...] it may seem as distant as the inability to see another person in pain” (1). She says that suffering is so isolating that we have complete faith in ourselves while we are in pain but have serious doubts when someone else appears to be in agony. As a result of dehumanising his sweetheart by turning her into a monolithic Hindu loathed, Ice Candy Man cannot feel empathy for her pain. It's also worth noting that what converts Ice Candy Man into a depredator isn't his
feelings of sympathy or empathy for the wounded women and the pain they must have undergone, but rather the insult to his manhood that the violated bodies represent.

Women are not depicted as victims of the massacre in Ice Candy Man’s national discourse because the male beneficiaries of the message brought about by the mutilated women's bodies were deemed the victims of the communal conflict acts. This paragraph exposes the instrumentalisation of women's bodies in patriarchal societies in the sense that the female body is viewed as a social product to be exploited and discarded as a tool of nationalism and vengeance. Because the mutilated women's bodies were considered as missives between communities, he doesn't see Ayah as a person but rather as a message to be returned. This contradictory occurrence could only occur because he interpreted the wounded bodies in patriarchal terms, i.e., violent violence against women takes on semiotic rather than embodied value. Because women's bodies become messages rather than the location of the murder, the massacre is repeated by men in every community.

As Roy writes, women become “with wins against the adversary, written and glorified in their bodies”, (72) the worst victims of civic struggles. "Women's sexuality signifies 'manhood'; its violation is a subject of such shame and disgrace that it must be avenged, “Menon and Bhasin added. Nevertheless, with the brutal logic of all such violence, the ultimate consequences are women” (43). Women's bodies are interpreted only as recipients of the honour of a man—and the violation underlines the function of women as objects in men's constructions of their honour. The tragic situation here is simply that the masculinities of Ice Candy Man was assaulted.

### Abject Bodies and Fallen Women: Raping the Nation

Martín-Lucas said. “In the Indian subcontinent, violations in conflict situations have taken place massively since the first war of division between Pakistan and India in 1947 [...] according to a common patriarchal assumption that women's bodies are a repository of the man's honour,” (54) Women were kidnapped from their houses during the communal disturbances of the partition, and many were brandished, and sometimes women committed mass suicide in the whole family. Women died as they believed they needed their chastity to preserve their family honour to avert sexual rape. The narrative appreciates the child Ranna that “the women of his household are going to pour kerosene and burn themselves, rather than confront the brutality of the mob.” (210) The Indian women, according to Nandy, stand as a nation and frame in Mother India's rhetoric and are therefore considered to be the repository of men's honour for their bodies. Because they are considered the recipients of the nation, rape means breaking traditions. As Pandey says: “a woman's rape is similar to the violations of the community she belongs to.” (105). The notion of purity, so deeply internalised in South Asian societies (as in many others), reinforces nationalist rhetoric about women's purity and defilement, locking them into a discourse in which sexual violence is a form of dishonour that amounts to social death, making the victim desire her physical death, as Menon and Bhasin write, “the notions of shame and honour are so deeply internalised.” (46)

Another sort of violence they were exposed to was their family sacrifice to save the Community honour. However, those who could not prevent rapping's even with their death must be labelled 'dead women.' They were also subjected to brutality against their families. In most cases, they were abandoned by their relatives and transferred to recovery camps, which the young narrator Lenny saw as jails in her interaction with Hamida: “Why were you in jail?” Finally, I inquire: “It isn't a jail, Lenny's baby... It is a camp for fallen women” [...] “Are you a fallen woman?” “Hello, my fate!” (226) groans Hamida, slapping her forehead. It shakes on its heels, and it sounds insane, sucks and expels the air between its teeth.” Hamida re-incarnates the woman's function, a lady with children, but her family is unwilling to return home because of her abduction and rape. As Menon and Bhasin said, “The conviction that protecting the honour of a woman is necessary for sustaining the honour of the man and the community was so powerful and broad that a whole new system of violence came into being, both by males and their parents and by women and their sisters” (44).

Thus, women are affected by two vectors of violence that interact inside and between family and community. Menon and Basin characterise the concentration of both types of violence on the same body (the symbolic site) as “a
continuum of violence in which one's relatives had died on one side and males of the other group were violated and brutalised; on the other.”

In the narrative, together with Ayah's numerous anonymised, mangled bodies are contaminated organisms that cross the borders (national in the case of corpses sent in trains from one side to the other, and ethnic in the case of rapes by members of the other community). These women become abject bodies after they are kidnapped and raped, a sign of collective dishonour. “The same patriarchal order which identifies the body as a symbol of the lineage and purity of the community will classify a whole group as unclean and contaminated, once outsiders rape women,” explains Sarkar. Women’s bodies are exploited because the 'polluted' body is distinguished and not more helpful to its cultural pureness symbolic characteristics. Godmother clearly explains it in the novel: “They cannot withstand the fact that other men are touching their women” (227).

The needy are “threatening rigid frontiers and causing strong anxieties of dirt, pollution, contamination, and defilement” (Jay, 146). Kristava said. When our imagination disintegrates, and the abject becomes a physical menace when we are propelled into the world of abjection since our identity system, and conception of an order has been broken up. The abject is situated at the edge of two stances. It is “not abandoning or accepting a prohibition, the rule of law, but rejecting them.” (15) The source of abjection is what undermines identity, system and order. In the context of nationalism, these scenes rework Kristeva’s view of the abjected, in particular, the raped and prostituted body of Ayah, which represents the overriding expression of abjection and corruption that the society and its agents of power, which are part of the family microcosm, must cover to preserve their core identity.

Judith Butler provides a worldly perspective to corporeality, which is interconnected with the social regulatory processes historically governed and delimited by the organ in her landmark bodies that matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex. “The persistence of the body, shapes, and movements of it, will be entirely material for it. But the effect of power, as the most productive effect of power, will be reconsidered in materiality” (2). Foucault (1991), on the other hand, used the notion of governmentality as an explanation for the transition from oppressive government power to biopower control, which is fundamental to the welfare, care, security of the population in a given region, to go about governance and forms of government. Power is not merely disciplinary and creative, but repressive and deductive (Foucault 95). Foucault regards identity as an anchored political structure with clearly defined boundaries and methods to check what can enter its field. Societies, therefore, tend to reject and control abjection to achieve their national identity as long as their symbolic order is threatened. In Kristeva’s theory, soiled, fuzzy components are boring the boundaries of a regulatory society, showing their vulnerability and corruption, as are the mutilate breasts, usually identified with breastfeeding and milk provision. The problem is that the abject is more obviously always present in community warfare, so identity for individuals and nations is continually jeopardised.

The nationalist discourse has generated a complex politics of corporeality. Theoretically, the women imagination has communicated the nation's abstract concept while continually constructing, controlling, and disciplining everyday women's bodies. The bodies of Ayah and Hamida are sexually and racially marked and are otherwise marked during this process. There is no doubt that the female body, symbolising the language of nationalism, becomes a transitory object. Zaida and Zafar affirm that Sidhwa places community violence on female bodies to symbolise a territory that contests the battle for victory. More specifically, the Ayah and Hamida rapes represent the conflict between the two communities that expel them and are automatically labelled as uneasy and unclean, respectively, as their communities (393). Aya’s fate is, nevertheless, not condemned in the end. Ayah returned to her family and didn't have to enter a rehabilitation camp for women who died. Thus, therapeutic talk of the abject takes place in the novel utilising the Ayah nature, an element of resistance. Ice Candy Man is refused by Ayah when he appears to repent and follows her to the frontier where it has been recovered, and what is generally thought of as "polluted" is recalled from a feminist viewpoint. According to Chinking, “the social stigma of rape makes a raped woman unmarried, disrespectful and traumatised for life in society. In other circumstances, women become
unacceptable to their families” (4–5). Still, Ayah is accepted by her family and refuses her imposed marriage, although it is traditionally a breach of the taboo against the fallen lady. The familiar victim, the polluted woman, now has a female organ which, in favour of the reassertion of its original authority, rejects the life of penance. Sidhwa is proposing a reverse of the prescription. This greatness can be viewed as a feminist battle. Butler said this in his report on vulnerability and resistance, "Butler says that if we also state that the vulnerability to dispossession, poverty, insecurity and harm that constitutes a precarious position in the world itself leads to the opposition, we seem to be reversing this situation (2016: 12). In addition, “mourning has dis-authorising consequences on the national and sexual grieving matrix,” according to Mr Athanasios. The end of Ayah's storey is an act of removing the loyalty device associated with grievance politics and the discourse formativeness that makes women as mothers stand in the nation's idealised pain.

We must not forget, however, that many Hamidas are still looking for justice. Tabasum and Karim said that falling ladies would be raped and cruelly traumatised. They will suffer bodily trauma as they will never accept their family because they are symbols of anger and disgrace. Their families never accept them. Spiritual and human healing remains central to all programs for social justice since it deals with the need for restoration and renewal following individual and collective trauma in 1947. Healing can be achieved through specific reconciliation policies, such as those implemented by the United Council for Relief and Welfare, the Central Recovery Operation, or the Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Act. Still, more attention must be paid to demand reparation for the injustice perpetrated against these millions of women and their families, and we must prioritise it. Women being denied justice highlights the constraints that women face in the formation of the nation-state. According to Elizabeth Grosz’s Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism, “what have perceived as totally stable and unchanging aspects of facticity, biologically given factors, are open to wide historical vicissitudes and modifications.” Sidhwa unlocks the dialectic of culture and body in India through the story of ordinary villagers, who record the rhetoric of the ruthless dishonour of women, speaking at that time by many males of both communities. Sidhwa appears to anticipate that the practice of reminiscing about mutual experiences of the subcontinent’s partition will cause older and younger generations to “re-examine[e] the history of the partition,” (276) as Butalia implies. Most importantly, it may motivate people to resurrect their “interwoven memories” by exchanging forgotten pieces of their "storey" to finally bridge the increasing gap between conflicting ethnic groups on both sides of the border.

Works Cited


