

Revisiting History: Sorayya Khan's Amorphous Noor and Memory

¹Archana Katariya, ²Priyanka Chaudhary

Abstract

"The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it." – Oscar Wilde

'The political is personal'; polity shapes all individuals for Sorayya Khan. History and politics are the superstructures that determine our affiliation and resistance among characters. The essay deciphers how the individual and collective decisions are shaped and affected by larger structures of polity and history. The novel opens with 'words from Kashmiri poet Agha Shahid Ali: Your history gets in the way of my memory'. Khan's effort, in this novel, to shatter the implicit silence amid Pakistan nation-state and explore the gloomy legacy of Pakistanis through the uncanny and unerring art of eponymous Noor, not only implies to Ali and Sajida but also unlocks the ideology, hierarchy and politics within the boundaries of nationalism. The 'memory is the means by which we draw on our past experiences in order to use this information in the present' (Sternberg, 1999), which assists to resolve the unspoken stagnancy in the familial relations. This essay explores how individual memory grows into collective memory by leading the path of episodic memory, post-traumatic stress disorder and dreams to answer the marginal sufferers and the deeds carried out in nation-states as an exponential hierarchy. Concluding an in-depth study of the novel in light of the Bangladesh 1971 Liberation War and the theme of memory, this essay examines the textual and historical relationship, tracing the shift from the official national narrative to the psychological and directing the path from personal memory of community actions is logged into the larger collective memory of the country. In this analysis, how the trauma and its memory of 1971 inhabits, retrieved, both within and outside the individual to reconcile to familial relations and identity of a nation-state. Individual preferences are overshadowed by political existences.

Keywords: *Bangladesh Liberation War, Historical Narrative, Nationalism, Noor, Retrieval of Memory, Sorayya Khan, Traumatic Past*

I. Introduction

The present essay uses the 1971 war related information issued by the Government of Pakistan, Bangladesh as well as India, which is necessary to know the novel in depth. Though, the official forms of the Government of Pakistan are forbidden to access, so, secondary sources have been used to fill in the gap. *Noor* is examined through Psychoanalysis, Nationalism and power relation and ideology approach.

¹ Department of Languages, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

² Department of Languages, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

II. Methodology

Individual and collective memory performs a crucial role in diasporic Sorayya Khan's magnum opus debut novel, *Noor* (2006), forming the identities of all characters including sufferers as well as offenders. The main concern in *Noor* is uprootedness, loss of homeland, rehabilitation, family attachment leading human beings rooted in their inseparable past at any stage of life. Intergenerational reminiscence through and despite Noor's disability are representative of how vicious pasts continue to influence present generations. *Noor* examines problems arising out of delinquency. The characters try to turn their back to the engagement with violence. Though the impact of national politics is transcribed very little, but this is enough to present a clue to reveal the actual picture. Nation is "an imagined political community" (Benedict, 1983), according to Anderson, "nation is a socially constructed community and imagined by the people who identify themselves as part of that group". Salman Rushdie defined Pakistan as an 'insufficiently imagined community' in his novel *Shame* (87). Anderson recognises three inconsistencies while elaborating nationalism: "(1) The objective modernity of nations to the historians' eyes vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists. (2) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept [and] (3) the 'political' power of such nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence." (Benedict, 1983)

Pakistan is never been a conformed or fixed identity for its separation from India then its own partition due to civil war.

National Identity:

Postmodernism considers identity not as something clear and exclusive while as something composed of a variety of fragments. In 'The Question of Cultural Identity', Stuart Hall explains how the understanding of the nature of identity has changed over time, moving from an early phase when it was thought to be a stable entity whose essential core was internal to the subject and remained unchanged throughout the lifetime. Today, identity is believed to be a product of the interaction between the subject and society, on which depends the shaping of personal and collective identities. If, in the past, the individual experienced society as composed of organised blocks creating an ordered picture where elements like class, race, gender, and ethnicity had a determined place and frame, today the internal coherence of those blocks has crumbled, each revealing its complex nature. This transformation has undermined the sense of integrity of the individual who, being unable to relate to a stable pattern, has found himself to be partial, composed of a number of fragments that interact and articulate themselves in different ways according to the circumstances. Therefore, being fragmented and continuously changing, 'the structure of identity remains open' (Hall 1996: 600).

Hall is of the view that national identity is also fragmented as Anderson's theory implies, any nation is a product of the encounter between people of diverse origins and cultures who become part of one political being. Though, a nation is a 'structure of cultural power', where national culture creates a discursive mechanism which represents difference as national unity or identity' (Hall 1996: 61). The 1971 war was fought between Muslims, within the boundaries of an Islamic nation who earlier demanded a separate nation in 1947 in the name of different culture and religion apart from Hindu and Sikh community. It was fought between two diverse ethnicities which questioned the national identity which denies justified share of economic and political part. Nationalism is defined as 'an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy of unity and identity for a population

which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential “nation” (Smith, 2016). For Anderson (2006: 211), “nations are merely “imagined communities” as members of these communities will rarely know each other, and thus they will draw upon the concept of nationality from their own imagined population to which they belong to” (Benedict, 1983). Smith emphasises on ideology as an chief component in the structuring of nation-state, ‘it serves to unify and focus the many grievances and aspirations of different social groups within a particular community or state, and to explain to and activate “the people”’ (Smith 1998: 116).

Insights into Noor:

In an interview given to Cara Cilano, Khan explains that her aim was: ‘to address the silence, to pinpoint it as something that is out there, that defines the history of ’71 in Pakistan, the way we think about who we are, as a way of not taking responsibility for what’s been done. It’s in the doing of the writing – that I’m writing ‘about’ the silence’ (Cilano 2011: 221).

Pierre Nora (1989) has explained the difference between history and memory, stating “while the former is the reconstruction, problematic and incomplete, of a succession of past events, memory is the product of a collective process based on the continuous elaboration of something that happened in the past and which, for this reason, is never complete.” Khan formed a novel which reminiscences the problematic historical event through the characters who are directly been a part of this factual happening and later participating in the development of shared narrative from marginal viewpoints. Khan deciphers ‘Political Mobilisation’ which is form of persuading and exerting the existing power distribution. According to (Kasaab 2016 cited Coakley 2012) takes this notion of political mobilisation as an ideology that validates this mobilisation and contracts the fences between nation and state.

There can be many inferences are possible that could be apt for the way Noor is shown to have this gift-children usually pick hints from parents’ pasts from their stories but one can't consider this for Noor as she has 'Down Syndrome' which usually creates difficulty for a normal path of development for a child so through their Freudian slip or descriptions. Although, it is clearly stated that her drawings came from dreams. One other thing was the way Sajida and Ali treat Noor. She is described as a special child and because of her drawings, Sajida describes her as possessing a special gift. In a way, the author shows Noor's subconscious mind more powerful than her conscious mind as her dreams show her the scenes which are an integral part of her family's past.

Her one of the first drawings describes the exact scene where Sajida's parents died so it was more astonishing as how Noor could draw as if she was there it triggered Sajida's memory. Other drawings resembled the way the landscape was that of East Pakistan's during the time was uncanny. Ali's memory of that time was initially triggered by the similar shade of sky that was coloured.

Noor was in a way a perfect literary device in order to bring three generations in one frame. By showing her development hindered by Down Syndrome, she symbolises innocence since there is little chance that she could have understood fully even if Sajida had ever described her life to her children. Noor becomes a way for author to bring forth the reality of her family's pasts and glue them back together.

Psychoanalytically, dreams manifest subconsciousness. Her cognitive difficulties may not allow her to fully understand but she understands specific emotions associated with those scenes as in one of her first drawings she didn't want to bring in Sajida afraid.

Noor, her hindered development plus these dreams which show her own understanding, so it is like even if Hussein thought that her less as a child, she was actually more who brought those repressed memories of her family in order to help them in dealing with traumatic past in a way more healthier than they could have.

Stuart Hall (Visual Culture: The Reader, 1999) “culture comes into play at precisely the point where biological individuals become subjects, and that what lies between the two is not some automatically constituted ‘natural’ process of socialization but much more complex processes of formation”.

(Hall, 1999) “Popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is the stake to be won or lost in that struggle. It is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured.”

Sajida’s murky complexion and short altitude is the clue of her Bangali Identity and represents her roots and origins of Bangal. After many years, the eponymous Noor, daughter of Sajida; the Arabic unisex word meaning divine light, coerces Ali, her grandfather and Sajida to unearth and unveil their tumultuous histories of the 1971 liberation war with the help of her special gift unusual art of painting. “Noor so different, access to secrets yet to be revealed”(180) and she give the impression as she belongs to the other world. The sketches of Noor force Ali and Sajida to disclose the account of mishaps bore by her biological family like her baby brother was lost in the cyclone. Afterwards, many of Noor’s frightening but true sketches dispels Ali, her grandfather and his family with the connection to war not only as observers but taking active participation in slaughters, rapes over the East Pakistanis. “Noor’s drawing was a manifestation of what Ali had locked away so carefully years ago in the cabinets of his mind ” (128).

Ali’s repeated attempts to bury his past are symbolic of the way Pakistan’s national imagery rests on suppression of its role in East Pakistan. The decision of India to take the side of East Pakistan in its liberation war interpreted as India’s imperialist attempt on the dominion of West Pakistan in spite of the imperialistic temperament of West Pakistan over its own part East Pakistan resulting in killing and raping of its own citizens. This omission in mass consciousness and official narratives of a nation-state, accentuates the role of Noor to compel the public in the reassessment of prevailing versions of the fractionation of Pakistan. The literary form Fiction, as a cultural poetics, also tells history as said by Stephen Greenblatt textuality of history and historicity of the text that points the historical background embedded in historical narratives and the personal experiences of the author: literary and non-literary text vis-à-vis historical narratives circulate inseparably. Fiction can question the confiscation of a historical narrative. The novel triggers a discourse or dialogue, as in Bakhtinian terms of monologism and dialogism between neighbours instead of with the past colonising and settling power.

Noor dramatizes how deliberately repressed traumatic experience bounces back on both the offender and the sufferer by thoroughly setting out Ali’s signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. Both Ali and Sajida were not able to resolve the knots in their subconscious mind and reconcile with their present. So, “what he had done, what he had seen, what had, in fact, been the war, would go on happening inside of him for as long as he lived” (196-197). Once Ali made Sajida’s epiphany by his odd action “Ali her father, might once have lifted his rifle and blindly aimed in a torrent of rain and rising waves of heated fog—and shot her dead” (200). Ali eventually elucidates to Sajida he was frightened by the disgusting odour of memories he seeks to suppress and in what way he had committed bloodshed. “It was like a mime... More often than not, he felt himself removed, as if he were watching himself do what needed to be done. He imagined this came from not believing in the war.” (189), which

is a direct hint to Internalised colonial constructs. Though the main interest of the author is not to explore the political reasons behind 1971 liberation war rather than on atrocities, brutality and their psychological influence on all. Khan, in *Noor* does not states straightforwardly the governmental link between the disaster of Bhola cyclone and the liberation struggle. Nevertheless, she triggers the mind of the readers to come to a conclusion by showing the racial discrimination, internal colonial attitude of West Pakistanis over East Pakistanis: “That Bengalis, dark and stupid, not *really* Muslim, didn’t deserve their own country, their own leaders.” (167)

Noor’s drawings emerge as a focal point in this novel which digs the factual symptoms of trauma by serving as a literary device and signified for the signifier- by acting as a symbolism and metaphor. She is hated by her father since her birth due to her defect, but she occupies a central position in the family. Mentally challenged Noor by autism occupies a peripheral space likewise little, polio ridden Parsi girl Lenny who eye witnesses the genocide and rapes of Indian division of 1947 as shown in Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India*. Noor’s drawings link her to the personal and secretive agony of other family members and society, specifically her grandfather and mother’s. Noor’s sketches of her own fantasies and dreams are pivotal to the flow of not only individual harrowing memory but complete revulsions of collective trauma. Sorayya Khan’s third person narrative is apt here to underscore that no other perspective can do the justice as all characters are related to it directly or indirectly. Noor represents aptly how personal guilt and trauma affect and moistens the extensive communal and muddle family, society and whole nation. The rapport that the victimized groups establish between their past and their present conditions is same as stated by Michael Rothberg’s notion of shared memory that extreme violence of different histories confront each other.

According to a Chakrabarti (2012), Khan herself credits the intersectionality and diasporic features of her life to re-examine and revisit the one of the most oppressive and silenced narration of modern Pakistan. Her step of revealing the silenced facts is indeed an act of more than courage as creating a thwart narrative of the official historic narratives of the nation-state is impossible in Pakistan nation in which autonomy of any type of proclamation might appear underneath censoring and these artistic expressions which is confrontational or dissatisfactory towards the central or local governing body might be treated for treachery under section 124-A. Noor as a diasporic product reveals the politics of the homeland. Noor not only questions the ruthlessness and bloodshed of brotherhood but vulnerability of women bodies who do not belong to any country; Sajida is separated, uprooted, alienated at such a young age and then transplanted in a new space leaves her in homing desire.

Nationality and Nation-state:

Khan interrogates Pakistani history with unflinching courage in her ‘eerily beautiful’ *Noor*. *Noor* offers counter memory of 1971 civil war which is rubbed out from Pakistani official account under belief of hegemonic narratives and political space of the nation for Pakistanis irrespective of their identity of gender, caste, belief or ethnicity should share a common memory of the 1971. *Noor* shatters this formation of the nation by revealing the culpability of forced common memoir thus interrogating the homogenous community of inhabitants. Khan’s novel breaks the ice and silences about the faults of historical discourses devoted to sterilizing methods of nation formation and re-creation of individual identity only along religious and ethnic boundaries in Pakistan. It is a counter discourse to the set ideology as Pakistanism. National history of Pakistan expunged the real atrocities and horrors and the gendered violence in collective oblivion which is thrown on its subjects in East Pakistan.

On looking at the history textbooks of Pakistan, Khan indicates, one can easily point out the ploy of mutism on the 1971 civil war containing only single or binary sentences stating it only 1971 crisis rather than civil war that resulted in formation of Bangladesh, and in what way India meddling into the inner homely matters of the nation, supporting and provoking the disaster, that ultimately turned uncontrollable. Contrary to it, history textbooks in Bangladesh exhibit a different view pages after pages altogether narrate a different history of freedom struggle. General Musharraf on his first visit to Bangladesh, proffered an official apology for the disaster and genocide occurred during 1971 liberation war with the view that time might had cured the wounds. *Noor* claims the connection between the disaster of 1970 deadliest Bhola cyclone with the civil war of 1971 to challenge that had been enumerated in national official history as the cause for the cracking of the nation-state and to bring the East Pakistanis' claims for liberation inside the national discourse and hegemonic power structure formation of Pakistani history.

Modern day Pakistan's history denies 1971 as a liberation war fought by the East Pakistanis to guard their ethnic and linguistic identities intact, and for cultural sovereignty; instead, on the other hand, this civil war is war is nationally and authoritatively recalled as a battle between India and Pakistan. *Noor* interventions and uncovers the materialism for personal gains of life deteriorate ideology of nationalism rendering hollow its promises of safety, development, and social upliftment.

Going back to see the cause of failure of Pakistani nation-state is inability to deliver suitable relief, supplies and attention for the victims of cyclone of 1970 although East Pakistan was the major component of the economy. The government was more interested and busier in weeding out the Bengali rebels who were demanding the cultural, linguistic identity of Bangla language instead of Urdu. These protestors posited an interrogation to the solidarity and integrity of the nation. West Pakistan did not want to lose East Pakistan at any coast as East Pakistan's tactical geopolitical location was extremely important to the Pakistani nation-state, therefore, territorial compromise on the demands of a pro-independence ethnic confrontation movement was not at all tolerable.

West Pakistan's attitude towards their eastern counterpart for abominating the rice-eating, womanly, submissive, dark coloured, was doubtful since 1947. West Pakistan was familiar with the importance of controlling its other part firstly for supervising India from both sides, secondly, for its productiveness and abundance of the ports that lay at the mouth of Bay of Bengal, quite rich for business and employment but declined to provide equal status by undermining their ethnicity and culture. Treating the East Pakistani's as subjects and other and by focused political power in West Pakistan, the nation-state set free a series of military operations to overpower the resistance movement. Unlike what is written in history textbooks and documents in present day Pakistan, these operations started underground in 1970 came at full swing by March 1971 with severe squelching of East Pakistan protestors known as 'Operation Searchlight.'

Individual and Collective Memory:

A team of expert doctors diagnoses *Noor* with Down Syndrome, Autism, Rett Syndrome, Asperger's Syndrome, Martin-Bell Syndrome but she is recognized from her first birthday by her family for her eerie artistic skill. The past that has been repressed and denied access in the ordinary routine discourse can only be accessed through invoking memories of fantasies, dreams, daydreaming, and imagination which *Noor* does. *Noor*'s drawings compel the family to remember the calamities that link them to each other and resolve the stories of infidelity, devastation and mental injury with the help of forgiveness, care and selfless love. Private memories are

stirred to confront public forgetfulness. "Motivated forgetting has been a crucial aspect of psychological study relating to such traumatizing experiences as rape, torture, war, natural disasters, and homicid" (Arrigo 1997). "The idea of psychological repression was developed in 1915 as an automatic defensive mechanism based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic model in which people subconsciously push unpleasant or intolerable thoughts and feelings into their unconscious". (Freud, 1957)

"I like dreams," Noor offered.

"Of course, Sometimes you can go places you wouldn't otherwise," 'Sajida answered. "Like the sea. I couldn't take you to the sea. But you went there in your dream!"

"Why you won't take me?"

"I don't like it."

"Why?"

"Big Loud. I like the ground better."

"When you were a snake-girl, Ammi. On the tree. You scared?" Noor asked softly." (75-76)

According to Nigel C. Hunt (2010), war trauma is not similar to PTSD while its symptoms are broader and informed but the construct is useful in many ways'. Soldiers involved in the war feel guilty about the victims. Witnessing all the bloodshed and the atrocities during the war, they can not adapt as a civilian after coming home. Hunt (2010) says, "Witnessing and taking part in a battle, being involved in killing, being captured and perhaps subjected to torture taking part in being a victim of or witnessing the atrocities against other soldiers and civilians, destroying artefacts- these can lead to him a breakdown in one's belief system and have an impact on the identity".

Noor, unlike her brothers, without chewing the crayon or tear the paper, with full devotion and deliberation fills twenty pages in monochrome, later leads to the use of multiple colours symbolising the plurality of historical discourses which is subversive under authoritative brushstrokes of singular and linear narrative like Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogism. In her paintings, the blue sky of Islamabad turns in to the blue green black of the ghastly waves in which Sajida's birth family in East Pakistan drowned in November 1970 and had been deliberately forgotten and finally repressed. Noor can be seen as a representation of President Zia-Ul-Haq's daughter, Zian, enables the politicians and citizens of memory within the centre of power through which collective forgetting had been structured and circulated.

Noor's conception and birth, filled with inventiveness coming from beyond, connotes the intervention of history all the way through memory in ways that resist clarification or connectedness. Noor, is deliberately put by Khan at the margin, being a child with mental disability, keeping away from the centre. Being mentally disable, she is capable to interrogate the national history from a space which is altered and undermined and unbiased likewise Noor.

Even Noor's appearance reminded Ali of his past when he sees her the first time:

"Ali, in an earlier life and another land, had seen children like Noor, a shade from black, in the hold of death. When Noor's face collapsed into what it would be, he leaned closer and, strangely, recalled something of

the war he 'd seen. The soiled maternity ward, new blood dying upon old. the sticky sweat of desperate work, evoked a moment in his other life” (19).

Even though she never left the house and was not present at the time of catastrophe, she is able to depict the past of her family with the aid of her paintings through time and space, going beyond the physical boundaries of home, nation, ethnicity and historical narrative. Once, Noor makes makeup on her face and colours her hair with orange and blue colour and she dances, Sajida stuns seeing her and remembers the previous memories of her (Noor) birth when she observed her like a shadow.

Atrocities on Ethnic ‘Others’ and Gendercide:

The West Pakistan army employed atrocities mainly on the enemy women to let down Bangladeshis by dishonouring their females, reminding them determinant of ethnic ‘others’, procreators of the antagonist public and transferable stuff. It was a war strategy of The West Pakistan army to coerce and terrorize by rape and sexual assault, using as a symbol of power and authority. Women were targeted directly through Rape and Subjugation and secondly, by pertaining gendercide where able men of the family were slaughtered leaving the Women helpless. "the story of a family that was slaughtered in broad daylight with a scythe. Another about a baby thrown into the air, caught by a bayonet... a dagger at the end of a rifle. Men forced to eat their cut off penises" (128-9). Ali remembered through Noor’s sketching, the river overstuffed with bloated carcasses moving like paper yachts, the army has to dig many expanded graves deep enough to hide the dead bodies from dogs and scavengers. Noor's sketches of her grandfather as a young soldier Ali in knee-high boots, standing in ankle-deep mire force Ali to recall the system how hundreds of imprisoned men and women were managed after they had been arrested, tortured, maimed, raped and murdered mercilessly.

“Until then, I hadn't believed that death was the problem. But rotted, piled, and dumped in mud, it suddenly was. On returning to the barracks, my ears rang and I couldn't hear the others. .. Back in the presence of my superior officer, after a shower and a change into fresh clothes, the ringing in my ears stopped. In the makeshift office, I offered estimates for the people buried. 'Forty-three,' I said, only accounting for the already decaying corpses intended for the mass grave. I predicted most had been dead more than a day, maybe as many as three or four” (204).

Further Sajida forces Ali to tell more about the digging.

“The jeeps arrived at the appointed station without incident. The stench was thick and putrid. Soldiers held handkerchiefs over their mouths. A pile of bloated corpses lay at the edge of a shallow, sunken pit. Ali realized that he'd been ordered to assist in the digging of a mass grave for enemies” (207).

The drawing of the marshy pink river with bloated buffaloes was appearing like blue-black people whose hands were tied at the back reminded Sajida and Ali the real situation of massacre and “no-breasted woman” which Ali and other army men threw from the barracks in the river to dispose of the raped and mutilated. This shatters the narrative of silence in which Nanijaan, Sajida and Ali have all been implicated. The consolation Nanijaan got to know that her son, Ali had survived the war and had come back home. On seeing Noor’s Paintings, she interrogates Ali, “What does it feel like, to kill someone? Where do you put that knowledge during the day? At night? Ah, sometimes, when it rains, you still can't sleep for remembering! What does it feel like, to know you

are the reason for someone else 's grief? You 've thought of that right?Killing is -what you did, right? Nothing else?" (137).

"other was hidden behind the coarse cloth of her sari. The commander pushed her to the floor. He pulled and stretched the breast that was large and firm until it sprayed a stream of milk. He laughed, called her a whore and much worse, stopping only to lick drops of her milk which landed on his lips. Then he 'forced his rifle into her mouth, tore her sari, and sat on top of her. When he was done, he stuffed his belt between her legs letting the oversized buckle catch and tear, laughing at how cleverly he had leashed her. The baby was dead by then, thrown to the side of the room with other corpses. After the man pulled the trigger, what was left of the woman's body, milk still leaking from her breasts." (54)

The dripping milk from the breasts of the woman symbolises the motherland, which was abused by the others i.e. West Pakistanis. The oozing milk from the breasts shows the valuable culture and values which was grabbed by the other persons. They use blades, scissors, belt and knife, which shows very severe anguish to the motherland and its ethics. These things are the symbols of the ferocity and atrocities was undertaking to the countrymen. The death of the woman emerges the death of the culture and the honour of the motherland. We observe how the women are being ill-treated by the West Pakistanis. This directs the offence of the motherland's honour. The death of her child symbolises the death of the coming generation's rights to live with honour. What is the delinquency of the woman for which she was raped and assassinated? Why the women are being the dupe during the war and after the war too? Why she is suffering the dishonour by the males whether they are alien or indigenous? Or they have no country? This is a horrible memory of Ali, which is stored in his subconscious mind, which retrieves but he needs never to retrieve it anymore.

Meredeth Turshen argues, here it is two facets of this hostility: "rape to impregnate, making them bear children for the enemy community and rape to prevent women from becoming mothers in their own community, by making them unacceptable to their community or by injuring them physically so that they are unable to or incapable of bearing children" (Moser and Clark 62). According to Hunt (2010), when a soldier returns from the war, he suffers PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and he fails to adapt a life as a civilian due to the bloodshed, war memories and guilty. He becomes away to his own family and friends whom he loves too much. His war experience becomes the life-threatening to himself and his loved-one too. Ali is also passing through this phase.

Sorayya is airing the atrocities on the women during war and obviously raising the query unknowingly why all the war starts and end with the women's' body? Why are the people celebrating their victory on women's bodies and takes vengeance on their bodies? Why are the women only source of entertainment for all the history rioters? The women are feeling the bondages during colonised and after independence but now she is roofed by the four walls.

Impact of Silences and Repression:

The celibacy of Ali heightens his abhorrence towards sex after watching the brutal acts with enemy women's genitals after rapes, indicates how the victims as well as the perpetrators are stricken both traumatized and miserable.

"The officer summoned me. "Your turn, " he said...

I fell sick to the stomach. My first lime, offered a woman like that...

I was alone with the girl, my pants still down...my penis shriveled and hidden...She was ripped and pried open, the implements used to do this, ... The nib of the fountain pen was missing. ... I could see her opening in the blood. I straddled her. She was warm and wet. My penis soft and small, did nothing ..., I couldn't enter her... She'd taken leave of her life... Her soul already dead, safely warm and wrapped in a peaceful place. I envied her... I knew what I'd done. I could never change that.”(140-41).

Kentaro Buma reported the number of Bengali women raped more than 200,000 by West Pakistani soldiers during the nine months war and thousands of raped women impregnated who were later rejected by their husbands or families. *Noor* assists re-examine the mass rape and 1971 civil war as a national political discourse in which all white collared officials and politicians consented for such dreadful atrocities on their own citizens as a fake name of nationalism. The rapes during wartime are realised as a socially created and politically instituted action in *Noor*. *Noor* supplements herself into the discourse of nation and warfare and disrupts the national account of 1971 by reminding Ali about his responsibility during this battle and challenge his motivated blocked and repressed memories and revealing the sovereign state responsible for the viciousness thrown methodically on enemy womenfolk.

Interrogating the way history is documented as a teleological and linear progressive narrative from one event to another, Khan turns the linear narrative of 1971 inside out presenting a drastically different version.

Ali brought Sajida his home and constituted “readymade family”, spent many years in solace and happiness. This prosperous home in Islamabad, ostensibly fortified with all amenities full of all relations, unexpectedly, shaken up by the quakes of traumatic past through *Noor*'s drawings. The fragile happy world of Ali which was manufactured to guard himself from the irrationality, unethical immoral war battle and brutality over Bengalis. This leads him to re-evaluate the relationship with his family members and encouraged to seek forgiveness. *Noor* provide space to Ali to regret his past, mourn his fearfulness and horror and reveal the shame of his hateful acts unleashed on Bengalis, by telling Sajida the secret of her past that he had consciously maintained silence from her.

The West Pakistani army's effort to subjugate the East Pakistani subjects by brutal physical and mental tortures which silently refuted and named impotent within the discourse of war. The heinous war atrocities and the unsuccessful rape forced Ali to celibacy and developed his distaste for eating meat which is related with Pakistani masculinity and deprecated principally in opposition to Indian vegetarianism.

“God and meat, Ali thought. Both were off limits, in the same category, since coming home. God because nothing Ali had seen - or done - could have been divined by God. And meat because he'd smelled flesh in every possible manifestation. Freshly dead, not-so-freshly dead, rotted, singed, burned, baked, and ever}' variety in between, and he never wanted to set eyes on it, much less his tongue on it. Again” (142).

Sajida decides to exonerate Ali for his past deeds done on her own ethnic people and accepts him after his repentance and liberating his soul from the confined drawers and cabinets of misty bathroom. The last scene of the novel cathartically explodes, validating the possibility of reconciliation and healing:

“Gently he pushed Hussein aside. He moved to where his child and grandchild lay tangled in a giddy embrace. Upon reaching them, he stood perfectly still. Then as if he'd never stopped believing ... he dropped to his knees... Prostrating before his ready-made family, his fore arms touching the sides of his folded legs, he rested

his left cheek on the floor. He took in the sight of his child and granddaughter. His eyes roamed, then settled, above. the astonishing power of love that can change and heal.” (204)

III. Conclusion

Noor's paintings enable the family to admit their past to start a means of recovery and restructure their self, finding cause of the foundations of their belonging, confronting the horrors once they faced. Metaphorically, resistance towards the national discourse in the form of official historical narrative is at full swing in all acts of Ali in hating meat eating and celibate, and in Noor being amorphous. *Noor* is finally able to bring together Ali, Sajida, Hussein, Nanijaan and Noor in a state of reconciliation and attachment by shattering silence which had confined the family into overt political entity. The novel shows how love is a vital resource that could counter the ethnocidal tendencies. The novel is able to challenge and underscore the nationalistic hegemonic ethnocidal tendencies that tend to isolate minority communities through discrimination and ethnic others into same bordered spaces. No political leader is involved in Noor perhaps for the purpose to detain them to provoke these sorts of happenings. Nationalism is a flexible notion associated with various political and cultural ideas, “either a form of political mobilization that is directed at rectifying a perceived absence of fit between the boundaries of the nation and the boundaries of the state; or the ideology that justifies this”. (Kasaab 2016 cited Coakley, 2012). National discourse of 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war in Pakistan is silenced at the national level through thin and stereotypical ideology which was unquestioned like Ali and Sajida’s defence mechanisms lead to repression of the traumatic past memories which are brought to the brim through Noor’s paintings which is actually manifestation of her dreams and fantasies. The repressed personal memories of Ali and Sajida become allegorical of collective forgetting and memory of the community and Pakistanis deliberated on them by the hegemonic structures and sovereignty.

Disclosure Statement:

The author reported no potential conflict of interest.

Notes on Contributor:

Ms Archana Katariya is a PhD Scholar of the Department of English of Manipal University Jaipur, India. Her research area of Interest is based on memory and spaces associated with Post-Colonial Studies. Dr Priyanka Chaudhary is an Associate Professor, Department of English, Manipal University Jaipur who has planned this research work.

REFERENCES

1. Anderson, Benedict. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso. pp. 6-7. ISBN 978-0-86091-546-1
2. Arrigo, J. M., & Pezdek, K. (1997). Lessons From the Study of Psychogenic Amnesia. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 6(5), 148–152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.ep10772916>

3. Brewin, C. R. (2015). Re-experiencing traumatic events in PTSD: new avenues in on research intrusive memories and flashbacks. *European Journal of Psych traumatology*, 6(27180). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v6.27180>
4. BROWNMILLER, SUSAN (1993). *Against Our Will: Man Woman and Rape* (June, Vol. 10). New York, United State: Ballantine Books. doi: ISBN: 0-449-90820-8
5. Chakrabarti, P. (2013). 11th Global Conference-Violence. In *Women's bodies, Men's war: The Political Economy of Military Rape and Gender Violence* (pp. 1–3). Prague: Czech Republic.
6. Chakrabarti, P., & Pal, S. (2012). Mumbai. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/161235>
7. Cilano, C. (2011) *National Identities in Pakistan: The 1971 War in Contemporary Pakistani Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge.
8. Freud, S. (1957). Repression. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 14, pp. 146–158). London: Hogarth
9. Hall, S. (1996) 'The Question of Cultural Identity'. In *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Ed. by Hall, S., Held, D., Hubert, D., and Thompson, K. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 596–632
10. Hajiyeva, M. (2016). Pakistani English Literature in Multicultural Context. *Journal of Research (Humanities)*, V(LII), 133–144.
11. HIRSCH, MARIANNE (2012). *The Generation of Post memory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press. doi: 10.7312/hirs15652
12. Hunt, N. (2010). *Approaches to understanding trauma. In Memory, War and Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511845017.006.
13. Ishtiyaque, F. (2016). Suturing The Memories Of The Liberation War 1971: The Narrative Poetics Of Sorayya Khan's NOOR. *European Journal of English Studies*, 19(3), 301–314. doi: [org/10.1080/13825577.2015.1091226](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13825577.2015.1091226).
14. Kassab, H. S. (2016). *The Power of Emotion in Politics, Philosophy, and Ideology*[ebook] (first). doi: 10.1007/978-1-137-59352-8
15. Khan, S. (2006). *Noor*. Wilmington, North Carolina, USA: The Publishing Laboratory.
16. Khan, S. (2015). The Silence and Forgetting That Wrote NOOR. *Journal of Narrative Politics*, 1(2), 121–132.
17. Laney, C., & Loftus, E. F. (2005). Traumatic Memories Are Not Necessarily Accurate Memories. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 50(13), 823–828. doi: 10.77/070674370505001303
18. Martin, O., & Josep, C. (2013). Episodic Memory: a comparative approach. *Frontiers in Behavioural Neuroscience*, 7(63), 1–13. doi: 10.3389/fnbeh.2013.00063
19. Nora, P. (1989). Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations*, (26), 7–24. doi: 10.2307/2928520 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2928520>

20. Patil, V. V. (2013). War and Politics in the Novels of Pakistani Women Writers. *Journal of Higher Education and Research Society: A Refereed International*, 1(1), 1–11.
21. Rahman, M. (2005, August). Noor: Casting Light on History. *Solidarity*. Retrieved from <https://solidarity-us.org/atc/117/p269/>
22. Sehole, R. S. (2014). Landscape: Psychological, geographical and cultural nexuses. *International Journal of English and Literature*, 5(3), 67–70. doi: 10.5897/IJEL12.043
23. Smith, A. D. (1999) *Myths and Memories of the Nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
24. Sternberg, R. J. (1999). *Cognitive psychology* (2 nd ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
25. Turshen, M. (2001). The Political Economy of Rape: An Analysis of Systematic Rape and Sexual Abuse of Women During Armed Conflict in Africa. In *Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence* (pp. 55–68). London: Victors, Zed Books.
26. Turshen, M. (2001). The Political Economy of Rape: An Analysis of Systematic Rape and Sexual Abuse of Women During Armed Conflict in Africa. In *Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence* (pp. 62). London: Victors, Zed Books
27. Zobair, A. A. (n.d.). Bangladesh Liberation war 1971. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/37201092/Liberation_War_of_Bangladesh