



HAUNTOLOGICAL ECHOES: ANALYZING SPECTRAL PRESENCE AND MEMORY IN SORAYYA KHAN'S *NOOR*

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Abstract

This thesis explores the intergenerational transmission of trauma in Sorayya Khan's novel Noor (2003), using Jacques Derrida's theory of Hauntology and Marianne Hirsch's concept of Postmemory as critical frameworks. Set against the backdrop of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, the novel portrays the lingering psychological and emotional aftermath of violence through the characters of Ali, Sajida, and Noor. Noor, born with cognitive disabilities, becomes a conduit for repressed memories and inherited trauma, despite not experiencing the war herself. Through her art, she evokes the silent history of her mother and grandfather. The study investigates how unresolved guilt, haunting memories, and suppressed grief persists across generations, disrupting linear time and reshaping personal and collective identities. By engaging with spectral presences and inherited affect, the thesis argues that trauma is not confined to individual experience but echoes through familial and national narratives. This research contributes to trauma literature by examining how fiction narrativizes postwar haunting and memory.

Keywords: Hauntology, Postmemory, intergenerational, trauma, grief, repressed memories, unresolved guilt, liberation.

Introduction

The notions of trauma, memory and identity have remained a pivotal point of discussion and debate in contemporary literary studies, because they frequently intersect and overlap in contemporary literary realms as well in the real world. If the postcolonial and postwar literary narratives are taken into consideration two things are the most apparent: first, the intersection of trauma, memory, identity on the individual and societies; second, the traumatic implications on the individuals and societies, who endured the harsh circumstances. The literary narratives focused on postcolonial or postwar traumatic events act as witnesses of the trauma; moreover, they also shed light on the various forms of violent and non-violent repression, in addition to the psychological devastations caused by them. At this point it is necessary to mention that the trauma endured by the survivors or victims of any traumatic event is not limited to that generation alone, rather the haunting memories of the past are passed on from one generation to another which makes the trauma intergenerational. This research focuses on a similar literary narrative that attempts to capture and portray the trauma associated with the war of liberation that Bangladesh fought in 1971.

Sorayya Khan's novel, *Noor*, was published in the year 2003, it sheds light on Bangladesh's War of Liberation which it had fought in the year 1971. The war originally started as a civil war between the two wings of Pakistan i.e., East and West; however, it later on took a genocidal turn wherein, the Bengalis were being persecuted for incomprehensible socio-political reasons. Khan's narrative does not directly criticize the social or political circumstances of that time rather implicitly comments on them through the interaction of different characters—Noor, her mother Sajida, and her grandfather Ali—who are harbouring memories of the traumatic past deep within their chests and dealing with its overwhelming burdens in subjective manners.

Noor, the eponymous protagonist of the novel, is born with cognitive and physical disabilities. If Noor's condition is symbolically interpreted, it would not be wrong to state, she displays the traumatic aftermath of war, she has undoubtedly inherited a trauma which is beyond her comprehension, nevertheless, governs her life and relationships.

Sajida as mentioned earlier is Noor's mother, but she has served a more important role in the war of 1971, she was brought to Pakistan from war-trodden Bangladesh by Ali, her father. The novel reads, "Ali her youngest son, weak and barely recovered from typhoid brought Sajida back from war in East Pakistan, stumbled up the stairs, and made her part of the family" (Khan 19). Sajida witnessed the war firsthand as a victimized survivor; understandably despite being brought to Pakistan the fragmented memories of the past—embodying the trauma of violence and displacement—continued to haunt her. Resultantly, her unresolved trauma surfaces and manifests itself through her interactions with Noor, and her sense of dislocation becomes an emotional inheritance passed down to her daughter.

Ali, is another major character in the novel, as mentioned above he is the one who brought Sajida from Bangladesh to Pakistan. Ali is Noor's grandfather—technically he is Sajida's father, although not biological—Sajida later gives birth to Noor, a special-child. The question arises what was he doing in Bangladesh? Ali, retired from the Pakistan Army, however, in 1971 when the conflict was going on, he was still serving in the Army and was directly involved in the war. Narrative shows he harbors guilt over his involvement in the war; he thus, represents the personal and national contradictions of being both a protector and perpetrator.

These characters collectively navigate through the complex web of memory and identity, made further perplex due to the lingering trauma and its fragmented memories. Ali and Sajida have once again inherited the legacy of grief, guilt, and loss, with Noor, who did not witness the war firsthand, yet embodies its traumatic aftermaths. These factors amalgamate to offer an exploration of the trauma that moves from one generation to another—becoming intergenerational and eternal—as it continues to haunt the survivors and their succeeding generations embodying a traumatic past that refuses to be forgotten.

Noor had never been to Bangladesh however, the paintings she draws are very similar to the landscape in Bangladesh, it almost seems magical and uncanny. These pictures drag Sajida back to the memories of her actual home, in Bangladesh; whereas, they remind Ali of the place where he along with his colleagues, committed or at least acted as accessories to genocidal war crimes. Thus, Noor, and the paintings drawn by her, act as a window through which Ali and Sajida can look directly back in their past—characterized with inflicted menaces, traumatic horrors of war, and dire consequences faced by the victims and survivors—and reflect on it.

Accordingly, the experiences of the major characters in the novel shed light on the often overlooked psychological aftermath of violence; it also highlights how trauma reshapes identities and perceptions across generations. This research employs the concept of "Hauntology" propounded by Jacques Derrida and the theory of "Post Memory" elucidated by Marianne Hirsch to investigate how these characters are shaped by the haunting memories of their pasts, additionally, by the inherited memories of pain, survival, and guilt.

The notion of "Hauntology" was introduced by Derrida in his seminal work, *Spectres of Marx*, wherein, he elucidated on the intrusive nature of the past, how it continues to linger with the present subsequently, challenging or at least disorienting the linear notions of time and memory. The term Past in this context refers to the memories of traumatic events that had occurred previously; consequently, traumatic memories of the past rather than staying grounded in history resurface, and intrude the contemporary consciousness of the individuals;

resultantly, impacting the sense and orientation of reality, time, perception of world and even decisions.

Hence, it would be safe to contend that the past memories haunt the survivors of the catastrophic events; in the case of the narrative Sajida and Ali are haunted by the intruding memories of the 1971 war which they confront through the paintings drawn by Noor.

Davis, while elaborating Derrida's concept of Hauntology—and its two integral interconnected notions of ghost and spectres—delineates it from the psychoanalytic notion of “phantom” propounded by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. He notes that Abraham and Torok in their seminal work focus on the significance of familial secrets, and the unspoken traumas unconsciously transmitted inter-generationally. Furthermore, the phantom, of Abraham and Torok, is actually the presence of a dead ancestor in the ego of the descendants which is trying to prevent the traumatic and shameful secrets from being disclosed or discovered by its descendants. Davis notes, “[the] phantom is the presence of a dead ancestor in the living Ego, still intent on preventing its traumatic and usually shameful secrets from coming to light” (374). Moreover, the phantom does not return to reveal or disclose the forgotten truth, or a hidden secret instead it tries to keep the secret remained shrouded in mystery. Davis elucidates this point in the following words:

The phantom does not...return from the dead in order to reveal something hidden or forgotten, to right a wrong or to deliver a message...the phantom is a liar; its effects are designed to mislead the haunted subject and to ensure that its secret remains shrouded in mystery (374).

However, for Derrida the specters or ghosts of the past serve a different role, they are merely personal instead they are collective, manifesting unresolved injustice seeking acknowledgement. Accordingly, Derrida postulates that specters, “occupy the place of a Levinasian Other: a wholly irrecoverable intrusion in our world, which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frame works, but whose otherness we are responsible for preserving” (Davis 373). Thus, establishing that Hauntology does not deal with the exorcism of ghosts but pertain listening to the ghosts, giving them room to unsettle the dominant narratives.

In Khan's novel haunting of a similar degree is observed in the characters of Sajida and Ali as both of them are plagued by memories and unresolved guilt stemming from the Bangladesh Liberation War. Ali experiences guilt and remorse for his past actions that continues to intrude in his contemporary life, whereas, Sajida, a displaced survivor of the war, suffers at the hands of the recurring horrific memories, having psychological bearing resultantly, impacting her relationship with Noor. In case of Ali and Sajida past can be seen intruding the present, influencing the various aspects of the characters' life such as their identities; the examination of these characters and their lives through the lens of hauntology brings to light the haunting memories, cultural legacies, and intergenerational traumas. Moreover, it serves as a framework providing nuanced understanding of the characters' struggles with their identities as they encounter and confront the historical and cultural ghosts – embodied as unresolved past trauma and repressed historical memories.

Furthermore, Marianne Hirsch's theoretical framework of “Post Memory” sheds light on the intergenerational transmission of trauma; elucidating how trauma experiences by the previous generations is transferred to the succeeding generations, despite the fact the succeeding generations did not directly experience these events, however, they remain deeply affected by it.

The term “Post Memory” coined by Hirsch elucidates the phenomenon of descendants—of trauma survivors—inheriting the trauma experienced by their predecessors, not only their stories but also the emotional weight regardless of the fact they never witnessed it firsthand. This

phenomenon is most evident in the character of Noor, who was not born at the time of war nevertheless, her developmental challenges and her peculiar sensitivity to the trauma around her underscore her role as the carrier of postmemory—characterized with the pain of unresolved collective history stemming from the war. Noor’s unique portrayal of the world demonstrates how past traumatic events—historical violence, displacement, killings, persecution, and rape—infiltrate the lives of subsequent generations. Hence, validating Derrida’s contention that memories haunt and

Hirsch’s assertion that trauma can be intergenerational, meaning it can be passed down through memory, emotion, and the subconscious.

Hirsch, in her seminal work, describes Postmemory as, “[the] relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right” (Hirsch 103). As mentioned earlier, the theoretical paradigm she propounded focused on the remembrance of the Holocaust, and the transmission of their postmemory through photographs—reliance on visual mediums for transgenerational transmission of trauma. In her work, Hirsch highlights the most important tropes responsible for mobilisation and transmission of postmemory. These tropes include family as a space of transmission of memories, function of gender as an idiom of remembrance. Furthermore, Hirsch introduces the concept of

“Postgeneration” also referable as the “hinge generation” who have been given the “guardianship of the Holocaust” responsible for determining the way in which, “received, transferred knowledge of events is being transmuted into history, or into myth” (Hirsch 103). The postgeneration is therefore, the living connection with the past, of the holocaust survivors, and this living connection is being preserved, maintained, and perpetuated, through different mediums, despite the deceasing of the generation of survivors—an act which simultaneously leads towards the erosion of the past. The postgeneration preserves the memories which would have otherwise eroded because of the deaths of the generation of survivors, or the consciously orchestrated efforts of states to adopt collective silence as an effort to suppress the past, and to keep it unknown.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To analyze how Derrida's concept of Hauntology is represented in *Noor* through the recurring motifs of memory, guilt, and the lingering presence of the past.
2. To explore the application of Marianne Hirsch’s theory of Postmemory in the novel, focusing on how Noor’s character inherits and manifests the trauma of the Bangladesh Liberation War.
3. To investigate how Sorayya Khan portrays the intergenerational transmission of trauma and memory in the novel specifically through the relationships of Noor, her mother, and her grandfather.

Research Questions

1. How does Derrida’s concept of Hauntology manifest in the characters’ experiences, memories, and relationships in *Noor*?
2. In what ways does Noor embody the principles of Marianne Hirsch’s theory of Postmemory, does her character illustrate the inherited trauma of the Bangladesh Liberation War?
3. How does the novel portray the psychological and emotional legacy of historical violence across generations?

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, using close textual analysis and the theoretical notions of, Hauntology and Postmemory, to examine Sorayya Khan’s novel *Noor*

(2003). This research will highlight how Khan's novel represents how trauma haunts its survivors and witnesses, how it is passed on from one generation to another. Primary focus will be placed on character interactions, memories, and the psychological implications of trauma to reveal how Hauntology and Postmemory shape intergenerational trauma.

Research Significance

This research contributes to the realms of post-colonial and trauma literature, offers a critical and prudent perspective on the novel *Noor (2003)* through the frameworks of Hauntology and Postmemory. It examines how historical trauma manifests itself, consequence of unaddressed cultural memory on individual identity, and intergenerational transmission of trauma. This research offers valuable insights into the intersections of literature, history, and psychology in analyzing inherited trauma.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks that will be used as lenses in this dissertation, to analyse Sorayya Khan's novel, *Noor (2003)*: first, Hauntology propounded by Jacques Derrida; second, Post-Memory postulated by Marianne Hirsch.

Jacques Derrida introduced the term and the concept of "Hauntology" in the book, *Specters of Marx (1994)* wherein the philosophical and critical foundations of this notion were laid. In this framework Derrida has basically challenged the traditional understanding and conventional ideas explaining the notions of being in connection with time, being, and history. The framework of hauntology counters the conventional understanding of ontology i.e., the study of being. Hauntology emphasises more on the spectral presence or absence of things or time, as compared to ontology where the spectral elements do not resurge or feature under normal circumstances. As opposed to the ontological understanding of time and being, the "hauntological" interpretation disrupts the notion of linear temporality thus asserting that past is never fully gone, it is never fully absent rather it lingers on shaping and haunting the present and the future.

This paper is also grounded in the theoretical concept of "Post Memory" was developed by Marianne Hirsch to explore and elaborate the intergenerational transmission of trauma, particularly the one emerging from the Holocaust. The notion of Post Memory describes the relationship between the generation who witnessed the collective trauma first-hand and the generation(s) that succeeded them. This concept is distinct from ideas like direct memory since it involves affective and imaginative investment and engagement of descendants with the traumatic past of their predecessors. There are different means of preserving the post memory or the traumatic memories from the predecessors' past such as through stories, images, behaviors that have been inherited from the past, these means amalgamate and create a sense of remembrance to keep the memory of the traumatic past alive. Hirsch further elaborates the concept of post memory in context of the holocaust and underpins the inalienable connection of the descendants with the traumatic memories of the previous generations. Hirsch notes: "Descendants of survivors (of victims as well as of perpetrators) of massive traumatic events connect so deeply to the previous generation's remembrances of the past that they need to call that connection memory and thus that, in certain extreme circumstances, memory can be transmitted to those who were not actually there to live an event" (Hirsch 105-106). Furthermore, Hirsch states that this type of memory, arguably received memory, is different from recalling of a certain event by the witnesses or the participants thus, validating the use prefixes such as "post" or "after" or any other adjectives to convey the inter or trans-generational impact of trauma resonating its after effects.

Hirsch defines Post memory as "the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among

which they grew up” (Hirsch 106). The generation who came after the occurrence of the traumatic events have in fact inherited the past of their ancestors through remembrance made possible through stories, images, and behaviors in which they grew up.

However, these traumatic experiences were so profound and deeply impactful on individuals that these memories eventually got constituted in their own right as distinct memories. The connection between post memory and the past is not mediated by recalling or remembrance instead by imaginative investment, creation and projection by the succeeding generations. The memories, which the succeeding generations have inherited, are so overwhelming that they have dominated the narrative and discourses—arguably preceding the birth of the inheriting generations’ own consciousness. Under such circumstances the inherited generations are exposed to the possibility of their own experiences, memories, and stories being displaced, and perhaps even evacuated by that of the previous generation.

To conclude, both these theoretical frameworks can offer profound insights about the Sorayya Khan’s novel. Hauntology underpins the impossibility of the past to be fully removed or erased and highlights its capability to influence the present and future despite having an intangible and absent presence. Postmemory implies that memories of the past are passed on to the generations succeeding the survivors of traumatic events.

Literature Review

The study, “Demystifying the Character of Noor: A Psychoanalytic Study of Sorayya Khan’s Noor” by Mohib Baloch (2024) studies the novel by Sorayya Khan through the critical framework of Freudian psychoanalysis and reveals the intersection of prominent themes such as memory, unconscious mind, and trauma. The purpose of this literature review is to focus primarily on the anthropomorphic characterization of Noor, also analyses trauma embodied in the characters through the psychoanalytic lens, and the aspect of intergenerational transmission of memory as proved in the narrative. Additionally, contextualizing this particular research with the existing body of literature available and identifying the gaps that would be later on addressed in this study. In this study by Baloch (2024) anthropomorphism is a prominent notion before proceedings further it is necessary to fully understand it. Accordingly, anthropomorphism is basically a literary device whereby human characteristics are attributed with animals, objects and abstract ideas. Seemingly, using anthropomorphism to analyse the narrative by Sorayya Khan might not be a promising approach capable of offering prudent insights. However, this literary device is fundamental and appropriate for the exploration of foundational concepts that serve to enhance the understanding of the novel and particularly of the eponymous character Noor. Given the significant nature of this concept the study refers to the Cambridge Dictionary wherein anthropomorphism is defined as, “the showing or treating of animals, gods, and objects as if they are human in appearance, character, or behavior” (Baloch 42). This is a notable literary technique which has been employed by numerous renowned authors to critically comments on the characters, situations, and the contextual circumstances or even on abstract human experiences to convey a particular message.

Consider the novel *Animal Farm* by George Orwell wherein he has commented and even critiqued the Marxist ideology. In Orwell’s novel the characters are actually animals embody humanistic traits and plan a coup to overthrow their cruel owner and eventually take over the farm. Initially the animal in unison lay down the foundational principles for the farm that are meant to promote equality, however, as time goes on some animals assume a more powerful position as compared to other animals. Although the story of the novel seems hyperbolically fictional, nevertheless it was Orwell’s genius technique to implicitly criticize the Marxist ideology without using any names; he simply gave the animals the traits of human beings created an ideal Marxist environment, at least within the farm, and demonstrated its gradual downfall as the animals much like human beings succumbed to greed and vices. Baloch

has also referred to Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice in Wonderland* to direct attention towards the use of anthropomorphized characters and their inevitability to create a whimsical and thoughtprovoking narrative. Likewise, *America Gods* by Neil Gaiman is another example of authors using anthropomorphism wherein the deities are anthropomorphized and symbolizing the intersection of ancient myths with modern technology. Similarly, Sorayya Khan's novel *Noor* (2003) embodies application of anthropomorphism in a unique manner, as mentioned earlier anthropomorphism is not limited to the attribution of human traits to animals therefore, they can also be extended to objects and abstract ideas. In the case of Sorayya Khan's novel the eponymous protagonist Noor is an embodiment of this particular literary technique her character is a manifestation of Freudian unconscious—a repository of repressed desires coupled with traumatic memories—that surface through the paints she draws. Baloch in this study opines that portrayal of Noor as an anthropomorphic entity helps Khan to bridge the gaps between psychological abstraction and literary representation, thus, allowing the readers interact with the complexities of trauma and memory.

Ishtiyaque (2015) in the study, "Suturing the Memories of The Liberation War of 1971: The Narrative Poetics of Sorayya Khan's *Noor*" presents a complex interplay of memory, nationhood and trauma as this article delves into these dynamics and explores to reconstruction of personal and collective histories in the backdrop of the Liberation War of 1971. This section of the literature review synthesizes the insights from Ishtiyaque's study pertaining to memory, historiography, trauma, memory and reconciliation as illustrated in Khan's narrative. The researcher situates the novel in the broader cultural and academic movement of memory boom emphasizing the role of memory to facilitate the understanding of history. The study by Ishtiyaque is grounded in Pierre Nora's distinction between memory and history highlights the role of the novel in the disruption of linear historiography through the privileging of personal recollections and silenced voices. Furthermore, the study explores how individual and collective trauma, associated with the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, is reflected in the novel. Ishtiyaque contends, the intertwining of trauma with personal and collective memories results in reshaping the memories of individual and on a larger level their national identities. Ali and Sajida both carry the memories of the war that are irreconcilable, repressed, and unresolved; however, through Noor they are forced to confront these hidden traumas. The study contends, Noor's paintings are a narrative device, breaking the silence, by bringing the memories of the past to the surface. Her art arguably serves as a bridge between generations, helping Ali and Sajida uncover repressed memories and confront its implications on their lives. Thus, contending that memory in the novel is fluid and fragmented, the intervention of the traumatic past, through Noor's paintings, acts as sudden awakening representing the repressed experiences stored in the unconscious that serve to challenge the official narratives regarding the Liberation War of 1971.

Accordingly, Sorayya Khan bridges the personal and collective memories and histories, unearthing the hidden traumas through the paintings drawn by Noor. The paintings are not only an expression of the repressed traumatic memories of the past instead they serve another purpose as well as allowing Ali and Sajida to navigate through their fractured pasts—regarding which they both preferred to uphold silence. The disjointed episodes, of the remembrance of the traumatic past events, amalgamate and form a mosaic of the lived experiences lived by Ali and Sajida, thereafter, transmitted to Noor. The non-linear approach towards the narration of history through fiction is without a doubt interesting and unique additionally, it also reflects on the complexities of remembering and forgetting—casting doubts on the dominant historical narratives that serve to dismember the truth. Furthermore, trauma, of psychological and corporeal nature, recurrently surfaces throughout the novel. It is an important motif and for its exploration Ishtiyaque draws on the Cathy Caruth theoretical frameworks. It goes without

saying, trauma is the narrative not only represented in the physical form but also in the psychological realm as a wound to the mind that subsequently inhabits the body. Post-traumatic stress is manifested through the various rituals performed by Ali for example cleansing symbolizing his attempt to wash away the horrors of the war—which is paralleled with Pakistan’s effort to suppress the memories of the past and that of its role as the perpetrator of violence and conflict in 1971.

Another significant idea postulated in Ishtiyaque’s research is the relationship between national identity and collective memory. The historical discourses concerning the Liberation War of 1971 propagated by Pakistan function to systematically erase the memories of the war and their role as the perpetrators of violence, which is interpretable as an attempt to enforce collective amnesia. Notably, the deliberate negation of the actual history—which is a consequence of believing in the official historical discourse—is mirrored through Hussein’s initial rejection of Noor’s artwork symbolizing the denial of painful truth by Pakistan. Sorayya Khan in the narrative, by presenting Ali’s household as a microcosm, critiques the selective memory characterized with deliberate selective remembrance and forgetting. Whereas Hussein eventually comes to terms with the Noor’s paintings which symbolizes the possibility of undertaking a path that leads towards national healing. Ishtiyaque contends that acknowledgement of these suppressed histories, divergent from the state’s historical narrative, is inevitable for the creation of an inclusive and truthful nation.

Another important perspective for the analysis of Sorayya Khan’s novel, *Noor (2003)*, is through the lens of Gothic framework whereby, the intricately woven layers of memory, guilt, redemption and trauma converge to form a complex tapestry knitted with the flabbergasting experiences of the perpetrators and survivors of war. Anka Shahid and Saiyma Aslam (2024) in the article, “Unveiling the Gothic Dimensions of Memory, Guilt, and Redemption in Sorayya Khan’s *Noor*” examine Sorayya Khan’s novel through the lens of Gothic studies and comment on the recurring gothic motifs responsible for shaping the course of the novel. In this literature review the key findings of this study have been discussed inclusive of the role of gothic elements in determining the interaction of the narrative with the historical traumas and psychological conflicts. The researchers contend that Khan’s novel *Noor (2003)* is not a typical story with a gothic plot, nevertheless, the narrative explores unsettling themes with the help of Gothic elements such as supernatural ghosts. Furthermore, in the novel guilt, repressed memories, and remorse haunt the characters like ghosts; consider the character of Ali, for instance he is under overwhelming burden for his actions during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, the memories of the past haunt him. Noor, the eponymous protagonist and Ali’s granddaughter, exhibits the internalized trauma, arguably passed down to her from her mother, through her paintings—which are visual descriptions of the painful memories associated with the war in 1971. Noor, through her paintings, unveils unsettling questions regarding history, family, and identity; furthermore, Khan has used gothic themes in her work to question traumatic historical events.

Before proceeding further, it is imperative to outline the Gothic literary traditions, the elements and themes that recurred in said literary works which include the themes of terror, decay, and uncanny. The researchers opine that interestingly these themes are also evident in the Sorayya Khan’s novel therefore, they enable the interpretation of this narrative as well. It is needless to mention that Khan’s novel has not been developed or based on the typical or conventional gothic tropes, nevertheless, it still employs psychological and thematic elements that resonate gothic literary sensibilities. For instance, the uncanny is manifested in the suppressed memories and the unresolved traumas of the characters, particularly Sajida and Ali; on the other hand, Noor’s drawings, as mentioned earlier are a conduit to the past, as described in the novel, “They [drawings] were windows into another world, far away and

distant, which might have ceased to exist without Noor” (Khan 140). Shahid and Aslam note, “the drawings of Noor are the manifestation of such fear and anxiety...the novel explores moral ambiguity and the gray areas of right and wrong, a characteristic often found in Gothic narratives” (Shahid and Aslam 603). Thus, acting as revenants of the past physical and perhaps psychological embodiment of the repressed trauma of her family. Furthermore, in the narrative the motifs of mutilated bodies, haunting imagery, and family secrets recur, which are elements that also belong to gothic literature, and Khan uses them to criticize the personal and political violence. In this article Ali’s inner turmoil and repressed memories of the past—pertaining to his role as the perpetrator of violence or of at least siding with the perpetrators—are a focal point subsequently, his suppressed guilt eventually culminates into a confession which is also aligned with the gothic themes of moral ambiguity and redemption. Sajida’s daughter and Ali’s granddaughter Noor is depicted as a clairvoyant, as mentioned earlier she becomes the conduit that enables the resurfacing of the buried histories compelling characters to confront their sins and past actions.

Furthermore, another element central to gothic literature which adds another dimension to Sorayya Khan’s novel is the “return of the repressed” drawn on Freud’s theories; the study explores the reemergence of the suppressed memories in the novel as haunting entities—which is in fact a trait of gothic literature. Noor’s paintings evoke the resurgence of the traumatic events that took place on the landscape of then East Pakistan in the years 1970 and 1971, the cyclone and the Liberation War respectively. The paintings remind the characters of their suppressed or perhaps the forgotten past, the recollections, therefore, serve to challenge the attempts of the characters to compartmentalize their pasts, highlighting the conflicting relationship and interplay between memory and guilt. Likewise, Ali embodies severe psychological distress and even tries to get rid of these feelings by carrying out rituals of self-purification which illustrates the tension between concealment and revelation—another gothic element. Shahid and Aslam go on to direct attention towards Ali’s experiences—that are manifestation of Freud’s notion of uncanny—whereby, the familiar becomes unsettling. Noor’s paintings are symbolic they are in fact a representation of this phenomenon, the drawings are based on the East Pakistan, a landscape familiar to Ali nevertheless, spine-chilling and wholly unsettling reminding him of the suppressed guilt-ridden memories, disrupting the boundary between unconscious and conscious.

Colours are undoubtedly the soul of any painting in literature colours hold a symbolic significance as they are a profound medium that enables the conveyance of themes, unveil character psychology, and sociopolitical critiques. The study titled as, “Unveiling Characters through Colors: A Critical Study of Sorayya Khan’s Noor” by Mohsin Hamid Butt et al. specifically focuses on the symbolism of the colours which are without a doubt intricately woven into Sorayya Khan’s novel. In this literature, the findings of this article pertaining to colours encapsulating and conveying emotions, societal tensions, psychological states have been synthesized that offer nuanced understanding of the themes embedded in the narrative. In the realm of literature colours have always held significance due to their symbolic presence, colours are employed to reflect emotions, psychology of the characters, prevalent mood, convey implicit messages, highlight social and moral issues. Keeping the importance of colours in view, particularly in the literary aspect, this research Mohsin Hamid Butt et al. employs Goethe’s Colour Theory in addition to Psychoanalytic Interpretations to understand and comprehend the narrative wherein, colours play a pivotal role for being critical semiotic tools. In this study the researchers opine that in the novel colours have been used by Khan as a narrative device to; symbolise the socio-political upheaval and depict the chaotic circumstances in Bangladesh prevalent in the year 1971 during the Liberation War allowing the readers to delve deeper into the lives of the characters. To elucidate this argument, the study refers to

example of recurring imagery of black, white, red and blue throughout the novel which actually portrays the emotional and thematic resonances showcasing despair and hope, oppression and redemption. Moreover, colours embody multifarious nature, their symbolic meanings are not fixed rather dynamic and evolving that is to imply they change with the development of the novel and the context they are employed in.

These findings of the research corresponds with Berlin and Kay's findings postulated in the Basic Color Terms (1969) wherein, it is suggested that colours serve a universal cognitive function but at the same time they are deeply influenced by the cultural contexts as well. The multifarious nature of colours and duality of their purpose in the novel is apparent from the fact that they are indicative of various things; first, universal emotions; second, historical and personal traumas. Evidently, Noor artwork and her paintings are central to the novel because they are inevitable for the characters' reconciliation with their suppressed past traumas; the paintings thus become a canvas on which traumas and memories are externalised. Drawing on this pretext, Butt et al. argue that Noor's paintings are a reflection of the different psychological states of the characters, which is quite obvious from the novel. For instance, the colour, Black, dominates throughout the narrative and signifies repression and marginalisation—especially of Sajida since she was ridiculed and referred to as “Kohl-ki-larki” meaning coal girl because of her appearance—symbolising strong undertones of societal racism and patriarchal bias. The eponymous protagonist Noor herself becomes a dichotomy signifying light and darkness. Her name suggests illumination whereas, her representation through black helps to evoke mystery and burden of inherited trauma. Likewise, the colour, Blue, becomes another psychologically charged colour conventionally it denotes peace and stability nevertheless, it takes on another layer which makes it nature more complex and significant in the context of the novel. The researchers have noted that Noor's fascination with blue crayons indicates her endeavors to articulate and externalise the suppressed and inexpressible collective trauma of her family, of Sajida and Ali particularly—thus, adding emotional depth to the usage of the colour blue. The meticulous shading with the colour blue is representative of an effort to impose order on the chaos and simultaneously a desire for a connection amidst isolation.

This study also analyses the colours from the feministic perspective as well, pink, is associated with femininity and immaturity and it is also reflective of patriarchal infantilization of women; these colour dynamics critique the ways in which patriarchal societies define and constrain femininity and women. Whereas the colours orange and yellow carry gendered connotations; the former colour is described as “muted” and “full of cracks” as it symbolizes decay and the constraints of domestic spaces especially for women; the latter is associated with light and brightness, ironically it underscores Sajida's struggles to escape the oppressive glare of societal expectations. The study contends, that colours collectively become a medium for exploration of intergenerational trauma they reflect the unresolved grief and guilt, serving as a bridge between past traumatic experiences and the present lives of the characters. This study unveils the unique ways in which Sorayya Khan has navigated themes of trauma, identity, history and memory through usage of colours, critiqued the socio-political dynamics, and unveiled the psychological complexity of the characters and the narrative.

In the realm of literature, the debate concerning transferability of maternal trauma centres around the mechanisms enabling passing on of, unresolved grief, psychological scars, traumatic experiences, from mothers to the subsequent generations impacting individual identities and collective societal dynamics. Exploring the phenomenon of transferability of maternal trauma from one generation to another offers a unique lens providing insights into the notion of intergenerational impacts of war and violence. The article “Maternal Transferability of Trauma and Psychosomatic Nation in Sorayya Khan's Noor” by Hamza Rauf Awan and Fatima Syeda delves into the intricacies of trauma as experienced by mothers due to historical-

political personal and collective upheavals. In this part of literature review the insights offered by this article have been synthesised whereby, key themes such as psychosomatic effects of trauma, maternal roles in transferring unresolved grief, and the broader societal implications of such inherited psychological scars have been discussed thoroughly.

This article presents maternal trauma as a catalyst of societal disruption and argue that maternal trauma especially the one acquired during times of war and social collapse or upheaval plays a major role in shaping familial dynamics but also national psyches. Accordingly, the authors of this research Awan and Syeda analyse the novel and hold maternal sufferings responsible for external violence in addition to being an agent of internal psychological destabilisation. Moreover, in this article Post Traumatic Stress Disorder abbreviated as PTSD is considered the key lens through maternal trauma is manifested and transmitted; this particular fact thus highlights how traumatic experiences particularly the one involving displacement, loss and sexual violence are internalised by mothers and later transmitted and externalised through their offspring. The War of Liberation of 1971 is the backdrop for Sorayya Khan's novel wherein the displacement of Sajida—a Bengali women—has been explored, whose trauma is inherited by Noor, her daughter, and it defines her life. The authors contend that war and partition not only create physical rifts additionally they serve to butcher the psychological and familiar structures.

Evidently, Sajida's experiences, characterised with death and destruction, from her childhood leave indelible scars on her psyche which are later manifested in her interactions with Noor—this particular fact showcases the intergenerational characteristic of trauma, transcending generational and temporal boundaries.

Moreover, the role of memory in the transmission of trauma cannot be neglected; accordingly, memory serves another crucial role in the narrative as a thematic device. The article contends the collective and personal memories interact with each other and shape the identities of the characters and determine their responses to the trauma. At this point the perspective of duality of memory is invoked to explain how Noor's artwork serves as a repository of repressed memories, histories and emotions. On the other hand, the same artwork as mentioned earlier is a conduit to the past characterised with trauma and destruction; Noor's paintings are undoubtedly evocative and cryptic in nature they are a medium through which the repressed memories of Sajida resurface compelling her to confront the past she had forgotten or at least attempted to forget. This article also hinges on Cathy Caruth's theories on trauma and Freud's concept of the unconscious to contextualise the discussion on memory. The flashbacks Sajida encounters are in the form of fragmented dreams, involuntary recollections that illustrating the disruption of linear perceptions of time due to trauma, due to which the past becomes perpetually present and continues to intrude. Furthermore, these experiences are also mirrored in Noor's behaviours and actions which suggests that trauma, in this novel at least, does not operate as an individual affliction instead as a collective and shared phenomenon as well within the families.

This study raises another compelling argument raised in this article is the exploration of trauma in its psychosomatic dimensions; although, trauma is inherently psychological nevertheless, it finds expression through physical symptoms and behaviours as well. For example, in the novel, the eponymous protagonist Noor suffers from Down syndrome—which can be interpreted as a metaphor of the inherited burdens and unresolved maternal grief. The unarticulated emotions and moans by Noor signify the ineffable weight of trauma which has been passed down by her mother Sajida—this particular phenomenon encapsulated the psychosomatic cycle of pain and repression. In this article the role of trauma in shaping the body's relationships with its environment has also been explored—these findings hinge primarily on Merleau-Ponty's Theory of Perception which suggest that Sajida's traumatic

experiences have altered her interactions with the world by blurring the boundaries between her past and present. The traumatic experiences are embodied and represented through the artwork by Noor that externalize the physical and emotions dissonances she has inherited from her mother.

In conclusion, Awan and Syeda comprehensively explore the notion of maternal trauma and its far-reaching implications on the characters and the larger society by analysing memory, psychosomatic expression, and artistic representation. The article thus, highlights the multifaceted approach in the depiction of trauma, the emphasis on intergenerational dimensions of trauma provides insights pertaining to the intricate dynamics of grief and resilience within families and societies.

The interplay between trauma, memory and identity has been one of the most explored subjects of psychoanalytical paradigms; likewise, the article, “A Psychoanalytical Study of Sorayya Khan’s Noor with Reference to Freud’s Traumatic Neurosis” by Maqsood et al., explores these themes through the application of Freudian theoretical framework. This article explores the Sorayya Khan’s novel in its psychological dimensions—trauma, repression, postwar identity—as an aftermath of the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. The concept of traumatic neurosis postulated by Freud is central to this research it serves as the foundational framework rendering an understanding of the psychological landscapes of the different characters. Freud postulates that traumatic neurosis stems from overwhelming external stimuli which cannot be processed by the ego, as a consequence thereof, psychological disarray and repression are experienced. This research basically draws a parallel between Freud’s theories and the experiences of the characters, particularly Sajida and Ali, who as per the study display symptoms of PTSD inclusive of nightmarish flashbacks, avoidance, and psychosomatic manifestations. Ali, the former soldier of Pakistan Army stationed in East Pakistan during 1971, embodies Freud’s concept of repressed trauma; the bath he takes is a ritualistic representation of his attempt to cleanse himself of the guilt and horror that he inherited from his wartime actions.

The study contends these actions on Ali’s part align with the Freudian notion of “stimulus barrier” whereby, the mind tries to shield itself from the traumatic stimuli meanwhile it inadvertently perpetuated psychological distress. On the other hand, Sajida’s fragmented memories and dissociative tendencies are reflective of her cumulative trauma—caused by the displacement, loss of family members due to the cyclone and predominantly the war.

Repression and the return of the repressed is another significant Freudian notion; although the theoretical or critical term is “repression” that posits, the suppressed memories resurface in indirect and symbolic forms which is the case throughout the novel. Consider Noor’s drawings for instance serve as a medium, even as a conduit to the past, through which the repressed returns unearthing the hidden truth about her family’s past. The artworks are referred to as “visceral and haunting” since they encapsulate and portray the horrors of the war and the unspoken truth about Ali and Sajida’s traumas. Interestingly, the Freudian concept of sublimation also seems to be in practice in this novel, Noor’s ability to articulate the repressed memories through art is in fact sublimation as it allows the repressed desires, experiences and even memories to find expression in forms that are not only creative but also socially acceptable since the dominant discourse has opted silence of such matters. Her drawings are not therapeutic, but they are also a catalyst that compels her family to confront their traumatic past and increases the chance of possible reconciliation with buried familial histories. This familiar dynamic, especially in context of the buried traumatic past, indicates towards intergenerational transmission of trauma due to which the psychological wounds of one generation are transferred to the next, whereby, the offspring inherit the wounds of their predecessors and re-experience them.

The article also explores the psychosomatic manifestations of trauma, the fact Noor was a girl with Down syndrome, suggests she was carrying the weight of intergenerational trauma; her physical condition carries the physical and emotional toll of the unresolved grief and guilt that runs within her family. A similar argument has been made in the article by Awan and Syeda regarding the psychosomatic manifestations and expressions of trauma whereby, the psychological distress is manifested in the body. Similarly, Ali's behaviour and particularly the cleansing rituals of scalding baths embody Freud's concept of "acting out" whereby, unresolved trauma is expressed through repetitive actions instead of conscious reflection. Moreover, in the novel, as discussed earlier, art emerges as a significant motif serving as a conduit for past, memory, trauma, and healing; it is a repository of her family's collective grief and a medium that offers redemption through reconciliation and catharsis. This article basically situates the psychological experiences of the characters in the novel within the broader historical and political contexts of the 1971 Liberation War. Thus, showcasing how conflict and violence manifested in different shapes—displacement, sexual violence, cultural erasure, and silence—impacted the psyche of those who experienced it or lived through it, depicting the interplay between individual and collective traumas.

The author of the novel Sorayya Khan also authored an article, "The Silence and Forgetting That Wrote *Noor*" (2015) wherein, she highlights the societal reaction to the trauma and guilt stemming from the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. The author contends, the individuals and the society have willingly made the choice to forget the painful history, in order to cope with the underlying sentiments of guilt, remorse, pain, and trauma. However, silence in matters of this nature has costs unfathomable damage, letting the past actions – persecution, violence, murders, abductions, and rape – remain unacknowledged take away the opportunity to understand and heal from the painful, and traumatic history. Khan, while researching to write the novel, interviewed various Pakistani soldiers who fought the war in 1971; notably, silence of the soldiers in addition to their and reluctance to express, regarding the experiences pertaining to the war was concerning. The novel breaks the silence by depicting characters struggling with repressed memories and guilt; thus, thus, attempting to explore the implications of unresolved trauma on the victims, survivors, perpetrators and their families.

In this article Khan has delved into the personal and professional challenges she encountered while researching for the writing of her novel *Noor* (2003) whose backdrop is obviously of the war between East and West Pakistan fought in 1971. It is necessary to mention that Sorayya Khan's childhood was arguably similar to that of Sajida since Khan's childhood is also characterised with the witnessing of the war's aftermaths. She witnessed the plight of the prisoners of war in addition to the physical and psychological scars that were inflicted on the landscape as a consequence of the war. Khan explains in this article the primary purpose behind the writing of this novel was to explore; the uncanny silence and forgetting that surrounded the traumatic events and most importantly to explore why they opted silence. As mentioned in the article her initial research which was carried out in Pakistan—wherein, she interviewed the soldiers who fought the war in East Pakistan—proved to be frustrating mainly because majority of the soldiers were reluctant to speak openly about the war, which could be due to different reasons. Maybe the soldiers were still under the oaths they had taken upon joining the service or perhaps they were burdened by the guilt and societal pressure that compelled them to maintain silence about their experiences in, then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh during the time of chaos and war.

Analysis

Hauntology in Noor—The Lingering and Spectral Past

The term, Hauntology, is actually a brainchild of Derrida, who propounded on this notion in detail in the book, *Spectres of Marx*, wherein, the traditional notions of time, memory and presence have been challenged. Instead, Derrida has proposed that the past never disappears, rather it lingers and continues to do so, and eventually acquires a spectral force and presence, that results in disruption of the present. The concept of Hauntology— basically emerged from Derrida’s critique of ontology, the study of being—directs attention towards the absence, or what is absent, and underpins that existence is perpetually haunted by the absent, unresolved and the repressed. In the words of Colin Davis: “Hauntology supplants its near-homonym ontology, replacing the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive” (Davis 373). Accordingly, as per the explanation regarding the nature of Hauntology, Davis suggests that unlike ontology the focus here is on the being and presence in the figure of a ghost—which is never fully present, absent, dead, or alive. The existence in this liminal state, therefore, defies the binary logic—of presence/absence, life/death—and forces us to confront and engage with the ghosts of history, haunting the present till date.

The concept of Hauntology explores the impact of Marx and Marxism’s specters on contemporary thought, politics, and culture that too after the “end of history.” Derrida explores the spectral nature of time and history, and refers towards Shakespeare’s play Hamlet, to argue that time is inherently disjointed, or in other words ‘out of joint’ it is therefore, always haunted by the past and the futures. Simply put, the present is never fully and purely present rather it is always infiltrated by the traces of what is no longer, or not yet (Derrida 61). Derrida in his seminal work, *Spectres of Marx*, lays the foundation for later introduction of the of Hauntology in the following words; “The time is out of joint”: the formula speaks of time, it also says the time, but it refers singularly to this time, to an “in these times,” the time of these times, the time of this world which was for Hamlet an “our time,” only a “this world,” this age and no other” (Derrida 61).

The disjointedness here refers to the fact that history is not linear or closed in fact it is haunted by the past and the future, predominantly by the unresolved past tensions and the future promises they held (Derrida 61). Derrida further suggests that historical moments, like the crisis experienced by Hamlet, are singular nevertheless, they echo across era making the past inescapable. Time—which is, out of joint, and disrupted—is embedded with spectres of the past and the future; the unresolved past tensions conjure the present, whereas the present is also haunted by the spectres of the future—along with the promises that would perhaps be their realisation.

In the novel, the main characters, Ali and Sajida, experience the spectral presence of the unresolved past tensions, and even of the future. They also experience fractured sense of time, as the violent war of Bangladesh of 1971 intrudes from the past, without any warning, into the present. The intrusions of the war are through different mediums: flashbacks, dreams, and even through art (Maqsood et al. 239). Both Ali and Sajida, undergo these infiltrative attempts of the unresolved past, at different points in the novel, and these attempts of the past to force a confrontation only intensify over time, especially when Noor starts drawing pictures of the same landscape—where Ali played a role in the perpetration of violence whereas, Sajida, witnessed it from the side of the victims. The narrative is certainly not linear, which is another fact affirming Derrida’s claim, of time being disjointed—it establishes the fact that collective and personal unresolved histories leave the past with no other option but to return.

The protagonist of the novel, Noor, the disabled or perhaps the specially abled child, embodies Derrida’s spectre as she becomes a living remnant of the past which she never

experienced. Her artwork becomes a window through which Ali and Sajida can look directly back into their guilt-ridden and traumatic pasts respectively. If we focus more on the character of Sajida, it becomes evident that she carried fragmented memories of the past, characterised by trauma of displacement and violence—that continued linger on, and intrude into her present (Shahid and Aslam 604). Although her inability to reconcile with the past aligns with Abraham and Torok's notion of the phantom (Davis 375), nevertheless, the transmission of the trauma to Noor adds a layer of complexity to the debate making it more, as Derrida would say, 'Hauntological' wherein, the ghosts of history infiltrate the present, and even intrude in the present sometimes through the future.

If Sajida's character is analysed the traces of history's spectre, or that of the unresolved past, and its intrusion into her present, are quite evident. And there can be no other evidence more direct than these lines from the novel—wherein, Khan explicitly unveils the problematic relationship Sajida shared with her past—that read, "Sajida's past unclear and unspoken, forever lingered just beyond her touch" (Khan 11).

Pay attention to the words used to describe Sajida's past in the novel, 'unclear' and 'unspoken' these two words make it evident that: attempts had been made by herself personally, or perhaps under collective pressure from the society, in which she was currently living, to consciously or even forcefully, silence her past. The words, unclear and unspoken, bring to light another detail about Sajida's past; first, it was unclear because it was traumatic, for being violent and involving displacement and familial loss, and resultantly became incomprehensible for her—which is a fundamental trait of trauma as theorised by Cathy Caruth in her book, *Unclaimed Experience* (1996).

Accordingly, Caruth (1996), in attempts to narrow down the key feature of trauma, refers to Freud, and notes, "the recurring image of the accident in Freud, as the illustration of the unexpected or the accidental... becomes the exemplary scene of trauma excellence because...it tells of what it is, in traumatic events that is not precisely grasped" (Caruth 6). She further notes, "The accident...is passed on through other trauma narratives, [which] does not simply represent the violence of a collision but also conveys the impact of its very incomprehensibility" (Caruth 6). These lines taken from Caruth's work on trauma help establish two fundamental traits of an event which can be labelled or categorised as traumatic: first, it cannot be precisely grasped; second, besides being colossal/violent is also incomprehensible. Caruth further notes, "What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known" (Caruth 6). In these lines, Caruth focuses on the survivors or the victims of the trauma, who witnessed the events first-hand, she notes that bearing a witness to trauma later turns haunts the survivor/victim because of the fact it cannot be expressed, or experiences cannot be put into words, due to fact it was never fully acknowledged, or more aptly put grasped.

Accordingly, the facts and instances—extracted from the novel, discussed in this chapter, and analysed through the lens of Hauntology—establish that Sajida's trauma was rooted in: first, the loss of her family, owed to the cyclones struck Bangladesh in 1970; second, displacement and exposure to merciless killings, because of the war. The study finds that, Sajida's trauma manifested in different forms, sometimes through dreams, fragmented memories of her biological-family, and sometimes even in visceral cues—such as the taste of mud. The wound inflicted on Sajida's psychology—due to separation from her family and later displacement—was not an individualistic problem rather Sajida in this context is a microcosmic representation of the hundreds of Bangladeshis who suffered in this pattern during 1970 and 1971.

The novel also engages with the political dimensions of hauntology as it sheds light on the efforts of West Pakistan, contemporaneously known as Pakistan, to inflict atrocities on the people and criminally silence them to prevent the truth from surfacing. To this effect, the personal silences opted by the characters in the novel reflect the nationally adopted and purposefully orchestrated efforts of enforcing national amnesia. The abandoned houses, unearthed war crimes, and maternal transmission of trauma collectively point towards the inability and refusal of characters to confront the past. Derrida, however, opines that these onesided efforts of suppressing or erasing the past are fragile and ineffective, instead they paradoxically only ensure the return of the past in even from disruptive forms.

Conclusively, the novel under discussion authored by Khan offers a profound literary exploration of the past through narrative reconstruction which aligns perfectly with Derrida's framework of hauntology—that underpins the spectral nature of the past and the permeation of the unresolved tensions/past into the individual and collective consciousness. The novel, in light of the theoretical framework, calls for learning to live with ghosts, or the past, not as a passive observer but as an active participant having ethical reckoning of the events that transpired in the past. The novel, by giving voice to the silenced and visibility to the repressed enables the transition of hauntology from a theoretical framework to a narrative imperative urging us to confront the past not as a distant memory rather as a living breathing force that shapes our present and future—in order to break the cycle of haunting and to materialise justice.

Post Memory and the Inherited Trauma of 1971

Transmission of trauma across generation, without any spatial or temporal limitations, is the most dominant theme, and at the heart of Sorayya Khan's narrative. The novel as mentioned earlier revolves around the eponymous protagonist and grapples with how historical violence seeps into the lives of individuals who never experienced it directly or first-hand, unlike the survivors. In the narrative, trauma is maternally transferred from Sajida to her newly born daughter Noor, who in return through her artwork preserves and retrieves the memories of the catastrophic year 1971. Noor a disabled, or a specially-abled child, finds solace in drawing and use of colours. As the novel progresses, Noor starts drawing the landscape of Bangladesh, and thereafter, she draws bloated buffaloes—these pictures remind both Ali and Sajida of their respective pasts, which they had unsuccessfully buried.

Accordingly, this research employs the theoretical lens of, Postmemory, propounded by Marianne Hirsch—to understand and explain the process of descendants, or second generations, inheriting the traumatic memories and preserving it through stories, images, art, and performance. This theoretical paradigm was underpinned by Hirsch to understand the transmission of traumatic memories of the Holocaust survivors to their respective second generations or the post-generations—and their efforts to preserve the memories through different means as referred earlier. In this chapter the critical lens of Postmemory is used to analyse Noor's utility in the inheritance of the trauma (Awan and Syeda 130), and her role as a vessel of her family's unresolved past—stemming from the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. In addition, enabling a confrontation of her family with unresolved problematic past, through the visual, non-lingual, medium of drawings, images, or photos. Unlike her mother Sajida, who witnessed and survived the war of 1971, and her grandfather Ali, who participated in the war and perpetrated violence, Noor, inherits the trauma—embodying familial silences, repressed guilt, and unspoken weight of history—and encounters the devastating reality as an aftermath being the second or the post generation. Noor through her artwork, which starts haunting Ali and Sajida over the course of the novel, adopts a non-linguistic medium for preservation and expression of the past traumatic memories. She, therefore, becomes the unlikely archivist of, and a conduit to, a past that she never lived.

This research basically explores how: the eponymous protagonist, Noor, embodies Hirsch's concept of Postmemory; her paintings function as a bridge between the personal and collective trauma—effectively linking the survivor and perpetrator with their unresolved past; the unclear and unspoken past is given a visual expression. The focus on the interplay between inherited memory and artistic expression challenges the traditional narratives of trauma and underpin that past is not merely remembered through recalling, but it can be relived through artistic creations, and mimicking through performances by the descendants, or later generations, of the survivors.

Postmemory is also involved in the theoretical discussions regarding memory, trauma, intergenerational transmission, and is used in several important contexts besides Holocaust. Hirsch then focuses on the various forms that exist for the preservation of personal, familial, and generational memories. Traditionally, oral narratives served the purpose but, the new and better ways are, “photography and performance, the ever growing culture of memorials, and new museology” which are the “repertoire” or in simple words, reserves or collections, storing those memories (105).

In the postgeneration, the prefix ‘post’ is quite significant, as this descendant generation of the survivors are described by their post-ness to the actual memory because they are the receivers of indirect knowledge; because the postgeneration, “did not see them [memories], suffer through them, experience their impact directly” (106). Postmemory is basically the relationship of the postgeneration with the collective memories of their preceding generation of survivors, who witness cultural or collective trauma. Hirsch argues the experiences of the surviving generation are transmitted into the postgeneration so deeply that they start constituting the latter memories. In this manner the complex interplay between inherited memories, narratives reconstruction, collective consciousness, and past is unearthed, in the following words by Hirsch: “To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one’s birth or one’s consciousness, is to risk having one’s own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation. It is to be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension. These events happened in the past, but their effects continue to the present. This is, I believe, the experience of postmemory and the process of its generation” (Hirsch 107).

The postgeneration after inheriting memories—that preceded their birth and consciousness—and preserving them becomes vulnerable to get impacted by traumatic events, which they did not witness directly but provided a substantial space in their consciousness. The traumatic events, for instance genocides that happened in the past, still defy narrative reconstruction and have the same bearing on the consciousness of its bearer’s psyche, perhaps less in magnitude and intensity as compared to the survivor(s). The point here is that past despite being inherited, and not directly lived, if traumatic continues to have similar implications on the individual and collective consciousness.

Furthermore, reading of the novel with the theoretical paradigm reveals that Noor epitomizes the concept of “familial gaze” as she absorbs the trauma of 1971 through language of family, which is more direct, and ruthless than social speech—externalised through Sajida’s nightmares and Ali’s guilt-ridden silences that permeated their household. Whereas, the paintings made by Noor, serving as a conduit to the unresolved past, is not only a hauntological, necessarily for being non-linguistic, medium of expression; but also hold significance in Hirsch’s framework as well. Her paintings are also classifiable as, “affiliative postmemory” which are

“space for projection and approximation” (116). The fragmented war imagery—such as cyclones, mass graves—are depicted in her drawings despite the fact Noor never witnessed these events—this particular fact demonstrates the effective transfer of the trauma through, “imaginative investment, projection, and creation” (107). Given the above facts, Noor becomes the hinge generation and receives the guardianship and responsibility of preserving the memories. Notably, she becomes the honest archivist of her familial memories and shapes post memory when her adult supervisors cannot externalise their traumas. Whereas Noor becomes the site enabling the transgenerational transmission of traumatic, and indirect knowledge; her muteness symbolises the national silence meanwhile, her paintings perform the work of affective memory work—dismantling the official narrative meant to suppress the actual past.

As mentioned earlier Noor was fond of drawing, the novel is replete with instance where her drawings reminded Sajida and Ali of their past in Bangladesh, former East Pakistan, particularly in the year 1971 and before. The fifth chapter of the novel gives an important reminder to the readers that, “Noor was five when she began to paint her dreams” (Khan 98) which establishes that Noor had picked visual representation as her preferred form of her discourse—particularly for expressing her unconscious mind that appeared in the form of dreams. Consider this instance from later in the chapter, where Sajida while glancing through the stack of Noor’s drawing stumbles on a picture that reminds her of the previous home and life by edge of the sea: “The first thing Sajida noticed was that all the pictures, except for a few scribbles here and there, were identical. It wasn’t, however, until Noor pointed to the sharply outlined shape which curved at each end and inquired “What’s this?” that Sajida suddenly recognized the shape. It was the staple of a previous life she’d lived on the edge of a sea, a different country now, miles away. “I don’t know,” Sajida said, keeping what she saw, the boat, to herself. “What did you mean to draw?” (Khan 99).

This instance shows that: Noor, the postgeneration, inherited the familial trauma—preceding her birth—that had been embedded into her consciousness and found expression through affective memory (Awan and Syeda 130). The inherited trauma was ingrained so deeply into Noor’s consciousness that it became her own memory, arguably due to the possibility that she witnessed the landscape in her dream, as mentioned in the novel. Meanwhile, for Sajida the painting retrieved the box, in which she had suppressed the traumatic memories, and resumed the haunting of the past.

The unexpected intrusion of the past—one has been relentlessly trying to suppress—that too because of a drawing made by a kid, is not an ordinary experience. The fish-boat, the landscape of Bangladesh, and the staple her former home, all of this was uncanny for Sajida; it certainly retrieved the suppressed trauma in her consciousness, which could not find expression at least not through words. Accordingly, Noor who had never witnessed the war, knew how to visually express it on paper, she perfectly drew the fishboat, fires, floods and faces—which reminded both Ali and Sajida of their past spent in Bangladesh. Noor did not witness or suffer because of 1971 war, moreover, she was born and raised in West Pakistan; therefore, ideally, she should not have been impacted by what happened in 1971 or by its trauma. However, contrary to expectations, in this household the youngest member of the family, Noor, was the only one who had internalised the trauma and brought it to life, not through words but through art, drawings and imagery. It is important to mention that Hirsch while commenting on the relationship between the post-generation and the memories of their elders, also the survivors, notes, “these memories were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right” (Hirsch 107). Apparently, it is the case in this novel as well, Noor, signifying the post-generation, maintains a link with her mother’s past, and manifests this remembrance in a manner that it seems these memories were her own (Awan and

Syeda 130). The exactness of the East Pakistan landscape and thereafter, the uncanny similarities with the war in her drawings validate this argument.

The sketches, drawn by Noor, are equally destabilizing for Ali, however, for different reasons. The uncannily accurate depiction of wartime East Pakistan—camouflaged jeeps, uniformed troops, black mud and raised roads—validate the ability of postmemory, of “uncanny repetition” (107) as it has been underpinned by Hirsch. Moreover, Ali’s shock after recognizing the battle scenes—i.e., of a soldier bleeding on a road after—underscore the indexical power of the drawings. It establishes the drawings are not merely a product of imagination, or spaces of abstract creativity, but eerie re-enactments of events that were impossible for Noor to witness, because they precede her existence. In the context of this novel, it can be framed as generational haunting by the past, because for the family and the family history the role of Ali as perpetrator of violence is omitted. However, these hidden secrets resurface through Noor’s hand, through a medium that does not require words for expression. The drawings, manifesting postmemory, comply with the “ethical obligation” on postmemory to confront the inherited guilt. The drawings also enable the dismantling of the family lores particularly by revealing Ali role as perpetrator. Sajida’s later realization that Ali was not fixing bridges but participating in violence fractures the narrative, of Ali’s innocence. It is necessary to mention, the rendering of troops against the foaming sea, amalgamates the familial traumas: first, Sajida’s loss of family wherein, the sea is destroyed; second, of Ali’s violent acts, with the landscape as its witness. The multifarious implications, on the characters, and dimensions of the drawings reflect Hirsch argument that postmemories artifacts are like sites of projection and identification (Hirsch 116) where, both the descendants and the survivors project unresolved emotions onto the visual fragments of the memories.

Critically speaking, Noor’s art is neither limited to symbolic interpretation, nor does it rely solely on symbolism for depiction of the past. The progression of her drawings from abstract blue hues to specific war scenes, that Ali had actually lived, mirrors the intrusive nature of trauma, which as per Hirsch are the memories that puncture the present (Khan 112). Similarly, the visceral reactions they provoke—Ali’s ringing ears, and nauseous taste of mud for Sajida—emphasize the bodily dimensions of postmemory. These recollections are not passive or coincidental rather somatic re-experiences, wherein, the past erupts and intrudes through visual stimuli. Sorayya Khan’s narrative thus, expands Hirsch framework on postmemory, the latter focuses on photographs but the former through the narrative establishes that any visual medium, even the strokes by a child’s crayon, can function as postmemorial artifacts, by carrying the weight of unprocessed history. The uncannily and relentlessly specific depictions of the landscape and war-events suggest that trauma, even unspoken, encodes itself into the familial consciousness, specifically of the post or the second generation(s), and resurfaces through oblique but precise details. Ultimately, Noor’s art basically exposes he paradox of postmemory that it serves as a, bridge to the past, reminder of its irreparable rupture—a dynamics which has been encapsulated by Hirsch as, “the connective tissue of generationally transmitted trauma” (Khan 121).

Psychological and Emotional Legacies of Historical Violence

Sorayya Khan’s novel, *Noor*, has masterfully woven, Hauntology—a notion propounded by Derrida—into its narrative fabric by unveiling how the unresolved traumas, stemming from the Bangladesh War of Liberation, fought in 1971. The novel also showcases how the traumas and psychological complications, rooted in the war, exert spectral influence over the lives of the characters, predominantly on Ali and Sajida (Zakaria). This paper discuss the instances of hauntology, and the nature of the past to, linger and haunt the present, in detail with specific instances and references towards the individual characters.

Accordingly, Ali's effort to fortify himself, both psychologically and physically; Sajida's repressed memories and the flashbacks characterised with remembrance of the catastrophic past; and above all the uncanny and specific artistic expressions through Noor's drawings collectively illustrate the core tenets of hauntology (Shahid and Aslam 606). It is necessary to reiterate the fundamental principles of hauntology underpin: the past is neither dead not fully present; the past exists, or lingers, in a liminal space responsible for disruption of linear time; and the past continues to haunt the present with the unresolved tensions. The characters, therefore, struggle to confront, suppress, or even channelise their traumas—mirroring Derrida's assertion that, history always remains out of joint, meanwhile, as the spectres of the past, collective or individual, refuse to be silent.

Analysis of Sajida's characters reveals she was haunted by history's spectre, and we even find evidence of the unresolved past's intrusion into her present. The narrative summarizes the relationship between Sajida and her past as "unclear and unspoken" (Khan 11). These lines affirm that the experiences of her past were undoubtedly traumatic and remained unresolved. Even Derrida propounded, the ghost of the past, lingers with the present, similarly for Sajida, her past always lingered with her, yet remained beyond her touch. Sajida belonged to the generation that witnessed and experienced traumatic events first-hand, and registered these memories in her consciousness, at a young age, by living through them. The unresolved past, characterized by the unclear, unspoken and disturbing memories therefore, returned to haunt her again in the present.

Accordingly, Sajida's trauma is rooted in the death of her family because of the cyclone and the subsequent war-events. Interestingly, Sajida is reminded of these events again and again through the course of the novel, sometimes through dreams, and also drawings. Furthermore, the novel reveals that Sajida lost her family to the cyclone, "She had screamed for her own mother one terrifying night when a wall of water snatched her baby brother from her arms and then swallowed him, along with everyone else she loved in the world" (Khan 11). Her mother, iconizing her familial trauma, therefore, appears in her dreams which in turn reminds her of the past and the life she had lived in East Pakistan before destruction unfolded. The intrusion of the past through dreams is a testament of the fact that the past continues to linger and haunt the survivor.

The intrusions from the past, in the forms of dreams, were not limited to nightmarish flashbacks or reminders of one particular instance—of her baby brother, and family being swallowed by the unforgiving waves—rather these dreams would also be random. These dreams would, however, feature her mother, the maternal head of the family iconizing the trauma stemming from familial loss. At another point in the novel, Hussein inquires how did Sajida know to sew, she replies, "Ma is free with sewing advice...as if her mother dead for thirteen years, lived in the house next door and was an integral to their daily lives" (Khan 13-14). Although this instance does not directly refer towards the traumatic event of separated from her family nevertheless, it features the character of her mother—symbolizing the past that continues to linger with her. The reference to her mother, give an idea as if she lived with her mother, and her family of East Pakistan, contrasting with her reality and the nature of life in West Pakistan. However, this instance does prove the character of her mother, was actually a spectre of history, which she is unable to let go.

The ghost, of the past, that haunts Sajida, is in fact much grander than it appears to be—since it embodies the collective traumas of the East Pakistani community—moreover it reflects their suffering and later silencing and denial by the perpetrators. Accordingly, the ghost—a manifestation of the past, from the years 1970-1971—was not merely personal rather collective and demanded recognition of the historical injustices that occurred therein. Whereas the maternal transmission of trauma to Noor showcases the intergenerational reach of hauntology

whereby, the unresolved past is inherited by another member of the family instead of being resolved, or ideally staying buried in the past. Interestingly, it is Noor's artwork—uncannily and eerily specific drawings of the war-torn Bangladeshi landscape—becomes the only medium that enables the expression of the repressed and consciously forgotten past. Notably, these drawings double as a hauntological medium as well, since through this medium the past does not require words, for intrusion or acknowledgement, to forcibly re-enter the present.

Ali, on the other hand, is traumatized because of his role as the perpetrator during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. The past and the associated memories of East Pakistan—characterized with merciless killings, mass graves, sexual violence, rain and mud—returns to haunt Ali, psychologically, consciously and unconsciously. The analysis of his character and behavioral patterns—living in fortress-like home, avoidance of the abandoned houses—depicted in the novel demonstrate how different elements from daily life reflected the influence of the past on him. Any reminder of East Pakistan triggers an internal conflict within him, forcing him into fight or flight situations—and through most part of the novel Ali picks the latter option. The abandoned houses of East Pakistanis become spectral reminders of the violence, and even the unwilling sight of these houses is enough to retrieve the unsettling and horrific memories of 1971. The uncomfortable conversations he has with his family members also stem from the same trauma. It is necessary to mention that witnessing acts of violence, even as a perpetrator, undoubtedly has emotional and psychological toll on the individuals—as it is the case for Ali which is reflected through both verbal and non-verbal cues. The crucial silences, spatial choices, demeanor, internal monologues reflect the aftermaths of an unresolved trauma, unrelenting to stop haunting the present.

Accordingly, a traumatised person would do anything to avoid seeing that would retrieve or revive the memories one had been trying to suppress for so long (Caruth 6). It was exactly the case with Ali, he tried to distance himself from the past as much as he could, by not talking about the war, or discussing it even with his family, avoiding seeing or travelling by the abandoned houses in Islamabad that once belonged to East Pakistanis, and building a house that resembled a fortress.

The novel mentions that after taking retirement from the army Ali started working as a realtor in Islamabad, the nature of his job required him to show the clients different houses and pieces of lands situated in Islamabad. The novel reads, “Over the years, he visited the plot. He would drive his car in wide circles, handling the kitchen and dining room, bedrooms and bathrooms” (Khan 50). This was the post-war Islamabad, although no substantial infrastructural damage had been caused to it, nevertheless, the aftermaths of the war were also visible in this landscape. The traces of war could be seen in Islamabad, primarily in the abandoned houses scattered all over the city. The narrative mentions these houses were abandoned, some of them were even deserted during construction, when the war started, and remained in ruins even after the culmination of the war. The people, along with Ali, believed these houses belonged to the East Pakistanis who had either been killed or escaped Pakistan because of the war. The book narrates this fact as, “Ali assumed, along with everyone else in Islamabad, that the partly built houses...belonged to East Pakistanis, dead or alive, who didn't claim them after the war” (Khan 50).

Therefore, Ali while working as a realtor tried his best to avoid these aforementioned houses, because they belonged to the East Pakistanis who had been displaced, or killed during the war. Now the question arises, why did Ali avoid seeing those houses, they were only abandoned structures. Ali avoided the sight of these houses because they had become more than just deserted houses, they had become a site of memory, and unofficial historical monuments serving. The increased metaphorical significance of these houses was perhaps only visible to Ali, since they served as the witness of the barbaric atrocities that unfolded in East

Pakistan and on the East Pakistanis. The abandoned houses, therefore, reminded Ali of the violence he had perpetrated in that landscape; moreover, these houses also signified the grave aftermaths of war. Hauntological interpretation of this instance establishes that these abandoned houses attained a spectral presence, at least for Ali, due to the fact even their sight reminded him of the unresolved past and brought back the memories he had buried deep long ago.

His efforts of conjurement, or avoidance, of the unresolved past were fragile and ineffective, because the past always lingered with him, without him realizing this fact. The past that had been suppressed returned instantly merely by the sight of abandoned houses. This is how trauma impacted Ali and continued to do so till it finally forced a familial confrontation.

Furthermore, Ali's deteriorated psychology and emotional condition is apparent from the fact he got a house constructed that resembled a fortress, unlike normal houses Ali's house was built facing away from the Margala Hills, with courtyards facing inwards. The narrative explores the symbolic connotations of the house, and its constructional patterns through the character of Nanijan, Ali's mother. She believed Ali had fortified himself against marriage, and she also believed that his decision had something to do with the war, and the associated secrets that never surfaced. The novel reads: "She imagined that Ali had fortified his inner sanctity of his home with rooms on all sides; the same way as he'd fortified himself against marriage. Just as his courtyard could not seem from the street, he would never find out who might not know whatever it was he'd seen in those months in that distant, wretched land" (Khan 53).

The house that Ali constructed according to his vision and imagination, became a physical manifestation of the trauma that he had internalized, perhaps unknowingly. Ali had built the house like a fortress because he was psychologically wounded, by the war, the atrocities he had committed and witnessed in East Pakistan, made him emotionally vulnerable. In this context, the best possible way to avoid, the same atrocities being inflicted on him or his family, was through fortification and isolation. Accordingly, just like Ali had fortified himself against marriage, he physically isolated and fortified himself in the house, once again.

Sajida lost her family to the cyclone, she saw the water take them all away, when she lived in East Pakistan. It is evident that Sajida was traumatised by this event from her past, and the fact it continued to intrude through her dreams also affirms that it was an unresolved trauma. Understandably, a person once in the same sight, where all this happened, would find themselves once again amidst the traumatic memories from the unresolved past. The fact, fifth chapter mentions that Noor started drawing her dreams when she was only five, and sequentially mentions that she drew her mother's home, leads to the argument that Noor saw the places where her mother formerly lived, and the events that transpired her displacement, in her dreams.

Accordingly, Noor, the post generation, inherits maternal trauma, which she has not lived through experience, however, the drawings of war-torn landscape made by her epitomize Derrida's specter—materialization of the past without narration or through words. Noor's disability can also be interpreted as a metaphor for the wounded nation underscoring the emotional and psychological legacies of the trauma, that resist the temporal and spatial limitations and persist across generations. In the realm of Postmemory, Hirsch posits this phenomenon of post generation is understandable as; the transmission of the experiences, of surviving generation, so deeply that they start constituting the former's memories. Noor, therefore, becomes a hauntological medium, independent of language, or a conduit through which Ali and Sajida are forced to confront their suppressed memories. The above instance also shows that historical violence is not merely transmitted but reincarnated in new forms if not resolved.

Finally, the non-linear narrative, and the narrative structure of the novel—flowing back and forth into the past and present—reinforces the hauntological disruption of the temporal order. To this effect the flashbacks, dreams, and fragmented memories continue to intrude on the present, which blurs the boundaries between the past and the present, and also between reality and specter. The disjointed temporality, therefore, mirrors Derrida's focal argument in this context that "time is out of joint" underscoring that being is haunted by what is absent or repressed. Whereas the cyclical return of trauma—primarily through Ali's guilt and efforts of conjurement, Sajida's dreams, and Noor's artwork—underpins the unfortunate reality i.e., the impossibility of closure a fundamental tenet of hauntology.

Conclusion

Sorayya Khan's *Noor* (2003) is a profound exploration of trauma, memory, and identity, set against the backdrop of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. Through the lives of its central characters—Ali, Sajida, and Noor—the novel reveals how historical violence leaves deep psychological scars that persist across generations. By employing Jacques Derrida's concept of hauntology and Marianne Hirsch's theory of postmemory, this research has examined how the past refuses to fade, instead haunting the present in spectral ways. The novel's narrative structure, character dynamics, and symbolic motifs all reinforce the idea that unresolved trauma shapes identities, relationships, and even physical spaces. The novel demonstrates how the past intrudes into the present, disrupting linear time and forcing characters to confront suppressed memories.

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