



MATERNAL TRANSFERABILITY OF TRAUMA AND PSYCHOSOMATIC NATION IN SORAYYA KHAN'S *NOOR*

Hamza Rauf Awan¹
Department of English
Forman Christian College University, Lahore
&
Fatima Syeda, PhD
Department of English
Forman Christian College University, Lahore

Abstract

Ignored or less voiced representation of victimized mothers may appear in the form of certain explicit psychological reactions within generations. Maternal trauma may seep through generations resulting in a psychologically paralyzed nation. The main concern of this paper is to study Sorayya Khan's novel *Noor* to unearth treachery and to unfold unspoken traumas (PTSD) inflicted specifically upon mothers during violent incidents. Mothers have always been the carriers of distortion, loss, violence, abuse and acute callousness, transmitting confused and anxious situations to the next generation. Sorayya Khan's first novel, *Noor*, addresses such violence and prejudice, thereby reflecting how such intense traumatic experiences actuate the suffering of mothers. This epic piece of art brings forth the hushed voices of both mothers and children who are marginalized, forgotten, oppressed, traumatized, subjected to dislocation and exposed to

¹ Hamza Rauf Awan is the first and the corresponding author
(hamzaraufawan@gmail.com)

violence and sexual assault against the backdrop of war. This research tends to unveil the ways in which mothers have been subjected to trauma to cripple the sound psychological foundations of the community/nation. The main purpose of this essay is to address certain essential questions such as: what in fact trauma is, how war affects the life patterns of society, how the trauma inflicted upon women (Mothers) becomes an irresolvable disorder, how trauma can act as a catalyst for the disruption of all sectors of the society, and finally how inherited trauma gives birth to a traumatized nation. The focal point of this research is to examine and explore the issues faced by the fallen ones (Mothers) during times of war and how these issues become precursors for the future lives of the characters, thereby resulting in a hollow nation.

Keywords

Maternal transferability, war, the partition, marginalization and Post-Trauma Stress

Introduction

The subjugation of mothers has always remained unmentioned within a patriarchal setup, especially against the backdrop of war. Such abasement gives rise to multifarious societal vices like marginalization, loss of consciousness, identity loss, and dispersion of self. Indeed, depressed psychological behaviours and neurotic anxiety are the chief ingredients of Post-Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD). Trauma is ostensibly a psychological disorder appearing as an outcome of traumatic calamities, and manifested in defensive actions of sufferers as post-traumatic behaviours. Constitutive of behavioural responses, these psychological fixations take the form of psychosomatic condition which affect other members of society. Consequently, the result is a hollow, devastated and terrified society. Comprised of traumatized paternal figures as well, the trauma begets itself into new evolved forms which re-orient and re-create a community/nation with nefarious psychological disorders.

This paper explores the root causes of trauma and post-traumatic shocks, especially, which lately are recognised as psychosomatic disorders. It also brings into limelight the perplexed and intertwined responses by victims, especially mothers, in the form of flashbacks, haunted memories, broken notions of reality and menaced dreams. This paper evaluates the characters of the selected text, Sorayya Khan's *Noor*

(2003) on the basis of psychological intervention and neurotic anxiety created by certain traumatic encounters. It is important to note that trauma has apparently become a transferable disorder; it gets transferred from one generation to another because of its reliance on cognitive behaviours and responses of sufferers. Significantly, it takes the form of internal illness or acute mental disorder, in other words, psychosomatic states. For a layman, it can be related to all the negative drawbacks, incidents and inclinations in an individual's life that affect him/her emotionally, physically or psychologically (Caruth 2016, 33). Such circumstances cut short one's ability to efficiently deal with life situations. Thus, consequently psychological fixations and repercussions take place owing to sexual assault, pain, physical and mental suffering in general; trauma particularly transforms into discreet psychological behaviours.

Trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder/post-traumatic shocks are intermittent in their appearance and recognition in human life. As trauma is a stressor which stimulates mental disorder by provoking cognitive behaviours in the form of new unrecognized or alien behaviours (Leys 2010, 124), likewise post-traumatic stress disorder is a combination of these new psychological responses picked up by stimuli from surroundings full of 'recognizable stressors' (Brown 2008, para. 2.3). Sorayya Khan's *Noor* brings into light maternal and domestic trauma in general and denounces war or any mode of trauma as it inflicts on a nation a broken image of actual identity and shared heritage. The novel offers a resonant and poignant representation of war and its aftershocks, respectively, during the 1971 Fall of Dhaka. Moreover, it uncovers the ravages committed during historic breaches like the 1971 War between East Pakistan and West Pakistan and revolves around a disabled child, Noor. Her paintings crystalize the forgotten and repressed lives of her mother, Sajida—a displaced Bengali to East Pakistan during the 1971 war, and her maternal grandfather, Ali, a war veteran. These paintings re-invoke the hidden trauma and resolve the Noor's undefined. The hidden meaning in her paintings acts as a mode playing an imminent role in connection to her mother's past; it aggravates the invocation of trauma and conspicuously provides the transferability of maternal trauma to new offspring.

The prime focus of this paper is to assess the transformation and infusion of trauma from mothers to their infants and to demonstrate how this contingent traumatic experience becomes irreparable psychic disorder. The paper also raises some foundational questions, such as what is trauma, and how does war affect life patterns of a society. How does trauma inflicted upon women (mothers) become an irresolvable disorder? How can maternal trauma be a catalyst for decentralization of all sectors of common life? And how does inherited trauma becomes an

intergenerational trauma ~ giving birth to a traumatized nation? Apart from dealing with these basic questions, this paper seeks support from Ataria's theory of PTSD and Freud's theory of defence mechanisms to find answers to the above queries. Ataria's theory of PTSD deals with new traumatic forms which define mechanisms of traumatic forms. The paper also looks at Merleau-Ponty's concept that human perception varies per encounter with external surroundings. There are four sections of this research paper. The first section deals with an introduction to the significance of the topic and basic foregrounding related to the theoretical framework; the second part consists of a brief study of relevant research with the purpose of identifying how this subject has received scanty attention by researchers; the third section offers arguments on which the paper is built; the final and the fourth section presents conclusions and suggests new dimensions for further research.

Literature Review

Sorayya Khan's *Noor* is an archetype of maternal trauma manifestation, along with its dynamic triggers in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder, its transferability and above all, its suppressed aftershocks in human society at large. Ishtiyaque, a critic, addresses the role of memory, and especially revocation of the past in the formulation of new reality (Ishtiyaque 2015, 308). Furthermore, she establishes that it is collective memory which offsprings amnesia; former deals with a traumatic incident in general, whereas the later relies on the after-effects of inflicted trauma. Such a traumatic fixation compels Ali, a 1971 war veteran in the novel *Noor*, to suffer amnesia, an indication of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In such cases, trauma plagues the sufferer; owing to its contagious nature, it either transfers or begets itself. *Noor's* paintings are none other than a symbol of past ravages orchestrated within the backdrop of the 1971 war. Her crafting abilities provide the poetics of memory: narrative and lyrical nature (Ishtiyaque 2015, 302). The former focuses on historic delineation of memory, and the later depends on an artistic revocation of the past to re-mould the present. In other words, this critic explains the role of memory in *Noor*, particularly the recognition and perception of reality, by relying on stressors or stimuli provided by inflicted trauma.

Similarly, another critic, Hutton, reinforces the role of memory in the revocation of the past as a redo of trauma. He contends that memory comprises bifurcated elements: repetition and recollection (Hutton 1993). Generally, repetition is merely a 'prevalence of past' while contrarily, recollection is the refined and offshoot representation of the past in the present. In other words, this theory explains the sporadic dreams that Sajida, *Noor's* mother, had as a manifestation of her repressed sub-conscious. It also explains the role of memory and the past, reliving it

in the aftermath of traumatic sufferings. On one hand, this view indicates that trauma depends not only on external or societal stimuli, but it also relies on the mental posture of the sufferer. Thus, Sajida's anxiety, her dreams, and her ardent attachment to Noor, are the reliving and rediscovery of ancestral channels through Noor. Memory acts as a dynamic history, producing lyrical and narrative patterns to map the route of the trauma, as happens in the novel. In addition, Soraya Khan (2015), the author of *Noor*, traces the societal and cultural elements responsible for the embodiment of *Noor* in her essay "*The Silence and Forgetting That Wrote NOOR.*" She contends that *Noor* is the collective story of the veterans of the 1971 war; every story is a minor version of a possibly-captured reality (122). The documentation of *Noor* is an outcome of interviews conducted with certain soldiers who had had nothing but silence dipped in remorse, pity, sympathy and unfathomable emotions. Moreover, Ali is the personification of all the martial officials whose stories sound as a rattling silence in the wake of the tragic catastrophe. It is crafted history, complacent masses, stymied political officials and a shared memory which participate in forgetting and silencing the war trauma., The trauma, in turn, widens the gulf between society and traumatized sufferers, be the soldiers or ravaged masses. Astonishingly, it has always been mothers who could never voice their roles in catastrophic history, although it is mothers who are affected most by any shift in societal trends.

Additionally, an Indian critic, Uma Mahadevan-Dasgupta (2011), offering another view, contends that Khan's *Noor* unveils the tragic history and calamity of the Pakistani nation; it reveals shifts or changeovers in the history of Pakistan, and also unearths the ways society has been affected by the Fall of Dhaka in 1971. What makes a trauma more devastating is the shattered version of memory in the aftershock of war. Another succinct review given by Mahmud Rahman (2004) has captured the distilled soul of Khan's *Noor*; he argues that *Noor* is 'a novel of weakened memory [which] resulted due to shattered memory', evoking power exploitation, fear, and fractured memory. By violating the norms of silence and forgetfulness, this novel questions the need for silence, made-history and the glittering images of both wings: East Pakistan and West Pakistan (Rahman 2004). Thus, both the aforementioned critics and reviewers foreground the roles of memory and history in the formulation of identity and life patterns of the population.

In the same vein, Sehole puts forward cultural, psychological, geographical and material aspects as determining factors for the re-emergence of trauma (Sehole 2014, 69), thereby tracing the same paradigm as followed by the above mentioned critics and scholars. Sehole formulates her concepts of trauma aligned along with a pattern of history, memory and the past in general. She, however, asserts that every

behaviour is the outcome of geo-cultural and psychological stressors in human society. Thus, Noor's drawings turn into a psychological shelter for all the characters in the novel (Sehole 70). Specifically, her initial drawings comprised of painted blue depict the Bay of Bengal; later, her crafted painting of a chronic tree with smitten fish acts as a recognizer for Sajida. The depiction invokes her memory of her mother and her baby brother; all in all, these paintings become a channel for connecting the characters to their forgotten or suppressed pasts, making possible their redemption and salvation. Thus, trauma also has its stimulators in external aspects, either geographic or atmospheric, as well as internal factors like psychological fixations and anxiety. Finally, it is worth noting that the abovementioned critics and scholars stress the role of memory and history, providing the research gap which this paper proposes to fill by providing a basis for maternal trauma and its transferability. It will also investigate the ways in which PTSD shatters the common beliefs of the masses and turns the masses into sufferers, thereby forming a crippled nation at large.

Discussion

Maternal Trauma and War

Pakistan's Independence comprises a legacy of suffering and tragic history; it has witnessed mass killings, adversities and horrendous atrocities. At Independence, the division into East and West Pakistan tore the country into pieces. This re-mapping caused serious breaches and bruises in the national territory, resulting in a socio-political fiasco which then resulted in a re-partition, shaping East Pakistan into Bangladesh. These historic changeovers gave birth to certain harnesses and psychological conflicts which haunt all the maternal characters in *Noor*. In other words, war plagued the lives of mothers, yet the maternal figures remain silenced and voiceless regardless of the severe repercussions in the form of maternal conflicts. as well as the transfer of this malignity in other traumatic forms.

This section explores the cruelties and adversities directed toward the sufferers; the Fall of Dhaka in 1971 emphasizes that trauma and historic calamities are inseparable. Specifically, the maternal figures have always been brushed aside while decrying the trauma and suffering which have darkened socio-communal life. This sacrilege is also an offshoot of political ideology since the war is a by-product of political disruption. Thus, war affects the community as a political breach; in other words, mothers become significant victims during political dismantling. War is the competition between superior and inferior power mongers; its fields act as precursors to orient and dis-orient society with its ramifications (Koopman 1997, 835). In other words, war disrupts the standards required for identity recognition and valuation

perspectives. Khan's *Noor* establishes that war not only dismantles territorial status but also redefines the components of the community and its dynamic composition. 'Bengalis are women with small penises. Bengalis are such cowards, God help them, and they turned to India for help. What does Independence mean for a Bengali?' (Khan 2003, 156). In such statements, the novel establishes that women or mothers have been relegated to inferior status owing to war. This intensity of animosity and hatred is an indication of post-trauma shocks (Ataria 2016, 19); maternal identity is circumscribed as 'despised identity or curse'. Thus trauma is not only directed at physical aspects of society, but tends to tarnish the behavioural modes of the community. In addition, there is no denial of the fact that it plagues and victimizes mothers the most; this traumatic experience is perpetrated further in the community through parental figures.

Another pitiful depiction in *Noor* which reveals the treacheries perpetrated towards mothers during the war is brutal rape and sexual gratification of a Bengali mother by Ali's officer; this image shackles all the humanistic norms and values: 'Milk puked from devoured breast onto her stomach... The marks of milk on her belly: The woman was a young mother' (Khan 2003, 182). This dribbled white milk signifies that the young mother had a child, a toddler whose right was stolen by the soldier within the scenario of war. 'There were red scars of teeth on her rinsed breast' (182) This animalistic sexual abuse and open maltreatment signifies that mothers had to give in to the cruelties and leave their suckling toddlers at the mercy of war lords. On one hand, rape brings forth the derogatory position that mothers were subjected to, and on the other, milk, a symbol of maternal chastity and sacredness, becomes the source of trauma which scars the socio-communal and domestic aspects of human life. There is no blinking at the fact that mothers become 'double victims' as they, on the first hand, are easy victims for manipulation and exploitation of the society at large; on the other, they have to bear the traumatic bondage of their blood relations. In other words, child trauma also primarily inflicts mothers. More importantly, war dismantles societal norms and values, causing disruptions in maternal stability and injures by wreaking havoc on maternal figures: bruised and torn chests, devoured bodies and disembowelled wombs. Such collective trauma not only cripples the mothers but also plagues other strata of the community (Akol et al. 2016, 21). Undoubtedly, mothers are the originators of the next generation, thus trauma aggravates their psychic sufferings by depriving them of their 'new flesh' (baby) and chastity. It inadvertently results in acute psychic illness whereby every action affects other societal elements and becomes the signifier of the traumatic revocation.

Moreover, Ali's flashbacks and dreams also become an expression of maternal trauma and how it haunts other members of society. His companion rapes a mother, snatches her child and dumps him on a dirt heap: 'He was swamped by her round and fleshy breast, he snatched her baby and dumped him in the corner of the room. He stretched her breast until there was a spray of milk' (Khan 2003, 77). The act, remorsefully, reflects the trauma, in terms of violence, inflicted upon mothers during the war as they become easy prey to manipulation and molestation. Another depiction similarly unveils the fabric of maternal trauma. Another of Ali's companion rapes and kills a Bengali mother: 'He sucked her ripped chests, licked the milk on her belly, called her whore and much worse, tore her sari and put a rifle in her mouth and emptied it with joy' (Khan 2003, 182). Another pitiful mother known as 'Auntie' becomes a victim, whom Ali rescued from the platform. Her physical appearance also narrated the same treachery: 'At the train station, there was a woman...and there were two huge pink infections oozing puss, yellow where her breast should have been' (Khan 2003, 152). The fallen mothers affect every witness emotionally and psychologically, which later questions an intact image of a human community. Thus, it is pertinent to establish here that mothers, who are traumatized adversely during every societal calamity, have never been apprised or even mentioned in the community as the foremost victims. So, a nation with traumatized mothers is a psycho-ward with rehabilitating patients under procedure, and it takes generations to recover from this trauma, PTSD (Ataria 2016, 22). In such manner, maternal trauma begets new traumas which haunt human society.

Therefore, a succinct appropriation of trauma is to call it a 'mute memory'; it affects, by and large, every sufferer throughout his/her life, no matter what forms it may take (Caruth 2016, para. 5). Political ideologies based on weak roots and obscure ideas cause national and international calamities; political afflictions haunt the maternal section of society at the earliest, affecting and disturbing communal patterns in general. 'War is war. Everybody knows that. It does terrible things to you' (Khan 2003, 189). More important is that mothers have always been subjected to acute traumatic experiences, ignoring the fact that they are the real harbingers of societal norms, culture and communal behaviour. It can be said that *Noor* becomes an expression of psychological distress, horrific evils and sexual harassment of mothers during the time of war, born as a manifestation of the transference of trauma into the next generation.

Maternal Trauma: Familial and Societal Life

Maternal trauma engulfs familial and societal patterns with its contagious nature and disorders. The transferability of trauma from a mother to the next generation is quite

visible in *Noor*, where a pattern develops among the offspring in relation to their predecessors. Sajida's experience of trauma makes Noor suffer psychologically as she carries her trauma into herself. This chapter holds the familial and the domestic depiction of her life and her relation to the children and other family members. Sajida, a young mother, had experienced trauma and had suffered a lot during her childhood; these devastating events had a lasting impression on her life, which later were transmitted into her daughter - Noor, due to the collective shared unconscious (Jung 2014).

Additionally, the body is the sole site of knowing and experiencing the world; it is not only a thing or an object but a source of experience. The consciousness of the human body is entangled with perception. This forms an intricate pattern which weaves into the pre-conscious state of an individual. Sajida, before even giving birth to her third child, somehow knows that Noor is going to be extraordinary, and with time she discovers that Noor carries traces of her mother's past. Sajida, as the perceiver, tacitly experienced trauma of a natural disaster as well as of war in her early childhood; her potential perspective of the terrible events, in the form of post-trauma acute stress and apprehensions, was transmitted to her daughter (Ataria 2016, 28); it depicts. Merleau-Ponty (2007) explains that perception is always perpetuated in the psychological currents of time through the fundamental dimension of expressivity (8). Thus, Noor's drawings are evidence of the fact that through the medium of art and creativity, the young generation links to its maternal passage and makes connection to it (Caruth 2016). 'The first thing Sajida noticed was that all the pictures were identical. It was a staple of a previous life she'd lived on the edge of a sea, a different country now, miles away' (Khan 2003, 99). A mother exposed to chronic trauma injects 'DESNOS' (Disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified) into her child, making a spectrum of disturbances (Blaz-Kapusta 2008, 1). The child suffers from disturbances in the form of self-perception, amnesia, somatization, anger, pain, hypersensitivity, extreme emotional reaction and sexual impulses, owing to her mother's traumatic experience. Noor's regular moans and her loud shrills are not only due to Down-Syndrome but are also inherited from her mother (Ataria 2016, 26). The reconnection is made by Noor's drawings which provide glimpses of Sajida's past; the processing and grieving of traumatic memories is lucidly depicted when Noor first draws a fishing -boat. 'Sajida finally recognized her daughter's word, fish-boat, as a word she'd heard used many years before in a different language -Bengali; the boat her father and uncles used in their daily work to bring home fish from the Bay of Bengal' (Khan 2003, 100). This revocation of the past, the outcome of transference of trauma to the next generation due to post-traumatic stress disorder, provides significant grassroots facts for the contagious nature of maternal trauma.

The familiarity of memories and thoughts is evident when Noor's drawings become more precise in their thought structure. Her drawing of the dead fish in silver nets which her mother saw in her previous life paves a bridge for the transference of maternal thoughts and feelings into the daughter. 'Noor's latest drawing was brimming with dead and rotting fish... More astonishing than the exactness of Noor's rendering was the startling truth that Sajida was again staring at the dead, rotting fish in silver fishing nets, she had seen as a child wound around a tree' (Khan 2003,75). Sigmund Freud in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* puts forth the idea that maternal transference is often related to the suppressed and unsolved psychological conflicts that the mother had faced in her past. Every dream is a connection to former experience; mentally distorted experiences and suffering from a coherent whole in dreams which are manifested in an individual's psychological issues (Freud 1958, 89-96). The horrendous effects of war and its aftermath shattered humanity. Thousands of people lost their lives and the ones who were fortunate enough to live through that time were always haunted by the past (Ataria 2016, 31). Trauma always intrudes in their lives in flashbacks and memories. Mothers were most affected by them and this in turn affected their infants.

Because Sajida had gone through the bitter experience of being almost washed away by a cyclone and had watched her family die in it, she is astonished to view Noor's painting. It makes her relive her past because Noor depicted the events that happened to her with so much exactness. 'When you were a snake-girl, Ammi. On the tree. You scared?' Sajida understood Noor's question...But she felt a shade of fear when she lied, as if the past and the present of her life were shifting course, and were inexplicably rushing towards each other...Noor brought up the drawing of the cyclone, her omission of Sajida in a tree' (Khan 2003, 103). It can be inferred here that traumatic re-depiction through Noor's paintings is literary proof for the genetic journey of maternal trauma in new evolved forms. The psychic legacies pass through unconscious genetic messages between child and mother. Anxiety and trauma are transfused from mother to the child carrying the genetic makeup in his or her DNA (Freud 1958, 91). So, Khan implies that it was Noor who brought the cyclone back for Sajida' (Khan 103). Noor's unconscious behaviour and creative impulse contain Sajida's traumatic codes; it was through her that Sajida was able to re-experience her long forgotten and hidden memories.

Noor's drawing of a snake girl brings to light Sajida's prior life when she was entangled in a tree. The pattern visible in Noor's paintings provides proof that her psychic apparatus was connected to her mother; the same hair line and the skill of crafting was inherited by Noor, and Sajida was well aware of this before even

conceiving her (Iyengar et al. 2014, 1). 'But Sajida knew when Noor was nothing more than a dance inside her Noor was connected to some other world in a way' (Khan 2003, 146). The bond between the mother's apprehensions and sufferings and her offspring is further corroborated in Noor's drawing of tin barrels. 'A snap shot, four by six. A pyramid of tin barrels, Thirty-six of them lay on their sides' (Khan 2003, 137). Surprisingly, this exactness of the event and the voraciousness of the number of barrels that Noor had drawn adds up to the process of transference of maternal trauma into the child. Sajida stopped here "reminiscing to confirm the memory, the barrels, and she counted them on Noor's drawing in her hand. *Thirty-six. Blues, whites, greens, reds and browns too*'. Noor was right. She had drawn what Sajida had forgotten. ... (Khan 2003, 142). "She knew what had been there. Joi Bangla, Hail Bangladesh. She knew this even though when she'd seen it for herself on the wall behind the oil drums, the script, box like, was unclear" (Khan 2003, 140).

Thus, this congeniality of maternal traumatic experience and its expression is the offshoot of post-trauma shocks which re-organize the community with new ingredients of psychic behaviours and responses.

Trauma inflicted on mothers becomes the semi-living psychological and emotional stimulus that triggers the memories (Liu et al. 2012, 3); both Sajida and Noor act as 'doppelganger', connected by shared traumatic memories. Through Noor, Sajida's maternal apprehension pops up to the surface: 'Noor was Sajida's secret' (Khan 2003, 1). Hence, trauma plagues not only sufferers but also revamps the life pattern of the sufferers; trauma becomes a compulsive repetition (Schwerdtfeger 2007, 41). Sajida's dreams had been a strong link of her intrusive memories. 'Sajida's dreams grew more vivid and pictured the landscape of East Pakistan-Bangladesh' (Khan 2003, 15). So Noor's birth was an invocation of her past. The power or process of reproducing and recalling the past through associative mechanism took its toll in her child's life. The phenomenon shows that children's psychic behaviours and behavioural demonstration are an outpouring of the maternal unexpressed psyche reservoir. By the same token, direct traumatic exposure in early childhood gives birth to psychological and mental fixations which the sufferer has to face for good; this traumatic encounter traumatizes the perception of the sufferer, and the sufferer has to develop certain defence mechanisms in the form of changed behaviours. 'Sajida's unsaid, unexpressed and feared past mostly remained untouched, moved her from past to future and future to present' (Khan 2003, 12). This ephemeral change in time and perception, accompanied by fear and escapism, is an actual transfer of trauma from its core to offshoots in domestic, communal and familial life (Ataria 2016, 26-31). The water that gulped the mother's family in the past became a repulsive defence mechanism in the daughters' life. The

same water that consumed Sajida's life soothed her daughters' moans and groans; thus trauma evolved into new forms. That Noor's moans have to be stopped by the sound of water is a signal of Sajida's repressed traumatic fixation with water. In addition, maternal traumatic outpouring in the next generation are vividly expressed by Noor's cravings for confections: 'When Noor tried sweetmeats for the first time, Sajida joked that she had found a soul mate in her daughter. Like Sajida, Noor craved sweets as a necessity' (Khan 2003, 78). The fact that maternal traits coincide and concur in a child comes in accordance with the actual state of things. We see that Sajida's distressing dreams, flashbacks and her inferior mental behaviour are the product of trauma faced during her childhood. And most importantly, this chronic trauma has been transferred to Noor, thereby affecting the whole family.

Another mother in the story, Nanijan, makes a strong argument that her distorted family life was transmitted in Sajida's consciousness unintentionally. 'Ever since the beginning... Nanijan was related, however distantly, to the voices inside Sajida's head, her dreams, and her long ago family swallowed by water' (Khan 2003, 89). This mutual correspondence is the symbol of the universal and shared traumatic experience of mothers and common empathy. Though Sajida had not come out of her womb, she was quite relatable because the chain of transference bridged between them. 'In some ways, appearing out of the blue, without the nine months of consideration, Sajida was a child more real than any she'd had' (Khan 2003, 92). Possessing the same natural traits of a daughter from her mother, and belonging to the same natural group, Nanijan transferred her familial fears to her daughter. The domestic violence that she faced in her young married life was voiced in Sajida and Hussein's martial relations. 'Ali's father grabbed her from the back, twisting her shoulders around, until he heard something in her neck crack before he let go' (Khan 2003, 87). A disordered psychic and behavioural state resulting in severe emotional stress is uttered in Nanijan's fears and concern for Sajida and Hussein. 'I warned Sajida to tell you before she married you. Tell him, I told her, tell him to swear that he will never beat you' (Khan 2003, 95). It brings forth the DESNOS, which mothers fear in dealing with the source of anxiety. It seems that maternal trauma can't be confined within the body of the mother. Since mothers create life (baby) within themselves, the trauma seeps into the psyche of the created child. In this way, maternal trauma is being transferred to the next generation, which in turn dismantles the sound perceptions of society and culture and creates a psycho-somatic or haunted nation at large.

Conclusion

Quite significantly, this research paper has succinctly established that Khan's *Noor* provides a candid picture of the repercussions of war, traumatic incidents, atrocities and treacheries perpetrated during wars. The novel specifically demonstrates how maternal trauma unhinges itself to shackle all spheres of human life so that mothers can ultimately give birth to a crippled nation if injected with trauma. Apart from that, Khan's work also questions the need for wars, which are generally fought for the sake of ad hoc political ideologies. By and by, *Noor* also establishes that fiction has become a way of giving voice to the unspoken in general

Political affairs, ideologies, norms and especially political stigmas-cum-exigencies particularly deal with communal life at large. Any disruption in the political agenda may give birth to disorders which haunt human life at equivalent scale. Wars, either national or international, essentially meant for the demonstration of supremacy of ideology, victimize generation after generation, especially because of mothers. Most importantly, this traumatic experience gets transferred owing to congenital sources or wombs as the vehicle of propagation. In other words, certain post-stress trauma behaviours and practices become normalized in the form of memories, nightmares, daydreams, shifts in perceptions, passive understanding of society, and most significantly, in the form of displacement, repression, regression and psychic anxiety. All these disorders are the product of wars. Khan's *Noor* artistically captures the immensity of traumatic exposures which formulate reality for the sufferers. Specially, it is mothers who act as donors to receptors (offspring or generation) for instillation of traumatic experiences. It is not surprising that this paper questions the role of wars and explores the grave reality and weak roots of political ideologies which re-orient human life in general. Moreover, it opens up new contours and dimensions for literary exploration regarding war and its begotten trauma. Additionally, this research paper points out the main victims of war, showcases the aftermath of war, and establishes the fact that perpetuation of traumatic experience, especially through mothers, not only affects familial and societal life in general, but also haunts and shackles communal/national life.

Bibliography

- Akol, A. D., S. Caluwaerts, et al. 2016. "Pregnant Women in War Zone." <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.i2037>
- Ataria, Yochai. 2016. "Post-traumatic stress disorder: A theory of perception." *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy* 11(1): 19-30.
- Błaż-Kapusta, Barbara. 2008. "Disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified (DESNOS)-a case study." *Archives of Psychiatry & Psychotherapy* 10 (2): 5-11.
- Brown, Asa Don. 2008. "The effects of childhood trauma on adult perception and worldview." Unpublished PhD Diss., Minnesota: Capella University.
- Caruth, Cathy. 2016. *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. UK: JHU Press.
- Chu, James A. 1991. "The repetition compulsion revisited: Reliving dissociated trauma." *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 28 (2): 327. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-3204.28.2.327>
- Freud, Sigmund. 1958. "The handling of dream-interpretation in psycho-analysis." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XII (1911-1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works*, pp. 89-96.
- Hutton, Patrick H. 1993. *History as an Art of Memory*. UPNE, New Hampshire.
- Ishtiyaque, Farah. 2015. "Suturing the Memories of the Liberation War of 1971: The Narrative Poetics of Sorayya Khan's Noor." *European Journal of English Studies* 19 (3): 301-314.
- Iyengar, Udit et al. 2014. "Unresolved trauma in mothers: intergenerational effects and the role of reorganization." *Frontiers in psychology* 5: 966. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00110>
- Jung, Carl Gustav. 2014. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. London: Routledge.
- Khan, Sorayya. 2015. "The Silence and Forgetting That Wrote NOOR." *Journal of Narrative Politics* 1(2): 121-32.
- Khan, Sorayya. *Noor*. 2003. Islamabad: Alhamra.
- Koopman, Cheryl. 1997. "Political psychology as a lens for viewing traumatic events." *Political Psychology* 18 (4): 831-847. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895x.00081>
- Leys, Ruth. 2010. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Liu, Yang, Yi-Jun Li, et al. 2012. "Cortical thinning in patients with recent onset post-traumatic stress disorder after a single prolonged trauma exposure." *PloS one* 7, no. 6. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0039025>
- Mahadevan-Dasgupta, Uma. 2011. Uma Mahadevan-Dasgupta Reviews Sorayya Khan's Latest Book 'Noor'. India Today.

- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 2007. *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Rahman, Mahmud. 2004. "Noor: *Casting Light on History*", Alhamra Publishing. <https://solidarity-us.org/atc/117/p269/>
- Schwerdtfeger, Kami L., and Briana S. Nelson Goff. 2007. "Intergenerational transmission of trauma: Exploring mother-infant prenatal attachment." *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 20 (1):39-51.
- Sehole, Sadia Riaz. 2014. "Landscape: Psychological, geographical and cultural nexuses." *International Journal of English and Literature* 5 (3): 67-70.