



WAR ZONES' ENIGMA

WAR ON TERROR OR PEACE

A Study of Victors, Victims and Values
through the Select Novels on War Zones

Dr. Pallavi Thakur

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The first casualty when war comes is truth.

- Hiram Johnson

PREFACE

Contemporary world struggles to unleash from the unwanted wars. The so-called war on terror is putting the lives of people in shambles. Commoners experience devastation that refuses to recuperate. Death, massacres, rape, abduction, poverty, unemployment, migration are its offshoots. The vested interests of power structures concoct the reasons to justify their decision of waging a war. Various theories have been propounded on war in the last three centuries. These theorists attributed religion, capitalism, class, caste, race and behaviour of the states as the major forces that initiate it. Allegiance of man to race, ethnicity, class, caste has often led to fratricidal wars in the country. Whereas the nationalist and capitalist ideology lead to the wars between nations. The motives of war can be understood by analysing the National and International systems through which it operates.

The politics of aggression, control and domination has provided an impetus to the theories such as Orientalism, Occidentalism, Neo-Orientalism etc. The world is witnessing a new schism developing between East and West. Also, the post-colonial world is now controlled by super powers who govern, steer and instruct the states due to their economic superiority. Hence the world was not and perhaps would not be bereft of the impending dangers of war. The worst sufferers, in this entire game of power, are the people.

There are never any true winners in conflicts since everyone engaged must bear the costs, with frequently significant numbers of deaths on both sides. A war's actual death toll may only be conjectured. For instance, it depends on whether "victims" are restricted to people who were killed during an armed conflict. This would entail ignoring people who perished during a battle through exposure, diseases, (sexual) violence, starvation, or other causes. Additionally, it ignores people who died years later as a result of injuries or diseases contracted during the conflict, such as the radiation victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The survivors' daily life are impacted by the psychological impacts as well. War experiences on a daily basis, whether as perpetrators or victims, leave traces of fear and uncertainty. Post-traumatic stress disorder, sadness, and anxiety are examples of late symptoms. Both military and civilians are impacted by these effects.

The long-term impacts of war were described by German Nobel Prize winner for literature Heinrich Böll as, "The war will never be over, never, as long as somewhere a wound it had inflicted is still bleeding". Soldiers and civilians who have been injured in combat frequently experience physical ailments that last for years. They frequently have to adjust to living with mutilations after losing their sight or hearing.

The conversion of native citizens into refugees is another effect of conflict. There are about 15 million refugees in the world, according to the UN, who were forced to flee their homes because of war or persecution. The majority—75%—dwell in underdeveloped nations. Their homes and livelihoods have been lost as a result of the conflict, permanently. The children of refugees are immediately at risk from hunger, malnutrition, and infections.

The book aims to explore the immediate impacts of war on individuals, politics, economy, and the environment as depicted through the lens of various writers. Many novelists and poets have deciphered the echoing terror in the lives of the indigenous facing war. An old chestnut reads, 'There are no winners in war, only survivors'. Many writers, being sensitive to the plight of the sufferers of war or being the sufferers themselves, have written about its deleterious effects on people and states. Some of them are diasporic writers who have themselves experienced the trauma of war, whereas the others have been known to spend time with the migrated and the survivors in order to narrate a relatable tale. These novels are not only an account of an episode from history but the writers bring to the home of every reader, the horrors of war. Hence the narratives discuss the political, economic, demographic and religious reasons of war in order to underscore its origin, course and consequences on the state and its citizens. The book is an attempt to explore the pains and traumas associated with wars and will force us to ponder on the importance of war to establish peace in the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am overwhelmed in all humbleness and gratefulness to acknowledge my debt to all those who helped me to bring this book to fruition. Once this book started to go from a concept in my mind to a manuscript, there were many people involved who deserve to be acknowledged and thanked. My sincere thanks and appreciation to all of them for being a part of this journey and making this book possible.

First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability and opportunity to undertake this study and to persevere and complete it satisfactorily. Without his blessings, this achievement would not have been possible.

I owe thanks to a very special person, my dearest husband and my best friend, Harish, for his continued and unfailing love, support and understanding during the compilation of this book. He was always around at times I thought that it is impossible to continue, he helped me to keep things in perspective. His incredible thoughtfulness helped me in giving the final shape to the book. I greatly value his contribution and deeply appreciate his belief in me. I also want to thank him for tolerating my incessant disappearances into my work.

I am forever indebted to my parents for giving me the opportunities and experiences that have made me who I am. They selflessly encouraged me to explore new directions in life and seek my own destiny. This journey would not have been possible if not for them, and I dedicate this milestone to them.

A word of appreciation to the pride and joy of my life, my kids, Akshat and Keshav. “While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about”.

Finally, I appreciate the efforts of the contributors who adhered to the given timeline and contributed such comprehensive and informative research papers. Without their contributions, the book would not exist.

Dr. Pallavi Thakur

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AFGHAN WAR-ZONES AND BACHA BAZI: AN ANALYSIS IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF KHALED HOSSEINI AND NADEEM ASLAM

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Abstract:

Conflict zones create a situation of humanitarian crisis wherein women and children are the most vulnerable to psychosocial impacts of disaster. Among the multifarious challenges faced by them, there is a heightened risk of gender based violence. Not only women and girls are exposed to sexual abuse, rape and prostitution but also boys. Among the conflict zones of the world, Afghanistan's conflict zones present a landscape of human rights violations for men, women and children. Sexual exploitation of Afghan boys by Afghan men, known as Bacha Bazi, has its roots in the country's culture. Decades of armed conflicts in the country "has increased the vulnerability of Afghan boys to experience sexual violation as well as individual and collective trauma" (Pashang, 2018, p.38). The paper attempts to examine the select novels of Khaled Hosseini and Nadeem Aslam to understand Afghanistan's conflict zones and the despicable lives of Afghan boys, who are trapped in the culturally sanctioned Bacha Bazi.

Keywords: Afghan conflict zones, Bacha Bazi, afghan boys, trauma, rape

1. Introduction:

Coldrey narrates an incident when General Sir Eyre Coote, a hero of the Napoleonic Wars, was found in a compromising situation with one of the pupils at Eton in 1819 by a housemaster. "Do you not know who I am?" the embarrassed officer said, to which the schoolmaster retorted, "Who you are, I care not; what you are, I plainly see!" The general's knighthood was revoked by the Prince Regent, which made the sequel even more embarrassing for the veteran soldier. Coldrey concludes that the incident demonstrates two important implications: i) sexual abuse of young people by men of power has been in existence for ages ii) such kind of act has been considered as crime for a long time (1996, p.370). In armed combat, sexual assault has traditionally been considered a "spoils" of war. Susan Brownmiller (1975) gives a thorough historical analysis of the mass psychology of rape during the two World Wars, case studies on Bangladesh and Vietnam and the American Revolution, and provides information on civil violence and pogroms in other societies, including those committed against "Indians and slaves in the American experience". Its usage against Native Americans (Smith 2005), Chinese in Nanking during World War II (Chang 1997), and comfort women by the Japanese between 1928 and 1945 (Dolgopol 2006) has been verified by the academics. Sexual violence against women and girls is common in conflict zones. Sexual violence was strate

gically done against boys in conflict regions of Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Syria. "Boys face reporting barriers because of the stigma related to perceived emasculation. In some countries, the existing legal

framework and generalised homophobia further impair reporting by male survivors”(Sapiezynska, 2019, p18).

2. Bacha Bazi in Afghanistan: “War violates every right of a child - the right to life, the right to be with family and community, the right to health, the right to the development of the personality and the right to be nurtured and protected” (Prasad & Prasad, 2009, p.166). “During and after armed conflict, children face problems of uprooting, loss, sexual violence, exposure to attack, and disease. Particularly vulnerable are unaccompanied children, who lack the emotional, social, and physical support typically provided by parents” (Wessels, 1998, p.637). While girls suffer disproportionately from gender-based violence, similarly boys are not free from such abuse. For example, in Afghanistan (2019) 13 cases were reported against boys whereas 5 cases were reported against the girls (Sapiezynska, 2019, p18). Attacks on girls are usually underreported in Afghanistan due to the social stigma. A large number of boys’ sexual exploitation in Afghanistan is attributable to the custom of Bacha bāzī practice where boys are sexually exploited and enslaved by those in power (Sapiezynska, 2019, p18).

“The foundation and roots of bacha bazi can be found in Persian culture, although like in Uzbekistan, it is not commonly practiced in today’s Islamic Republic” (Frost, 2016, p.1). “Bacha bāzī is the colloquial reference in Afghanistan to what would contemporarily be known as pederasty. Same-sex paedophilia, restricted to adult men and adolescent boys, is most notably observed across south-eastern Afghanistan’s rural Pashtun belt, and the countryside of northern Afghanistan among ethnic Tajiks” (Powell, 2018, p.1). The practise of Bacha bāzī is not new. Though similar practises have been common in Central Asia at least since the Ottoman Empire’s rule, its origins in Afghanistan can be traced to the late nineteenth century (Chow, 2015). According to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC),

although there is no clear Afghan legal definition of bacha bazi, it generally refers to local powerful individuals keeping one or more boys, typically between 10 to 18 years of age, for use as body guards, servants, dancers, and for sexual exploitation and other forms of harassment”(Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), 2018, p.1).

In a few decades Afghanistan's poverty has been a major factor in Bacha bāzī's rise. It makes it simple for predators to prowl the streets looking for 'pretty' young boys and luring them away from their families with promises of work or education (Drury, 2016). Bacha baz, the name of bacha owners or men who simply enjoy the tradition, look for 11-12 year old boys in the poor villages of Afghanistan. Bacha baz kidnaps these boys or trades them to a family for a certain amount of money because the family needs money to continue living. After procuring the boys, they are taught dancing, singing and music throughout the year. In a year, these boys are ready to dance, sing and do whatever Bacha bazz wants them to do (Nisya, Sunarko & Trihartono, 2019, p1). Zadzi quotes a Bacha Baaz for whom the public ostentation of bacha bazi is a sign of prestige: “I am not really rich, but I am just as good as the wealthy. I want as many bacha bereesh as possible, so that when I go to parties I am no worse than anybody else” (2007). In Af

ghanistan, widespread sexual abuse of minors has long been an issue, especially among armed leaders who control most of the countryside and have the power to intimidate the populace (Goldstein, 2015). “While Bacha bāzī predates the current round of internal strife and war, the prevailing political chaos and conflict dynamics in the country have contributed to its persistent growth” (Misra, 2023, p. 350). According to Najeeba, sexual exploitation of children has increased due to an increase in the number of homeless children in Afghanistan which is the result of incessant wars in the country. The situation is grim as the ‘agents’ or the perpetrators never face legal implications hence the future of the young children is bleak (2017, p.4).

Bacha bāzī is a social problem in Afghanistan. Many of the children so far have become homeless and have been exploited for sexual pleasure and other malicious purposes. This is clearly affecting the future generation of the country. The agents dealing in children’s trafficking and Bacha bāzī have never faced any kind of legal implications. Over the last few years this has grown rapidly posing serious threat to young boys and their families in Afghanistan. According to a report by *Save the Children, 1 in 6 Children Living in Conflict Zones at Risk of Sexual Violence by Armed Groups*, “While boys only made up 2% of UN-reported cases of sexual violence in 2019, they have been strategically targeted during the last years in conflicts in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Syria. In Afghanistan, most cases reported in 2019 related to boys, where they’re often exploited and enslaved by men in positions of power” (2021). Children and other civilians are frequently targeted by sexual violence as a weapon of war in order to terrorise them, instil fear and intimidation for tactical and strategic advantage, purge or degrade an ethnic group, or punish those who may have aided opposing soldiers. Sexual abuse against children and other civilians is frequently used as a weapon of war. Warlords sexually abuse the boys either to satiate their sensual urges or take revenge from their opponents. “The inextricable linkage between human rights and stability is readily apparent when one considers that the Taliban have used bacha bazi as a recruiting tactic and as a way to bait the ANSF into further violence” (Prey & Spears, 2021). During the rule of Mujahideen, Bacha Bazi custom “evolved and pedophilia reached its peak. Across lawless Afghanistan young boys were kidnapped, raped, trafficked, and sold as sexual slaves” (Foreign Policy, 2013). Many reports discuss US soldiers witnessing Afghan militia members and police indulging in Bacha Bazi,

Once the custom made its comeback following the US invasion in 2001, members of US Special Forces could hear from their bunks Afghan militia members sexually abusing boys in their base, however, they were not allowed to take action and were advised to “look the other way because it’s their culture” (The New York Times, 2015). Nevertheless, in 2011 one of the captains of US Special Forces beat up an Afghan National Police (ANP) for keeping an Afghan boy tied to his bed as a sex slave (AP News, 2015) (quoted in Andelkovic, 2021).

“Within the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF), the Afghan Local Police (ALP) and to a lesser extent, the Afghan National Police (ANP) are most associated with bacha bazi” (Afghanistan. 2020, p.4). “Decades of insecurity in Afghanistan has created conditions in which the practice of bacha bazi has flourished

and expanded and, although not only committed by parties to the conflict, is often associated with them” (Ibid.).

Particular concern was raised by informants about the presence of young boys at police checkpoints and their vulnerability to sexual violence there. A YHDO outreach worker in Kandahar described regularly seeing boys of around 13-14 years old sitting at checkpoints. A senior government official also from Kandahar acknowledged that children were often present at checkpoints there – in his words “the commander of a checkpoint will keep children and sexually abuse them. Commanders can keep 2-3 boys as bacha boys/for sexual gratification.” UN officials also spoke of receiving reports of sexual violence by the ANP and ALP at checkpoints but which they have not been able to verify (Ibid, p.5).

Bacha Bazi has deleterious impact on the physical and psychological stability of the boys. According to Zarifa Sabet, the boys are unable to runaway from the Bacha Baz due to the fear of death or violence. The psychological trauma restricts them to readjust in the society. The feminine identity doesn’t allow them to establish their male identity. Due to shame, stigma, and male gender expectations that force boys to keep their experiences private, the mental health effects of sexual abuse on boys are difficult to assess (Pashang, 2018, p.47). Stephen (2015) discusses the physical injuries inflicted on Afghan boys due to Bacha Bazi,

Most cases result in some form of grievous physical injury due to rape trauma including internal/anal haemorrhaging, rectal prolapse, protrusion of intestines, displaced pelvis bones, throat injuries, heavy internal bleeding, rectal wall tearing, as well as in- juries that stem from the pure force of coercion. These include broken limbs, broken fingers, fractures, broken teeth, savage beatings, strangulation, asphyxiation, and in some cases death.” (Stephen 2015).

Though Bacha Bazi is a custom in Afghanistan, its hideous facet is also visible during the conflicts in the country. Boys have to forcibly accept the androgynous identity and survive the horrors of sexual abuse. Many novelists have penned the pain and trauma of the boys who are trapped in the vicious vortex of Bacha Bazi. The despicable condition of boys trapped in Bacha Bazi in Afghanistan during wartimes has been underscored by many novelists. The paper attempts to examine the representation of Afghan boys, in *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, *The Blind Man’s Garden* by Nadeem Aslam, who are trapped in the conflict zones and are sexually abused by the Afghan warlords.

3. Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*:

The paper analyses how Afghan boys suffer in the deadly vortex of Bacha Bazi as a result of the enduring patriarchy and racial conflicts between Pashtuns and Hazaras in Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*. The novel emphasises Pashtuns engaging in Bacha Bazi for two reasons: to exact revenge on Hazaras for the harm done to their people and to quench their sexual appetite. In *Afghan Child Labourers Exposed to Abuse*, Barat Ali Jafar discusses the concerns of Esmatullah Nasari, the director of the Empowerment Centre for Women, regarding Bacha Bazi. He states, “The abuse of children by those in position of power appears to have become an unpleasant aspect of Afghan culture”

(2017). He further reiterates, "If this issue of sexual assault is not stopped in its tracks it could spread and can have very dangerous consequences on our country" (Ibid.).

In *The Kite Runner*, Khalid Hosseini made a ground-breaking effort by exposing the plight of the Hazaras, an ethnic minority group in Afghanistan, as a result of prejudice. It depicts the mistreatment of Hazara children who are forced into Bacha Bazi by Pashtun warlords because of their animosity towards the opposing ethnic group. The story deftly interweaves the traumatised lives of Hazaras in the Pashtun-dominated Afghan society and exposes Pashtun warlords who use Bacha Bazi to achieve their dual goals of satisfying their sexual appetite and carrying out ethnic cleansing.

The protagonist of the narrative is Hassan (a Hazara), a curious youngster with a natural curiosity for learning. Raised in Amir's Pashtun family, the latter was taken aback by Hassan's impressive interpersonal relations with the people and the circumstances he found himself in. The wealthy and well-known Sunni Pashtun father of Amir was Baba, who "was used to winning, winning at everything he set his mind to" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 52). Amir was horrified to learn of the injustices and horrors committed against Hazaras in Afghanistan as the kids grew up together. As he observed Ali (Hassan's father) being pursued and ridiculed by the kids on the streets of Kabul, his interest in Hazaras developed. They chided him and called him, "flat-nosed" because of Ali and Hassan's peculiar Hazara Mongoloid features" (Ibid, p.8).

As a child, he was ignorant of the disgust that the Pashtuns had towards Hazaras. He was unable to comprehend Hassan's inadequacy as a Hazara and his superiority as a Pashtun. Ali and Hassan were never subjected to racial prejudice because Baba and Amir always treated them like family. However, Hassan was unable to enrol in a school due to societal restrictions on Hazaras. Amir's concerns about Pashtuns' consistent animosity against Hazaras were not answered. The only idea he had about Hazaras was that "they were Mogul descendants and that they looked a little like Chinese people" (Ibid, p.8). Finally he found his mother's book in his Baba's library through which he got the reasons behind the animosity between the Hazaras and Pashtuns. Amir reads a passage from a chapter which discusses Hazaras' history,

I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It said the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had "quelled them with unspeakable violence." The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their lands, burned their homes, and sold their women. The book said part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that the Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a (Ibid, pp.8-9).

As a Hazara, Hassan bears the pain of belonging to a minority community. After meeting Aseef, the world of prejudice, hatred, marginalisation, and pain becomes exposed to him. The latter frequently referred to Hassan as a "donkey" because they were intolerant of Hazaras. When Aseef refers to Afghanistan as a Pashtun country, his animosity towards Hazaras is very apparent. He finds the Hazaras' presence rather repulsive and suggests seeing the president to rid Afghanistan of the "dirty, Kassef Hazaras". Aseef strongly chastises Amir for bringing in Hassan as a family member, "If idiots like you and your father didn't take these people in, we'd be rid of them by now.

They'd all just go rot in Hazarajat where they belong. You're a disgrace to Afghanistan" (Ibid, p. 39). He proclaims,

Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-nose here. His people pollute our home- land, our watani. They dirty our blood." He made a sweeping, grandiose gesture with his hands. "Afghanistan for Pashtuns, I say. That's my vision (Ibid, p. 38).

Hassan was never able to comprehend the consequences of trying to save Amir. By defending Amir from the unstoppable leader, Aseef, he unintentionally posed a challenge to the former. The injured Aseef admonishes Amir and Hassan, "Your Hazara made a big mistake today, Amir" (KR 40). He was obsessed to take get revenge. Hassan was sexually assaulted by Aseef because of his peculiar and perverse ideas towards the Hazaras. His sexual assault on the underage boy is evidence of his cruel personality and fervent desire to rid Afghanistan of the minorities who, in his opinion, are tainting the country's priceless culture, tradition, and heritage. Amir remembers the winter of 1975 when he "saw Hassan run a kite for the last time" (Ibid, p. 51). Amir won the kite competition, but the final kite had to be retrieved as a sign of victory and was equally coveted. The best kite runner, Hassan, sprints to get the kite for his devoted master and friend, Amir. As soon as he grabbed for the kite, he was cornered in an alley by Aseef and his pals. Aseef, who was in desperate need, was looking forward to the chance. Following a brief altercation, Aseef sexually assaults him,

Aseef knelt behind Hassan, put his hands on Hassan's hips and lifted his bare but- tocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back and undid his own belt buckle with his free hand. He unzipped his jeans. Dropped his underwear. He positioned himself behind Hassan. Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper. He moved his head slightly and I caught a glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it. It was a look I had seen before. It was the look of the lamb (Ibid, p. 71).

Amir observed the episode as a naïve witness and refrained from rushing in to assist Hassan out of fear for what he would do to him. He goes into great detail about leaving the alley.

I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Aseef and what he would do to me. I was afraid of get- ting hurt" (Ibid, p. 72). To console and comfort his guilt he justifies his cowardice act as, "He was just a Hazara, wasn't he? (Ibid, p. 73)

Amir perceives Hassan as a mere servant who is born to serve his superiors. The tale explores how racism affects children's minds and makes them become hideous aggressors. The Kite Runner's first chapter, which describes a sexual attack on a Hazara youngster, exposes the level of hatred and hostility existing in Afghanistan against minorities, notably the Hazaras. It also exposes the reality that the community's powerful males raped and sexually exploited youngsters. Amir, as a child became sensitive to the animosity between the Hazaras and Pashtuns,

The curious thing was, I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either. Not in the usual sense anyhow. Never mind that we taught each other to ride a bicycle with no hands, or to build a fully functional homemade camera out of a cardboard-box...Never mind any of those things. Because history isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the need, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was Sunni and he was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing (Ibid, p. 24).

Readers find to their dismay that Shorab (Hassan's son) is being sexually exploited by Pashtun warlords, none other than Aseef. Amir returns from America on the call of Rahim Khan, Baba's friend. On meeting him, Amir finds that Hassan and his wife have been killed by the Talib's and his son, Shorab, lives in "an orphanage somewhere in Karteh-She" (Ibid, p. 203). Amir intends to give Shorab a respectable life since he has carried a heavy burden of guilt for not defending Hassan from Aseef since he was a toddler. When Amir arrives at the orphanage, Zaman, the proprietor, informs him that Shorab has been seized by a Talib representative who "visits once per month or two. He has a small amount of cash with him, but it's better than nothing at all (Ibid., p. 235). Zaman also laments his failure to defend the orphanage's youngsters from the formidable warlord, If I deny him one child, he takes ten. So I let him take one and leave the judging on Allah" (Ibid, p. 237). The novel reveals the reticent submission of the Afghans before the Talibs. He also informs that "Usually he will take a girl, but not all ways (Ibid, p.235).

This is a reflection of Talib's great indulgence in satiating his sexual needs through children. Zaman's words, "I am helpless," convey his plight.

I swallow my pride and take his goddam filthy... dirty money. Then I go to the bazar and buy food for the children" (Ibid, p.237).

The tale demonstrates how poverty and helplessness are to be blamed for Bacha Bazi's proliferation in Afghanistan. Afghans who are under enormous pressure witnessed children being mistreated and abused as sexual objects by Afghan warlords. Amir finds Shorab transformed into a dancing boy by the Taliban leader, who was none other than Aseef. Even as an adult, Aseef's intense animosity for the Hazara people didn't lessen in the slightest. According to Kenneth D. Bush Dianna a research by Padilla, Ruiz, and Brand (1974), *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*, ethnic attitudes, including positive or negative biases, emerge in early childhood and become more pronounced over time (2000, p.3). Shorab was brought before Talib as a woman. He was "dressed in loose, sapphire blue pirhan-tumban" (Hosseini, 2013, p.256).

His head was shaved, his eyes darkened with mascara, and his cheeks glowed with an unnatural red. When he stopped in the middle of the room, the bells strapped around his anklets stopped jingling" (Ibid, p. 257).

The description emphasises how a boy's sexual identity is changed in Bacha Bazi. Additionally, it shows Pashtuns enjoying Bacha Bazi, however the latter were infamous for brutally punishing homosexuality. According to Mondloch "Pashtun social norms dictate that bacha bazi is not unislamic or homosexual at all" (2013). The Hypocrisy of Child Abuse in Many Muslim Countries by Shaista Gohir discusses the widespread Bacha Bazi culture in many Muslim countries throughout the World.

The moral hypocrisy is outrageous in a country where homosexuality is not only strictly forbidden but savagely punished, even between two consenting adults. However, men who sodomize young boys are not considered homosexuals or paedophiles (2010).

Amir comments, "I guessed the music wasn't sinful as long as it played to Taliban ears" (Hosseini, 2013, p.257). Amir watched Hassan dance in front of the Talibs,

Sohrab raised his arms and turned slowly. He stood on tip-toes, spun gracefully, dipped to his knees, straightened, and spun again. His little hands swivelled at the wrists, his fingers snapped, and his head swung side to side like a pendulum. His feet pounded the floor, the bells jingling in perfect harmony with the beat of the table. He kept his eyes closed (Ibid, p. 257).

Sohrab appears to be engulfed in shame and terror in this appalling situation. He suffers from both physical and psychological abuse and is frightened and filled with the nightmares of sexual assault by the Talib's. Shorab stands in for the condition of Hazara boys, who are orphans and hence are easily available to the warlords. The sexual attempts made by the Talib towards Sohrab were clearly visible to Amir. The small boy is head down, expressing his mute consent to the Warlord's lewd advances. Shorab is treated as his property, as seen by his use of the phrase "my Hazara boy."

Bia, bia, my boy," the Talib said, calling Sohrab to him. Sohrab went to him, head down, stood between his thighs. The Talib wrapped his arms around the boy. "How talented he is, nay, my Hazara boy!" he said. His hands slid down the child's back, then up, felt under his armpits. One of the guards elbowed the other and snickered (Ibid, pp. 257-58).

Talib's sexism is evident in the way he fondles Shorab's body. The Hazara boys confined in Bacha Bazi and sexually exploited as a result of the ongoing animosity between the two ethnic groups are the subject of Hosseini's writing. The tale reveals the Pashtuns' unwavering goal to remove every speck of Hazaras' existence in Afghanistan. Aseef, the Talib, expounds the reason behind the decision of Pashtuns to cleanse Afghanistan, "Like pride in your people, your customs, your language. Afghanistan is like a beautiful mansion littered with garbage, and someone has to take out the garbage" (Ibid, p.261). The declaration clearly expresses the Pashtuns' unrelenting animosity for Hazaras and other ethnic groups, which resulted in bloodbaths, massacres, cruelty, ruthlessness in Afghanistan. This hatred also propelled Bacha Bazi in the country. According to Muhammad Hussain Nusrat, "The act of "ethnic cleansing, land confiscation, slavery and persecution' has been carried out against Hazaras "since 1891" (2019, p.1).

Children were the victims of violence and sexual abuse due to racial prejudice. Amir questions Aseef about his unyielding resolve, "What mission is that?" I heard myself say. "Stoning adulterers? Raping children? Flogging women for wearing high heels? Massacring Hazaras? All in the name of Islam?" (Hosseini, 2013, p. 261).

In the book, one of the explanations for Bacha Bazi's existence is due to interethnic conflict. According to Kenneth D. Bush and Diana Saltarelli, the majority ethnic group

uses a variety of tactics to rule over the other ethnic groups, “Their strategies include scorched earth tactics to starve populations and destroy infrastructures, sexual torture and mass rape, ethnic and social cleansing, and even genocide” (2000, p.4). Along with emphasising the psychological effects of Bacha Bazi on Shorab, who attempts suicide out of fear that he will be sent back to the orphanage and possibly back into the cycle of sexual slavery, the novel also highlights the effects of ethnic rivalry on Hazara male children. Amir remembers Shorab’s body lying in the hotel room bathtub, “the water drops dripping from the faucet and dangling over the side of the tub, the blood-soaked razor sitting on the toilet tank...and his eyes, still half open but lightless” (Hosseini, 2013, p.318). Shorab continues to lead a solitary existence despite Amir's efforts to bring him to the United States. Amir sums up his silence as, “It was the silence of one who has taken cover in a dark place, curled up all the edges and tucked them under” (Ibid, p.331). Numerous attempts by Amir and Soraya (Amir's wife) to return Shorab to his regular life were abject failures. The book closes on a happy note when Amir finally succeeds in igniting a flame in Shorab's eyes through the kite-flying event planned for an Afghan gathering in Fremont. Although Shorab was hesitant to participate at first, Amir soon noticed him taking part in it. The phrase "kite flying competition" is repeated at the book's conclusion, reminding readers of the day when Amir encountered Hassan, the titular kite runner “run a kite for the last time” (Ibid, p.51). “For you, a thousand times over,” I heard myself say” (Ibid, p. 340).

The Kite Runner by Hosseini highlights the tragedy of thousands of Afghan boys who are imprisoned by the ingrained Bacha Bazi culture. The novel also suggests that individuals must take action to counter the frightening and imposing power structures that want to rule the society by their repressive conventions.

Bacha Bazi has a negative impact on Afghanistan in two ways: it hinders the peaceful development of the nation and the healthy development of Afghan male children, who are the nation's future. According to Robin Burns, if a nation's development and peace are connected then “peace is defined not as the absence of war, but the achievement of positive social and cultural goals (Burns 1982, p.62). *The Kite Runner* by Hosseini suggests to break the cultural, psychological, and ethnic barriers in order to offer Afghan male youngsters the right to dignity and the freedom to make decisions that will be in their best interests.

4. Nadeem Aslam’s *The Blind Man’s Garden*:

The novel opens with the statement "History is the third parent." While there is no escape from the "parentage" of history, Aslam makes the compelling and awe-inspiring argument in his fourth book that we may, throughout the course of our lives, follow and compromise with the workings of our historical circumstances. Aslam plunges readers straight into the heart of the conflict where the fallout from the September assaults on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre is wreaking havoc and killing people. After 9/11 attack America waged a war against Afghanistan which also affected Pakistan. The story is set in Pakistan and Afghanistan and the most disturbing and unrelenting aspect of this outstanding story is how completely incommensurable the opposing sides are. “For the United States, "there are no innocent people in a guilty nation". For the splintered, warring groups opposing them, the Americans are aliens, an army "made up of homosexuals and women". Killing them has "a perfect legitimacy and even beauty”

(Hill). According to Fatima Noor, President Bush declared a war on terrorism and coined the term 'Islamophobia'. The American troops attacked Afghanistan as they believed that suspects were the Afghani Taliban,

Before the attacks Pakistan was supporting the Taliban government, but after the attacks it joined hands with America. This union with the American government also had its cons, and Pakistan had to pay the cost for it. The killing, damage and trauma that was firstly allocated on Americans and then was poured upon Afghans, moved to Pakistan. All these nations were facing the effects of war, but no nation was aware of the troubles faced by other nations (2020, p.2).

The novel represents trauma experienced by Pakistani people due to war and terrorism and the effect of traumatic people on the society. As most researchers have extensively discussed the impact of war on Afghans and Pakistanis, the trauma experienced by children in the course of war is majorly sidelined. Before we delve deep into the sexual exploitation of children, trauma and war, as depicted in *The Blind Man's Garden*, it is essential to understand the background of the novel.

The novel is weaved around the teacher and scholar Rohan, who resides in a house with a rose, lotus, carnation, and almond-scented exquisite garden in a tiny Pakistani town, Heer. He created this sanctuary by gathering pieces of dirt from sacred cities and shaping it into an example of Islamic principles. "The garden, Aslam's metaphor for the world, a place of beauty and innocence, is in the course of the novel corrupted and tarnished with innocent blood" (Banerjee, 2013). The novel mentions "Afghanistan' and 'Peshawar' as 'war zones'". It underscores the trauma associated with the children in war zones. The protagonist is informed by Abdul, the bird pardoner, that his son is with the Taliban and he "is being held in a warlord's prison in Afghanistan" (2013, p.117). The warlord's people had sent him a letter asking him to meet them and know how to free his son. They had cautioned in the letter, "Don't go to the police. We will kill him or hand him over to Americans to be tortured" (2013, p.117). Rohan decides to go with the bird pardoner to Peshawar, " We will meet the warlord's people together and see what can be done to bring back Jeo" (2013, p.118). At Peshawar a man wearing a Kalashnikov informs Rohan and Abdul that "twenty-thousand rupees will be charged to free the bird pardoner's son" (p.118). They are taken into a van to have a glimpse of the latter's son. Abdul finds a boy in rags inside the van who "flinches and lets out a sequel when the bird pardoner moves towards him" (p.120). Abdul declares that the boy is not his son. Rohan could see the boy weeping and beseeching,

'Please take me away', the little voice says finally, looking down. 'They keep us in a prison. They do things to you the make you want to kill yourself. Please take me away, ' he whispers.

...They have this game, they call it "nail". They start with the youngest prisoners and ask their ages. If the boy says twelve, they send twelve men to him. If he says fourteen, he gets fourteen. They take him to a room and take off his trousers and hold him down and then the whole place fills with screams. The men yell louder than the boy-like they have gone mad or have

turned into wild animals. They are shouting, "Nail! Nail! Nail! As they do it for to him (p.120).

Nadeem Aslam has depicted the practice of Bazi Bazi rampant among the Afghan warlords and soldiers. The indecent act of sexual exploitation of children, has been portrayed in this segment of the novel. The novel underscores the plight of children who are not only impacted by the foreign intrusion but also by the inhuman power play of their own warlords. The latter, instead of protecting their countrymen, revel in the game of power, libido and wealth. According to Lauren and David Adesnik, "Despite widespread condemnation, child sex abuse is rife in some segments of Afghanistan society, especially among the warlords and strongmen who dominate Afghanistan's rural countryside, where the possession of boys is seen as a mark of status, wealth, and influence" (2015, p.2). Children are more victimised under Bacha Bazi during wars as they are easily available due to the loss of parents or weak financial condition of the family. Some children are lured to join as soldiers and get into the trap of Bacha Bazi. According to Pashang (et.al.) "armed conflict has increased the vulnerability of Afghan boys to experience sexual violation as well as individual and collective trauma" (2018, p.39).

Rohan and Abdul are let out of the van and the door is closed on the boy. The boy screams to save him or else he will kill himself. Abdul informs the ransom seeker that the boy is not his son. The warlord's men show him a deck of pictures. At the end of the sheaf, Abdul recognises his son, Jeo. The men ask Abdul to meet them next week at the same time with the ransom money. Helpless Abdul beseeches them to give him some more time as he does not have money. He or his wife will have to sell their kidney in order to pay the ransom. Rohan, unable to control his anger and distress accuses the men for torturing boys as well as their parents. The outraged man threatens,

'I will cut the boy's throat and I will kill you!' He says while Rohan groans at him. 'Your boy was caught fighting against us. He probably killed some of our men. We need money to make sure the widows and the children of those dead men don't become beggars' (p.121).

Rohan decides that they will go to Afghanistan with the warlord's men. He had a ruby which he will offer in exchange of Jeo. After getting the ruby "appraised at the Jewellers' Bazar, they drive towards the eastern outskirts of Peshawar"(p.122). The journey to the destination in Afghanistan takes seventeen hours. They are brought into a room and are asked to spend the rest of the night. Rohan finds the remains of broken Buddha statues on the floor. Rohan concludes, "The opposite of war is not peace but civilisation, and civilisation is purchased with violence and cold-blooded murder"(p.127). Rohan and Abdul follow a man into the warlord's underground prison next morning. As they moved through the hallways, Rohan could see people thrusting their hands with beakers out of their cells asking for water. He states, "These prisoners must all be insignificant, because the important ones are handed over to the Americans for \$5,000 each" (p.128). The novel underscores the pathetic condition of the civilians trapped in war. They are commodified both by the local warlords as well as their enemies.

The man goes with the jewel to the warlord. Meanwhile Jeo informs Rohan and Abdul that there are about hundred children trapped in the building and the others who came with him had died. The warlord returns delighted by the beauty of the jewel. He announces, "You can take the boy" (p.129). Rohan, however, wanted to save the other children from the brutal clutches of the warlord. On seeing the American soldiers outside the building he thought of seeking their help to rescue the children. He requests,

I need your help in getting some children out of this building,' he says, pointing with his head.

'Not our problem.'

'They are being abused there.'

'Not our problem... (p.131).

"This blatant disregard for the safety of underage boys in Afghanistan seemingly answers the previously posed question: protecting its interests in the Middle East is more important to the U.S. government than protecting the young boys who are victimized by bacha bazi" (Bruton, 2019, p.191). The novel explicitly discusses the USA's presence in Afghanistan post September 11 attack and posing it as the rescuer of Afghans, especially Afghan women, from brutal Talibs,

September 11 nearly shattered confidence in the U.S. as an impenetrable body of power, threatening its hypermasculine identity as the authority that would be respected by the world. In response, Western nation-states, namely the U.S. and Britain, colluded with the media to manufacture consent and gather funding for a "War on Terror" that would teach those who dared threaten the world's hegemony a lesson. To that end, Afghanistan was centered as a target due to its alleged role in harboring Al Qaeda insurgents. The War on Terror was initiated not on the battlefield, but first and foremost through powerful propaganda, especially about Afghans, their "true" nature, and how badly they needed Western intervention and oversight for the sake of the world. Thus came Laura Bush and Cherie Blair's campaign to "save" Afghan women from the clutches of vaguely-described, evil terrorists (Malikyar, 2021, p.1).

However, the moral policing of the whites loses its traces when it comes to check Bacha Bazi in Afghanistan. The USA focusses on Afghan men who are a threat to the security of the whites and are least concerned about the security of the Afghans as a whole.

Conclusion:

The Kite Runner and *The Blind Man's Garden* demonstrate the chaos in the life of the indigenous in the war zones. It simultaneously unfolds the commodification of children during war. The novel is a collage of human relationships and their sufferings due to the war. While depicting the geo-political conflicts, Hosseini and Aslam also lay bare the plight of the helpless children who are churned in the wheels of 'war on terror'. Trapped in poverty, loss of parents, ethnic rivalry, homelessness, collapsed security systems, the Afghan children became vulnerable to sexual exploitation during conflicts and war. Afghanistan's culturally sanctioned paedophilia has skinned the basic rights of children.

Its ugliest form can be seen when the native warlords sexually abuse the children and the US security forces deny to protect the helpless victims. The novel underscores the hypocrisy of conflicts and war which instead of safeguarding the rights of the people converges its interest in strengthening the existing power structures.

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**AFTERMATH OF WORLD WAR II: THE BIRTH OF ANGRY YOUNG MAN
IN THE BRITISH PLAY *LOOK BACK IN ANGER* BY JOHN OSBORNE AND
IRATE WILLY LOMAN IN *DEATH OF A SALESMAN* BY AMERICAN
PLAYWRIGHT ARTHUR MILLER**

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Abstract:

After the World War II (1939—1945) Great Britain lost its former position as a world super power. There emerged two super powers truly, United States and U.S.S.R. Because it could not maintain its worldwide empire and simultaneously lacked resources to hold India, India got its Independence from the British rule in 1947. With the destruction of infrastructure and huge loss of its human resources Britain became bankrupt. The three-class structure became deep rooted after the war there.

Keywords: Angry Young Man, Middle class, Realism, Capitalism, American Dream.

1. Birth of Angry Young Man:

In the Britain of 1950's a group of young writers who expressed their disaffection and disdain towards establishments emerged as a new breed of intellectuals. They jointly came up with a movement which was called Angry Young Man movement. These writers not only exposed through their plays the hypocrisies of upper-class ethos and lifestyles in their writings but also created protagonists; (hero/anti-hero) depicting working or lower middle class deep disaffected directionless unprivileged by birth. It can be quite understood that there was a very recent origin of a tradition of the post war young rebel hero.

The second world war lasted for nearly about six years for Britain because it was engaged in it from beginning till the end. This was a very hard time for history of Britain. It turned its history upside down. Great Britain which was earlier an empire full of power, transformed into a country surrounded by chaos and fear due to its altered position post war. Its citizens lost the sense of security after losing its colonial power.

The barrier size increased in all strata of society which was already living on strict social stratification. Here took birth Angry Young Men through anger, revolt, discontentment and struggle for existence in the post-World War II society. The great number of problems prevailing in the era set a stage for dramatists like John Osborne, John Arden, Kingsley Amis, etc.

2. Osborne's Play Look Back in Anger:

Osborne's play Look back in Anger marked a cultural movement in the British Literary scenes. Its appearance at that particular moment in post-war British society also contributed as one of the major intellectual responses.

Doris Lessing recorded her own experience of watching the play with a “feverish, uneasy audience the young shouting enthusiasm, the older generation unhappy” (*Walking in the Shade*, Harper Collins, 1997, p.207).

The contribution of these Angry young men dramatists in fifties continued to be read, performed and studied. Osborne’s play was a seminal work in this genre such that it marked a significant departure from the more traditional and genteel dramas that had been popular in Britain up to that point.

Look Back in Anger is a three Act play with five scenes in all. In the play action takes place in the Porters’ one room flat in the Midlands. There are five major characters in it. Jimmy Porter and his wife Alison Porter, Colonel Redfern; father of Alison, their friends Cliff Lewis, Helena Charles.

In his introductory paragraph Osborne introduces to us:

JIMMY is a tall, thin young man about twenty-five, wearing a very worn tweed jacket and flannels, Clouds of smoke fill the room from the pipe he is smoking. He is a disconcerting mixture of sincerity and cheerful malice, of tenderness and freebooting cruelty; restless, importunate, full of pride, a combination which alienates the sensitive and insensitive alike. Blistering honesty or apparent honesty, like his, makes few friends. To many he seems sensitive to the point of vulgarity. To others, he is simply a loudmouth” (*Look Back in Anger*, Act I, p. 7).

Angry Young Jimmy Porter, protagonist of the play *Look Back in Anger*: The first of the Angry young men, Jimmy Porter, was introduced to the audience of the 50’s by John Osborne in his play *Look Back in Anger*. He is embittered and angry, portrayal of the mentality of a young generation of post war time who belonged to the lower classes and who felt that privileges were reserved for upper classes only.

He feels the world that surrounds him is morally bankrupt. It is dull, uninspiring and demoralising. He is full of frustration, pain, anger and discontentment. His constant outbursts and tirades against the society and people around him were seen as a reflection of the feeling of a generation of young people who felt that their lives and opportunities were being stifled.

Jimmy is a self-confessedly working-class man though perhaps not as low down on the social ladder as he likes to portray. He felt trapped and unfulfilled in his life. He is well educated, in choosing to run a sweet stall is his seeking attention kind of attitude. He is quite proud of his education and intelligence he often taunts cliff of not being educated enough and wasting his life in pastimes as concert going etc.

He has tried, as career options, Journalism, advertising, even selling vacuum cleaners and is shown happy doing this as anything. Sunday newspapers publish trivial matters week after week to keep the people occupied with small insignificant matters. Jimmy feels the world that surrounds him is morally bankrupt, dull and uninspiring. There is no hope left in society and that social inequality is prevailing due to open alliance between values and interests of the dominant classes seems to be his deep sense of anguish.

Jimmy constantly sees himself trapped between a past which can only be looked back at and an unfulfilling present. For twelve months he watched his father dying when he was only a ten-year old child. His father who had come back from war in Spain. Jimmy feels he was the only one who cared for him as his mother looked after him only out of pity. In the words of Jimmy,

You see, I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry- angry and helpless. And I can never forget it I knew more about love... betrayal.... and death, when I was ten years old than you will probably even know all your life (Look Back in Anger, Act II Sc. I, p. 50).

He feels in comparison to the 1930s and 40s, when heroism and commitment were active values, the present seemed to offer no possibility of a meaningful intervention in the society of the time.

I suppose people of our generation aren't able to die for good cause any longer. we had all that done for us in the 30s and 40s, when we were still kids..... There aren't any good brave causes left. If the big bang does come, and we all get killed off, it won't be in aid of the old-fashioned, grand design. It'll just be for the brave New-nothing-very-much-thank-you (Look Back in Anger, Act III Sc. I, p. 73).

When Alison comes back home Jimmy puts her the question whether she can recall why did he get attracted towards her in no time,

You didn't really notice me, but I was watching you all the evening. you seemed to have a wonderful relaxation of spirit. I knew that was what I wanted (Look Back in Anger, Act III Sc. II, p. 83).

Alison is shown crying confessing that she wanted to die after the loss of her expectant child as she had never faced pain like this. In the face of Alison's emotional breakdown Jimmy's anger dissolves into helplessness. He has driven her to this point, and both he and the audience are shocked by the depth of pain that his anger and tirades have caused.

The moment is cathartic, suggesting whether Jimmy is right that suffering is the most essential human emotion remains open at the end of the play—it is attractively powerful, but we also wonder whether all this pain would have been better off avoided, if it could have been.

Jimmy Porter became to be seen not as a hero but as the spokesperson of the younger generation. It seems in the play that he always wants to change the way the world works. That is why the newspapers then urged the readers not to miss the play as it would speak for you.

If you are young, it will speak for you. If you are middle-aged, it will tell you what the young are feeling (The New Statesman and Nation, May 1956).

John Barber, a critic, described it as “intense, angry, feverish, undisciplined.... even crazy. But it is young, young, young” (The Daily Express, May 1956).

It would be well understood by now that the play reflected for the first time, with full seriousness, an awareness of the changes in the post war English social and cultural scenario.

3. Americanisation of the World after World War II and the Frustrated, Irate

3.1 Individual in Modern American Plays:

The loss of Britain's position as a world super-power made America take over the world policy. Its impact was increasing day by day and its culture conquering slowly the world and also Britain. Americanisation of the world was beginning meaning which was the adoption of all the practices and aspirations of modern America by the world.

Teenagers were a huge new market for clothes, music, radios, motorbikes and other goods as this became American Dream. The belief in this American dream is deeply rooted in the history of America. It is based on the principle of democracy and equality.

After the World War II the economic situation in America witnessed great prosperity. As a matter of fact, many people became able to afford an apartment, a car and better lifestyle. However, the economic growth brought prosperity for the high class, there began middle-class never-ending struggle.

In Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman, the protagonist is shown as a representative who struggled to realise those material things to fulfil his desire of achieving the American Dream.

Willy Loman is shown as an aging, self-deluded salesman trapped in a vicious circle of denial, self-deception and ultimately death. He is disillusioned by the American dream, desperately clinging to his fading to achieve them. His dreams are actually based in a flawed understanding of success.

He is so much stuck in his delusions and is unwilling to accept any help or seek advice from those around him. He seems to be a tragic figure trapped in a cycle of disappointment and failure, unable to escape from his self-imposed prison.

Death of a Salesman tackles the concept of American dream in a decade when visible everywhere was the increased consumption and technological advancement became the dominant power. A phrase is applied to Abraham Lincoln, "From the log cabin to the White House." In a society where rags to the riches is the dream come true, when you have luck, you can pluck is chased, Miller created in Willy Loman a character who is a living example of follower of the American Dream. He hammers this notion in the minds of his sons too.

However, in the boom years after the war it became dream of success and the cultures of business changed towards capitalism. The happiness of an individual started to be proportional to the thickness of the wallet. As shown in *Death of a Salesman*, greed and selfishness became major means in pursuit to happiness.

Death of a Salesman is one of the most literary pieces that projects the effects of the War very closely reflecting the conflict between Willy Loman and social trends. It focuses on the struggle of an individual to fit in this new world order heading towards the making of a capitalistic society. He is an incorrigible optimist and understands rising

sun is worshipped just like the rising super power America and opposite of it the setting sun of the British empire has set the new world order.

Death of a Salesman is a play in two acts and has a requiem followed by them. Arthur Miller wrote the play in 1948 and produced in 1949. Miller won a Pulitzer Prize for the work, which he described as “the tragedy of a man who gave his life, or sold it” in pursuit of the American Dream.

In the play Death of a Salesman Willy Loman an aging salesman trying to keep his job, his wife Linda and his two sons Biff and Happy comprises of a family around which the story revolves. Willy would manipulate the truth to his own advantage and saw everything as some kind of a competition that he and his family has to win.

Biff the elder son is an athlete and there is a strained relation between father and son. Happy the younger one is a shallow materialistic man trying to make his living by working as a salesman and is often called ‘A ladies’ man.’

Miller through his play seeks to portray the societal values and morals being incorporated in the American Society in the aftermath of World War II. Where wealth, income, status all are assigned through competition, how could a middle-class individual Willy Loman survive. He could not find a way out to avoid the rat race and in the end gave up his fight by committing suicide.

Willy decides to go through with his suicide plans so that his elder son Biff could have enough money to make a success in life. He drives off to crash his car one more time.

At the close of the play there is a requiem. Linda, his wife seems stunned as to why no one came for the funeral. Biff takes the act of suicide of his father as a man who held wrong dreams and died for those wrong dreams. Happy seems to be a dreamer like his father and he disagrees with Biff.

Willy Loman chases the American dream which implied ‘a shine on the shoe and a smile on the face’. Being bred on the old values, Willy Loman is not able to adapt to the new ways of doing business in America. In a scene he is shown yelling at his sons Biff and Happy in a restaurant.

The woods are burning, boys, you understand? There’s a big blaze going on all around. I was fired today (DOAS, Act II, p.78).

His old-fashioned techniques of selling were no longer in accordance with the new business environment gearing up in America. He gave false justifications to his family:

They don’t need me in New York. I’m the New England man. I’m vital in New England (DOAS, Act I, p.6).

The abuses of this capitalistic system are visible when there is no respect shown for Willy’s length of service. He is fired because of the lack of essentials of capitalism. In his expulsion scene, Willy talks to Howard,

You can’t eat the orange and throw the peel away a man is not a piece of fruit (DOAS, Act II, p.58).

Although Willy Loman has worked hard all his life but now after so many changes in the business model, where ‘business is business’, he is reduced to begging his former

boss' son Howard for job. Howard is the new age businessman who has taken over his father in this cut throat competitive world where old-fashioned technique of salesmanship is no longer relevant.

The changes in the American business system came after the war, As capitalists, they only sought profit with lesser appreciation to social relations and also the efforts exerted by employees in the past for the sake of employers business.

Willy hated the way society and economy changed, how the world became so industrialised. Willy felt lonely isolated and discontent that he was not able to change according to this fast-changing world and thus gave his life. This burden of his pursuits weighed him down and finally led him to suicide.

After the end of two Acts Miller has added a requiem to it. Requiem serves as a mass prayer for the departed Soul of Willy Loman. Willy's wife Linda fails to understand that why after all he did the suicide. She says:

Why did you do it? I search and I search, and I fail to understand (DOAS, Requiem p.104).

In the end of the requiem she says,

I made the last payment today, today dear and there'll be nobody home (DOAS, Requiem, p.104).

Willy was a product and a victim of the environment. A society which took his life chasing his dreams. His suicide showed that a man's concern for his personal dignity is so deep rooted that before giving up his dreams he would give away his life.

4. Conclusion:

Miller's and Osborne's characters; Willy and Jimmy were devised when the World was running with the motto of survival of the fittest which was the aftermath of World War II. Jimmy belongs to a bygone world superpower country, whereas Willy is a character of an upcoming superpower.

Same emotion is arisen in both their lives and they look back nostalgically to seek refuge in those earlier days. The suffering and anger that we have seen in both of the plays has a human cost.

Both miller and Osborne used stage as a public platform to showcase the real picture of their post war societies.

These writers presented an authentic picture of society and adopted Realism as their literary style. John Osborne, 26-year-old playwright became famous with his play Look Back in Anger and came to be known as Angry Young Man. Although the movement could not survive a full decade, yet it got acknowledged as the dominant literary movement of the age which was the aftermath of the World War II.

Miller's Death of a Salesman depicts the effects of the World War II on the American society which witnessed prosperity and technological advancement. Willy Loman chases the American dream which implied that a shine on the shoe and a smile on the face is what is the essentials within a materialistic society.

Osborne's play came to be regarded as turning point in the history of British drama. Both the playwrights painted a realistic picture to present the authentic picture of Society Where in the sufferings of the middle-class individual in the society is concerned.

As Jimmy porter or Willy Loman both Osborne and Miller captured the frustrations and disillusionment of a generation effected by the War and their stories remain relevant to the present times. Both the characters became so beloved and remain relatable to the audiences till today.

Due to the horrors of War the world witnessed a generation of changing attitudes thereafter was the emergence of Angry Young Men in Literature as well.

Following World War II, the United States saw an upward rise in the Economy that brought unparalleled prosperity to a majority of its citizens and raised Americans expectations, breeding a belief that most economic and social problems could be solved very soon. After 15 years of depression and war, Americans were no more interested in social reform but in rebuilding the nation by achieving stable economic growth.

As put by analysts, the post-war era was the age of the housing boom, the television boom, and the baby boom, of high birth and comparatively low divorce rates, of rapidly mushrooming suburbs and a self-conscious emphasis upon family togetherness.

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**NTHE TIGER'S VANQUISH: REPRESENTATION OF IPKF'S ROLE IN THE
SRI LANKAN CIVIL WAR IN AYATHURAI SANTHAN'S NOVEL *THE
WHIRLPOOL***

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Abstract:

The Srilankan Civil war which lasted over more than two decades was a time of great turbulence for both the warring groups: the Tamils and the Sinhalese. Several Sri Lankan writers have captured the gruesome memories of war and the insurgency created by the Tigers (LTTE chief Prabhakaran and his clan) who couldn't be vanquished by the State Machinery. It was at this juncture that IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) came to disarm the militants and set up an Interim Administrative Council. Our paper looks at the literary representation of the role of IPKF, Operation Pawan, the reasons for its unpopularity amongst Tamils in Jaffna, and the oppression faced by women during the combing process. To substantiate our arguments we would be closely working with the novel Whirlpool by Ayathurai Santhan. The broad framework that we would use to analyse the text, infer our argument and to understand hegemonic power relations which existed amongst the Tamils and the IPKF would be that of cultural and post-colonial studies.

Keywords: Militancy, ethnic violence, Jaffna, Tigers, IPKF

1. Introduction:

Civil War is an inter-group conflict within the State. European history has witnessed umpteen civil wars like the American Civil War, the English Civil War and the Russian Civil War. The predominant aim of the dissenting group might vary depending on the socio-political context of the location or country. Some would be to demand change in governmental policies, whereas some would be to procure control over a particular territory, or in rare cases, to get independence from an existing State or dominant group which practices exclusionist strategies against the minorities. One of the most devastating Civil Wars that occurred in South Asian History was in the island nation of Sri Lanka (old Ceylon) over a long duration of several decades. It has been recognized as the most long drawn out armed conflict in the history of Asia, which came to an unforeseen end in 2009 with the defeat of the LTTE in 2009. From the late 16th C onwards; Sri Lanka as a nation had to undergo a series of traumatic historic appropriations and colonisation from three imperial powers: the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. However, the origin of the present conflict (Civil War) can be traced back to the bitter dissension between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority in the nation.

The two major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka are the Tamilians following Hindu culture and religion and the Sinhalese group following Buddhist culture and religion. According to the Harvard International Review, the origin of the Sinhala- Tamil discord begins as

early as their settlement of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Several historians believe that the Tamils arrived on the island both as invaders and traders from India's Chola Kingdom. In pre-colonial times, Tamil kings ruled most of the Northern and Eastern provinces of the island and the respective lands had a Tamil majority. Whereas, the Southern and the Western regions had a Sinhalese majority. The traditions, value systems, norms, tastes and language of both zones differed considerably. Despite a considerable influence of the Dravidian culture on both the Sinhalese and Tamil groups, over the period of time both developed their own unique identities and customs. During the British Raj, missionary activities reached its zenith in Sri Lanka and a number of educational institutions including convent schools, arts and professional colleges were opened in the Northern part where the Tamil population dominated. Consequently, the Tamilians received better exposure to the English language, western education, and modern living. This consequently led to a few of them occupying high positions in civil services and other administrative sectors.

In 1948, Sri Lanka gained freedom from the British rule and shifted to Parliamentary democracy, whose bedrock was majoritarianism. The Sinhalese government implemented several policies for the exclusive benefit of Sinhalese. In 1956, the Sinhalese language was made the official language by the newly formed government, resulting in many Tamilians losing government jobs and curbing prospective job opportunities of the Tamil youth. Tamil films, magazines, periodicals and other publications were banned. Tamil language and literature, sources of immense cultural pride for the Tamilians suffered a severe setback. Such discrimination motivated youngsters from schools and colleges to get involved in political activism who later resorted to extreme form of armed insurgency overtook the nation in a short while. These found expression in several English novels like Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* (1994), *The Road from Elephant Pass* (2003) by Nihal De Silva, *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* (2012) by Nayomi Munaweera, *Dare to Dream - Heroic Tales for the Tamil Diaspora* by JK Sivalingam (2012) and *The Story of a Brief Marriage*, Anuk Arudpragasam (2016).

Eventually, the demands of the Sri Lankan Tamils converged to a unified goal, forming an Independent Tamil nation in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka. Tamil Armed groups started developing during this time. Even kids were given militant training and forced to take arms and join the force. Among them, LTTE stood out in the clarity of their ambition (complete secession of Tamilians from Sinhalese) and the specificity of their targets and later, they became one of the world's most potent militant guerilla forces. It was formed in 1976, with two power centres in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka. They even functioned as a parallel shadow government in the Northern region of Jaffna. With the passage of time, the two old groups at loggerheads came to be represented by the Sinhalese-led Srilankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE).

On 23 July 1983, a massive attack was unleashed by LTTE on Srilankan army in which 13 service personnels died and in the resultant riots across the country, about 3000 civilians succumbed to death. Appealed by the Indian Tamilians and the Tamil diaspora, Indian government led by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi decided to intervene and mediate the grant of autonomy to Tamil-dominated provinces along with the complete disarmament of the Tamil armed forces. Operation Liberation was announced by the Sri

Lankan Army in 1987, aiming for the all-out elimination of LTTE from Jaffna. LTTE's announcement of their refusal to surrender or disarm led to the IPKF engaging in a deadly military action against them. The actual Civil war happened at this prime phase of the existing conflict. In the present essay, we look at the perception of the Srilankan Tamils regarding the activities of IPKF.

Umpteen Sri Lankan Tamil novelists like Thirukkivilur, Kaviyuvan, Cheran and Ranjakumar have pointed out the unfathomable destruction that has resulted out the civil war. In fact literary critics have pointed out how Lankan writing in English has become civil war trauma oriented and focus on how the writers trace the transformation of Sri Lanka from a "locus amoenus", a place of safety, to "locus horribilis," a place ruined by the war (Rose 1). Our essay focuses on the role of IPKF in the novel *The Whirlwind* by Ayathurai Santham and interrogates the varied ways in which turbulence was unleashed in Jaffna by Indian appropriation of the conflict. In addition, the essay also focus on the representation of the reciprocation of this infiltration by the indigenous natives of Jaffna. The present essay is divided into three sections namely a) Expression of the civil war turbulence and an eco-critical lens b) Ayathurai Santhan's representation of the IPKF intrusion as resistance writing c) Representation of Indian Politics in Tamil Sri Lankan Consciousness.

2. Expression of the Civil War Turbulence through an Eco-critical Lens:

Literary works very often use non-human elements to encode implied messages conveying emotions and concerns. *The Whirlwind* is loaded with such messages conveying the Godotian wait of the people of Jaffna for the end of the Civil War and the restoration of normalcy in their lives. The settings used in *The Whirlwind* create an eco-phobic narrative and subvert the popular representation of Sri Lanka as idyllic land of beaches and tea plantations. The narrative intercepted through ecological symbols unearths palimpsest histories of violent political events and represents them as sites of fear and human exploitation. In this section, we borrow from the Indian scriptures the concept of the five elements of nature or the Pancha Mahabhootas - Vayu (Wind), Agni (Fire), Jala (Water), Pruthvi (Earth), and Akasha (Space). We look at the manner in which Ayathurai Santhan has employed the Pancha Mahabhootas in the narrative to analyse the state of precarity arising from this colossal turbulence that set into the lives of the people belonging to Jaffna with the intrusion of IPKF.

2.1 Vayu (Wind):

The very term of IPKF's mission is termed Operation Pawan. On its inception, Operation Pawan was conceptualized to provide relief (like the wind) from the scorching tyrannies of the LTTE tigers. However, this wind metamorphoses into a Whirlwind in the lives of the citizens of Jaffna. It denotes the perils of lack of support and surveillance by Sri Lankan Govt which finally wrecked havoc in the lives of the villagers. The comment by one of the villagers that the IPKF signified not the 'mere wind' but a whirlwind which could sweep the entire place of its sanctity and normalcy is quite indicative of the complex situation in which the citizens of Jaffna found themselves in.

2.2 Pruthvi (Earth):

Alathurayai Santhan has employed earth, its smells, sights and sounds quite evocatively in his narrative. The location of the Koodam where all the refugees were detained had

symbols which conveyed the ominous events which were to continue following the IPKF invasions. For example, the flowering tree Fringapani which is supposedly known for the visual treat that it provides to its viewers with its velvety soft petals and mesmerizing fragrance becomes appalling with its 'leafless branches like giant fingers'

Yet another instance of expressing dissent towards the IPKF in the narrative is the hostility presented in the environment by sounds from screeching birds like the Sudalai Kuruvi whose calls were generally believed to be ominous and a precursive warning of the impending disaster. Additionally, alienation and distancing of the IPKF jawan's culture which was predominantly north Indian is shown through the use of the smell of ghee and groundnut oil wafting throughout the area which is occupied by the IPKF and the place where Sivan and Thevar are taken to. This east-west divide is prominent throughout the work. The inability of Sri Lanka to reconfigure herself to the combing procedures is wilfully depicted by Sivan's churning stomach.

The sounds of military encounters and shelling at noon are interspersed by memories of Sivan, who longingly remembers the sound of temple bells emanating from the nearby temple in a peaceful situation. Thus, these sights and sounds are meaningfully employed by the author to show the comparison between the normal and unusual times like these.

2.3 Akasha (Space):

The author's depiction of space in the form of the sky was even more interesting as it showed dissent of the civilians witnessing the brutal harassment and killing of innocent people who were not even remotely related to the Tamil Rebels or the LTTE. Maroon-coloured dragonflies dispersed in the sky symbolising the occasional killing of people.

The sky is generally the site with a gradual movement of clouds signifying life and life processes. However, the sky in the present narrative is still, without the movement of clouds. This can perhaps be implied as how the ecosystem has come to a standstill after the onslaught of the Civil War.

2.4 Jala (Water):

The chill and dampness pervading the Koodam exemplified the stagnation and unease of the people which resulted because of their feeling of helplessness on being caught between political dictums, LTTE militants and IPKF. Furthermore, the unleashing of havoc as a result of unseasonal rain when Sivan and Thevar are captured by the IPKF shows how the innocent civilians were lured, trapped and probably killed on mere suspicion of being potential rebels and belonging to the LTTE camp.

2.5 Agni (Fire):

Light or fire signifies hope. When the people of Jaffna were huddled in the Koodam, "a single hurricane lamp lit by Mani hung on the thin rod...The pale yellow light seemed unable to ooze out the chimney covered by soot". This reflects how perhaps IPKF, their only source of hope and solace too like the soot had made their hopes opaque and bleak due to their high-handedness.

Thus, the close connection between political conflict and the physical world could be observed in the text, the latter at once acting as a stage for the former and getting subjected to unpredictable repercussions.

3. Ayathurai Santhan's Representation of the IPKF Intrusion on the Jaffanese Consciousness:

The narrative captures the complex dynamism of the particular period, encompassing the rapid changes in civilian experiences as a result of the dramatic unveiling of political decisions. The Whirlwind forms a significant part of Sri Lanka's history of crises in literary narration, more in connection with lived experience of the civilians than as another equivalent to dominant narratives. Christopher Bertram points out that the unsuccessful side in a conflict will tend to adopt "structures" similar to those of the triumphing rivals, as the obvious culmination of strong resistance:

Countries and cultures have engaged in both economic competition and in military conflict. In all these forms of conflict and competition, possession of a higher level of technological development increases the chance that a given culture or state will survive. Those countries or cultures that fail to select structures conducive to the development of the productive forms will either be eliminated (or assimilated) by their rivals or will undergo a crisis that will force them to select anew their basic structures. In either case, the unsuccessful, if they survive, will tend to adopt structures resembling those of their successful rivals (p.116).

Similarly, Giddens highlights the autonomous role of organized coercion, as the form in which the plurality of rival powers making up the entire system interact with each other and lead to political organization. His chief argument is that military violence in a State turns out to be responsible for system integration (Callinicos, 1995, p.117, Giddens, 1995, p.198). The war in Sri Lanka reduced the intersectional subjectivities of the land to two ethnicised blocs and made it indispensable for the people to align with either of their ethno nationalist ideologies and troop morale (Pieris, 2018, p.1). The shifting loyalty between Sinhala and Tamil polarities was compounded by the growing exclusionist politics. The novel presents a turbulent social scenario in which the role of the foreign troop in uniting the people and their destructive influence on their lives are juxtaposed with one another. The Indian soldiers, a majority of whom are unfamiliar with both Tamil and Sinhala Act more or less in favour of the Sinhala-dominated political leadership. Language, the most important factor in establishing cultural linkages and conveying public opinion in such a sensitive contact zone, fails to mediate subtle negotiations between the military forces and the civilians. When the language through which one establishes an identity in a social order, becomes conscious of oneself and communicates with others, fails to be operational, the subordinate position of the respective speech community is intended. The dominant armed force's use of Hindi as a language unfamiliar to the civilians, casts Tamil as a subordinate language and its speakers as a dependent population, connoting the silence and alienation accompanying non-belonging or fugitiveness. The Indian soldier's apathy reflects in the way he behaves, in how his language of dominance "collapses" the civilians to their land from which they are displaced and alienated (2012, p.121).

The IPKF jawans who belonged to the North classified and relegated all the Tamils under a homogenised cartel of being 'Sri Lankans' irrespective of the fact whether the State was inclusive of the Tamils or not. This is reflected by Sivan's museful lines that 'whatever difference there are, in the eyes of the foreigner we are all Sri Lankans

(Santhan, 2012, p.172) The Hindi-speaking north Indian soldiers could hardly communicate in English which proved to be a major setback in handling the situation effectively. The only two Hindi words that Sivan could decipher were “Aw (aao) and chalo” meaning come. It was only with the senior military officers who were conversant in English that some communication was possible. The elderly citizens, as represented by Thevar in the novel, encounter humiliation from the part of officers, interrogating his optimism, faith and hopes for a peaceful atmosphere. Such experiences thrown at the old Jaffanese, affecting their cultural pride symbolize the shifting structures of cultural terrain partially closed for adaptation as far as the old generations are concerned.

4. The Precariousness of the Evacuation Procedure:

The precarious situation in which a civilian is forced to detach oneself from routine life, basic preoccupations and functions of everyday social practice, penetrates one’s ethical suppositions and values, affecting the core of one’s social character. Several people who belonged to privileged Vellala families and those who had ample resources were subjected to undignified modes of oppression which involved not physical violence but also humiliation. They were ejected from their comfortable homes to be huddled up in an almost abandoned house like a refugee camp. The arrival of IPKF which had at one time signified hope and respite from the LTTE for these ‘no-where’ marginalised citizens became the very source of remorse, bitterness and despair.

Sivan’s thought process aptly conveys this message “to see that they are punishing the very same helpless masses, who anxiously awaited their arrival and warmly welcomed them with great hopes and anticipation” (Santhan, 2012, p.146). As the narrative proceeds, an observation can be made on how the very forces sent by India to protect the dignity of their neighbouring nation brutally took away the dignity of Sri Lankan Tamil women.

The following query raised by a mother to her daughter depicts the concern which haunted every Srilankan Tamil woman during the time:

Tell me the truth child, had anything happened there?...Did anything unpleasant take place when you were alone in the house? Those men are nasty...you think that I would be alive by now if such a thing had happened? (Santhan, 2012, p.26)

Thus, trapped between the Sinhala hegemony, IPKF appropriation of the conflict and the LTTE armed insurgency, the Srilankan Tamils became one of the worst hit victims of three dimensional ethno-political-religious conflict in World History. Surprisingly, the LTTE tigers who were fighting their Tamil identity and a separate state too started inflicting atrocities against the innocent Sri Lankan Tamils as the latter was seen as the source which beckoned the IPKF involvement.

5. Representation of Indian Politics in Sri Lankan (Tamil) Consciousness:

The mounting pressure on the Indian Government by the people of Tamil Nadu to redeem their hapless brethren located in Sri Lanka was one of the foremost reasons for the Indian intervention into the neighbouring country's political affairs. However, with the change of political parties and ideologies, the approach towards the crisis also altered. Mrs Indira Gandhi was revered as an endearing political figure by several Tamil Srilankans. Her death was mourned by the whole of Jaffna for two days. Sivan

reminisces how Mrs. Gandhi's demise was grieved by everyone "as if that lady had belonged to their own family. All the roads were deserted and shops and offices closed and there were only black flags and funeral decorations everywhere. The entire peninsula would have never seen such a bereavement before" (Santhan, 2012, p.248). Yet another politician who is represented in the narrative as being concerned about the Tamil Srilankan's welfare was the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, MGR or M.G. Ramachandran who reigned between 1917-1987. Several non-fictional records would collude to MGR's special empathy and concern for the Sri Lankan Tamils as Kandy was his birthplace. However, it was MGR's chance meeting with the LTTE supremo Pirapaharan that led to the reversal of upper hand in LTTE's favour. Mohandas in his work *MGR: The Man and The Myth*, highlights: "MGR listened patiently, but it was apparent that instant rapport was established between MGR and Pirapaharan, the LTTE supremo" (1992, p.79).

Thus, changes in power configurations in the neighbouring nation, though historically, culturally, ethnically and religiously, an inseparable one, resulted in huge transformations in the political map and ordinary life of Sri Lanka. Also, the voice of the neighbourhood, unrecognized in the preceding times, asserted their importance and acquired much credibility. Reflection of this relationality and hope in the Indian government's pragmatism, against all odds exacerbated by the IPKF in some regions, can be found in Sivan's comment:

Instead of all these they should have pressed for a genuine dialogue between the rebels and the government here. That may have been more sensible and successful than sending troops (Santhan, 2012, p.55).

In fact, there is also a strong insinuation by Thevar in Tamil 'sirupillaku viyaiyaaddu, sundelikku seevan poachu- what's fun for the child is death for the mouse' (ibid, p.267). The above line indicates the lopsided and callous attitude assumed by Indian politicians and IPKF in dire circumstances faced by the Sri Lankan Tamils. In fact, here the author shows the manner in which a life threatening situation faced by the indigenous natives is deemed trivial and inconsequential from the Indian standpoint. In fact, one can also read this entire search operation in the hamlet of Jaffna as an act of Indian hegemony comparable to that of the ones undertaken by the first world country like U.S which takes a moral pride in pilfering, infiltrating and taking charge of the so called 'humanitarian crisis' without really taking into account the cultural specificities or popular vein of the masses residing there or who are directly involved in the event. Sivan's words seem to resonate the collective consciousness of the entire Sri Lankan Tamilians that 'Using military force will never bring peace, anywhere in the world. Even if it does it will be short lived' (ibid, p.261). Thus, contrary to the best of Indian intentions hoping for an end to the crisis at their behest, their presence intersects with existing communitarian values, intensifying the existing conflict. Yet, they play a key role in setting the charged context in which the shift in Jaffanese sensibilities and activation of resistance gets situated.

6. Conclusion:

Santhan's attempt at representing the Civil War scenario from a subaltern perspective contributes to the recognition of *The Whirlwind* as a story of and from the ethnic

communities each member of which suffered the trauma of war in one way or the other. The novel has carefully weaved together the co-existing consciences of optimism and pessimism, derangement and forceful resistance, helplessness and aspiration, simultaneously motivating the reader and invoking tender thoughts on the overcast Srilankan sky. Through the literary expressions as discussed above, the condition of the Jaffanese aligns with a universal human predicament and communal resistant strategies at times of crisis

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MALASWAMI JACOB'S ZORAMI: A REDEMPTION SONG - UNHEARD VOICES OF HUMAN SUFFERINGS

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Abstract:

The Mizo people's darkest chapter in history took place between 1966 and 1986 when the Mizo National Front Party decided to declare independence from the Assam government. The 20-year period of conflict between the Mizo National Front Party and the Indian Army was known as Rambuai (troubled land) or Insurgency. The burden of suppressing any resistance movement against the government fell to the Indian army, which led to bloodshed and destruction. Armed with the AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Power Act), the Indian army was able to use extreme force to suppress any form of resistance. They could also forbid large gatherings and even detain suspects without a warrant. The army took advantage of the situation to abuse their power and inflict unspeakable atrocities on both innocent civilians and MNF (Mizo National Front) insurgents. The atrocities of the army which involved raping, sexual assault, killing, and depriving the people of their rights and freedom were horrifying and traumatizing for the people, particularly the women. The gross violence done by army and the human sufferings of the troubled period have been recorded in the Mizo/Rambuai literature. Malaswami Jacob's 'Zorami: A redemption song' is the first historical novel written in English which is one of the best literary representation of Mizo insurgency. The present paper aims to examine how Rambuai memories narrated in the novel records the unheard voices. It also tries to highlight the twenty years of war between the government and the MNF and the series of human sufferings, sexual assault and killings that followed which tormented the Mizo people.

Keywords: Rambuai (troubled land), Mizo National Front(MNF), Indian Army.

1. Introduction:

'Zorami: A Redemption Song' is a Mizo novel written in English by Malsawmi Jacob, published in the year 2015. The story is set in the Rambuai period of the 1960s in Mizo history, and it is centered on the character of Zorami, a small child in the beginning. "The novel presents the years of insurgency in a postmodern historiography mode. Zorami, the female protagonist of the novel craves freedom and peace. The wounds and trauma inflicted upon her physically and psychologically are drawn parallel with the land" (Siddiq, S & Kathoon, 2022, p.12). Zorami's life experiences in the troubled land of Mizoram and the shared experiences of the horrendous and excruciating pain of the hard times by the Mizo people are explored in the novel, up to the point where they learned to forgive and heal rather than holding on to hatred. During those times the land was in turmoil because of the conflict between the Mizo National Front and the Indian

Army. “The MNF movement for self-determination, which began with half-hearted support from the people had spiraled off into the most violent and darkest period in Mizo history known as Rambuai (1966-1986) which, when translated into English, means ‘troubled land’. This was the period which witnessed the 1966 aerial bombing of Aizawl that remains a blight in the nation’s history” (Khangte, 2022, p.4) The abuse of power by the Indian Army, the atrocities they committed, and the additional burden caused by the Mizo National Front Army throughout the twenty years of troubled times have brought immense pain and grief to the people of Mizoram.

The negligence of the Mizo people during the Mautam famine by the government of Assam and the fear of assimilation pressured the Mizo people to take initiatives towards the protection of Mizo culture and considered Independence from India. The resistance and declaration of Independence by the Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga against the Government of India had created and wreaked havoc in Mizoram during those times, violence was rampant and innocents suffered. Zorami the protagonist of the novel comes of age during the period of Rambuai, an armed struggle for Independence started by the Mizo National Front, the Mizo National Front (MNF) spent much of their time scheming, plotting, and training strategic attacks to take control from the government and targeting all the important headquarters of the Government buildings in different locations, they nearly succeed in taking over the government as they captured several headquarters of government. But however swift retaliations followed to pull down their attempt to rise to power which resulted in the aerial attacks, grouping of villages, curfew, burning of village, and houses and many more sufferings for the people. “The sufferings caused by army atrocities were many, but so were those undergone in the hands of the underground” (Zama and Lalawmpuia Vanchiau, 2016, p.57)

Zorami caught in the fight between the Mizo National Front (MNF) and the Indian Army had a horrid experience that scarred her till the very period of her adulthood, she was violated as a young teenager by an Indian Army man when she was on her way to fetch water, she was deeply wounded mentally and traumatized. Zorami “damaged by the trauma” (Lushai, 2019, p. 50) and was deeply affected by it and it has worsened her timid and reclusive personality. She had a very low self-esteem for herself, affecting her whole relationships with others, and developed an inability to socialize in a Mizo society where socializing is one of the functions of society, it continued on till her adulthood and jeopardize her marriage by creating a rift in her relationship with her husband, failing to give in fully to their marriage and always doubting her husband’s faithfulness to their marriage. The novel also depicts the culture of the Mizo people, a close-knit society, and a collectivist culture. Gradually the Mizo people learned to cope with their traumatic experience of Rambuai and marched towards peace. Their deep love of songs and socializing, helping and keeping other’s needs above one’s needs, and solidarity in their religion has fused deeply with their nature that it had become their identity. They had lamented their sufferings through songs and even their joy with songs. Malsawmi Jacob has used her novel characters to perfectly portray the Mizo people during the Rambuai.

2. Rambuai and the Mizo People:

“The government’s inept and apathetic response left the Mizos feeling abandoned and betrayed. Innumerable lives were lost to hunger and starvation. A voluntary group, the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF), was organized to respond to this crisis. They later dropped the term ‘famine’ to become the Mizo National Front (MNF) and, under this name, spearhead the insurgency movement. In 1966, they declared independence from India and launched a stunning surprise raid, taking brief control of the then tiny district headquarter of Aizawl, their armoury and treasury. This began the twenty-year period, which Mizos refer to as Rambuai, meaning ‘troubled land.’ The Indian Government’s atrocious and heavy handed response included carpet bombings, a unique example of a government turning its air force against its own territory; and the infamous ‘regrouping’ or forced ‘villagization’, an equivalent of the British Government’s anti-guerrilla operations during the Malayan revolt against their colonizers in the 1950s” (Lulam, 2017, p.4) The innocents whose consent were not sought for the beginning of the resistance were the most to suffer the Rambuai. “In the old days, Mizos were peaceful by nature; unfortunately due to some misunderstandings inter village wars and skirmishes often occurred. Village life itself was mostly peaceful within the closely-knit community. Mizos live by a code of self-sacrifice, of honour and chivalry, putting oneself at the forefront in times of danger while remaining at the backseat in times of peace. Rebellion or insurgency has never been a part of Mizo culture” (Malsawmkima, 2015, p.6). The Mizo people for the first time have experienced the atrocities and horrendous ruthlessness of human beings to another and witnessed the capability of inflicting such pain without any remorse, the series of sufferings that they have experienced from the hands of the Indian Army was unimaginable for peaceful people like the Mizo. The Mizo people who emphasized on respecting and caring for elders in their society and culture, who valued highly the significance of the elderly were trampled by the Army who did not have any regards for the elderly “Pu Khuanga was fifty years old when he was made a coolie by a section of the Indian Army. The load they give him was too heavy for him. He fell down and couldn’t get up again. His self-appointed masters kicked him, again and again, trying to make him get up. He died on the spot, with a heavy bag of rice on top of him. A number of younger men who survived such ordeals were maimed for life” (Jacob, 2015, p.108).

Zorami, the protagonist of the novel who was violently assaulted and violated, grew up with deep hatred for the Indian Army, she got stuck in her traumatizing past, throughout her life her traumatizing past has shaped and controlled her whole perspective of life into a very pessimistic and negative view which resulted in Zorami to be a self-loathing and recluse individual with unstable mental health. She represented the people of Mizoram; her journey to redemption reflected the path of the Mizo people from the scars of the Rambuai to their 1986 Peace Accord. Kimi her best friend on the other hand had a very different perspective and was very optimistic and had such a good faith in God, despite her plight of having had all those misfortunes happening to her family and in her life, she remained hopeful, happy and contented which even angered Zorami at some point. Kimi learned to let go of her hatred and anger towards the killers of her father and admitted “True, it’s hard to forgive him. But we are taught to forgive as we have been forgiven, aren’t we?” (Jacob, 2015, p.66) Kimi learned to be at peace and

remained optimistic throughout her life despite the series of plight that followed her, she was happy and was mentally stable and found her redemption in her faith, while Zorami nearly end her marriage troubled by rumours of her husband having an extra marital affair. She was also troubled with a regular occurrence of mental trauma which nearly drove her to commit suicide. The black serpent who kept visiting her and haunting her in her dreams to remind and to let her relive her horrid past pushed her on edge of her sanity but she saw something else, God was offering help to her. Malsawmi Jacob spoke about the significance of spiritual epiphany in the book for Zorami and the Mizo people to heal in her interview “Spiritual epiphany is the key factor in my protagonist’s inner healing. I honestly could not find any other way to mend her shattered psyche. And for a people still hurting from the atrocities they suffered, a genuine spiritual experience is the need. Spiritual, not merely religious”. (Sarangi, 2017, p.4) Zorami always longed to be cleansed and be healed from her wound of her traumatic childhood past “And the dirt, the dirt! How she wanted to wash herself clean, to be immersed in a flowing river! But there was no such river within reach. All she could get was a few mugs of water for a bath. She loathed her defiled body like a rotten carcass. In sleep, she dreamt of a brook running down a hill. She ran to it, hoping for a dip in its clear, clean water. But when she reached there, she saw only muddy, filthy water” (Jacob, 2015, p.177) but considered impossible “Too late. I’m already dead. My brain still thinks, my lungs still breathe, but my soul is dead. Dead, dead! It’s hopeless!” (Jacob, 2015, p.226) Zorami could finally sing her redemption song with the help of God and was transformed in the light of divine healing into a new person, similarly the people of Mizoram has travelled the similar path of Zorami which was filled with obstacle and bitterness at the beginning but has learned to let go of the hatred that lingered on, in the course of time “Signed on 30 June 1986, between the Mizo National Front (MNF) and the Government of India, the Mizo Accord so far remains the only successful Peace Accord of its kind in independent India’s history. The Mizoram accord is also rightly referred to as 'the only insurgency in the world which ended with a stroke of pen', by Security experts all over the world” (Sharma, 2016, p.3) Peace was not only signed on paper but even on the hearts of the people of Mizoram as they strived towards the goal of peace which once reigned the land of the Mizo people “Thirty years after the Mizo accord was signed, the state remains an oasis of peace in the north-east. The fact that peace has been sustained for three decades is no mean achievement and has only happened because of the determination shown by a highly knowledgeable and educated public, the church, the governments of different parties and civil.” (Sharma, 2016, p.3)

3. Human Sufferings

During the troubled period Mizo people faced economic problems, young men and even older men were forced to do hard labour and were treated like an animal, women were molested and raped, harassed and sexually assaulted. They could not write nor express in any form, they were voiceless and powerless without anyone to protect them. The protagonist Zorami carried her pain and shame of being defiled, haunted by her traumatizing past which came back re-visiting her in the form of black snake, “an enormous black snake coming after her. She wants to run away, but is held immobile. The snake crawls forward and catches her” (Jacob, 2015, p. 54) put her on edge of sanity. Malsawmi Jacob has also used many ranges of characters in her novel to address the different hardships and exploitation that had happened during the Rambuai period

suffered by the people of Mizoram, the two sisters- Mawii and Rami were among the unfortunate victims of sexual exploitation and violence by the Indian Army, Mawii and Rami were physically and emotionally damaged, “They took them into their barracks. The Major locked Mawii in his room and ordered his subordinates to take Rami away. The women were released the next morning. The sisters held hands, crying, and somehow inched back home.” (Jacob, 2015, pp.116-117) Rami and Mawii were forcefully taken inside the Indian Army camp to be brutally raped repeatedly that they were permanently damaged and lost their sanity, “The major would keep the younger woman with him and hand over the other to his men. They would release them after some days, and arrest them again whenever they wished. Then the arrests stopped altogether. The two sisters had forgotten to get back to their home. They forget to take bath or to change their clothes. They roamed around day and night, crying and sleeping on the roadside when exhaustion overcame them” (Jacob, 2015, p.117) There were many women who were even openly sexually assaulted by the army and even pregnant woman were not spared “there was a knock on the door. Siami went to answer it. Two army men were standing there with their guns. They began to assault her, removing her clothes with their free hands, the other hands still holding the guns. At her screams her father-in-law came to her help. One of them knocked him down with the butt of a gun” (Jacob, 2015, pp.92-93) Dinmawii, a school teacher was also caught and taken by the army though she was not mentioned again in the following chapters, one could imagine her fate already, considering the behaviour of the Army during the Insurgency. Dinmawii happened to have a clandestine meeting with one of the Mizo underground rebel as they were in a relationship, it was a very common case that the Indian Army would usually target the family or acquaintances of the underground rebels (Mizo National Front). There was no one who could put a stop to the practice of such atrocity and the army kept on repeating their heinous and evil crimes “Kohli found other women victims. He kept on devouring one prey after another, breaking the hearts of many parents” (Jacob, 2015, p.117) Dinpuii the ex-girlfriend of Sanga was also believed to be the victim of the army evil atrocity as a badly mutilated corpse of a woman was found near an army camp after report of her missing. The people were powerless and voiceless against the Goliath Indian Army powered by the Government and their rights as a human being were violated by the army who considered and treated them as merely as an animal “There was no justice for the people against the likes of Subedar Sinhna and Major Kohli. The state was under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act since it was declared a disturbed area. The Indian Army could do as they pleased; no one could stop them as they had the sanction of the highest authority in the country” (Jacob, 2015, p.117) Beauty is a gift but for the Mizo women during the Rambuai it was a curse, who could question the Army? And who could stop and judge the Army? “Some volunteers joined the MNF for their own protection because they expected to be arrested and knew women were treated very badly in prison. As Chalmawii declared, ‘Life in prison was miserable, especially for beautiful women.’ From her experience she said beautiful women are more vulnerable to sexual assault.” (Vanlalthanpuii, 2019, pp.12-13)

In the novel, only Kimi and her family were miraculously safe from the abuse of the Indian army after her father was caught and murdered by the Army. Apart from these women characters many other minor characters addressed many issues and sufferings like forced hard labor, displacement of home, curfew, censorship (printing press were

not allowed to print and write any negative reviews of both the Army and the Insurgents, as they were under constant threat from both sides) and economic problem caused by the blockage of road and grouping of villages in a different location, majority of the population who relied mainly on the cultivation of crops suffered immensely.

Zorami and several other girls were the victim of rape, sexual assault and gender based violence during the Rambuai. The novel particularly focuses on the life of a rape victim under a patriarchal society, Zorami could never open up about her troubling dreams that haunted her and it was slowly devouring her from reality and sanity,

She feels a chill all of a sudden. Outside the morning sun is still shining. But a dark cloud has risen on her inner horizon. She shivers as she recalls her dream- the same dream that has haunted her for many years. Like in an old photograph she sees a girl lying hunched up under a bush. She is down on her side with her back towards her, so curled up that her knees almost touch her forehead. She looks dead. But somehow in the dream, Zorami knows she isn't quite dead (Jacob, 2015, p.17).

Zorami was followed by her painful past which she could not erase on her own, and in her dreams it haunted her and she continued to relive the horrendous memory over and over. "What is most painful in Zorami's ordeal is her being denied the capacity to speak. She internalizes the idea that being sexually violated is humiliating and therefore she must bear her shame in silence" ((Biswas and Khiangte, 2022, p.6). She was unable to open up and share her sufferings with anyone, not a soul, even just to ease a little bit of her pain and her heavy burden "If only she could bring herself to confide in someone about her inner turmoil, her emotional battles! She doesn't even dare to look squarely at them herself, to say nothing of talking about it. Thus, such dark, horrifying spectres keep dancing their war dance in the dim recesses of her being, causing havoc to her soul" (Jacob, 2015, p.38). Zorami was unable to live a normal life, secretly tortured inside by her memory though she was an educated with a decent job she was still seeing herself as just a damaged girl with no worth. Living in a patriarchal society where the position of a woman was placed underneath man and considered secondary to man, she was constricted with the pressure of the dominant men's rule and her trauma. Zorami could not find a conducive environment even at her very own home to grow and heal from her wound; rather she was reminded of her worth being a damaged girl that she should consent to whoever was proposing for her hand "You should be only too happy he is willing to marry you, a damaged girl. He is too good for you" (Jacob, 2015, p.55). Their thirst for bloodshed and cruelty was unquenchable as they could not even pass an innocent village without displaying their habit of doing something beyond cruelty to whomever they wish to, even though they had no connection with the MNF resistance movement anyone was not safe, being safe during those times seems to be a matter of 'luck'. "Biltlang was a tiny village of about fifty houses. A section of the Indian Army landed there under the command of a major. The people there had done nothing offensive, and there was not a single MNF member in the village" (Jacob, 2015, p.105). The young pastor of the village had kindly invited the army and offered them tea and requested not to hurt any member of the village, they shot the innocent and kind pastor and burned his house along with him. The Indian Army also had a habit of targeting the nearest village whenever they were ambushed and attacked by the MNF troops; they

would kill, rape, and burnt down houses. Some would even plead with MNF members not to plan any attack or ambush as they were afraid that they would suffer at the hands of the Army “They often requested them not to ambush Indian army men close to their villages, as the backlash on the nearest village when such an incident occurred was too horrifying” (Jacob, 2015, p.80). All the atrocities of the Indian army could never be justified under any circumstance and the bombing of its own people by the government was horrifying and even hard to believe “India had begun an attack on a part of its own territory. Targeting its own citizens. The Mizo people began to experience genuine terror for the first time in their national history” (Jacob, 2015, p.89).

Apart from the terrors caused on some section of society there were many cases where the whole population and entirety suffered immense problem in economic, medical and even education, health care facilities were extremely poor “The years 1966 and 1967 were the worse period in Mizoram history. Every day, the mortality rate rose due to scarcity, malnutrition and lack of health care facilities. It may be mentioned that access to hospitals and dispensaries was very difficult due to curfews enforced almost every day from dawn to dusk. No doctors could make their tours to visit the sick patients too. Added to this were the activities of the Army such as burning of villages who were suspected of harbouring the MNF volunteers” ((Malsawmliana 2015, p.129). Although mainly the people suffered from the hands of the Indian Army, the Mizo National Front also caused and added painful weight to the burden of the people which Malsawmi Jacob also added in the book “The army men also came around to the houses, demanding food, chickens or eggs. And in between, the Mizo soldiers would do the same. It was a terrifying time for the citizens, living in constant fear of both sides” (Jacob, 2015, p.97). Amidst all the sufferings and pain from the Indian Army, the MNF soldiers terrorizing their own brother and sister was heartbreaking “In the meantime, the MNF volunteers who regarded the hills as their area of operation began to make a forced donation to the extent of one percent of salary from government employees. Those who lived on jhum and orange cultivation are in no way exempted from paying this donation. The villagers on their part unwillingly contributed the donation out of fear. Besides the volunteers collected from the shopkeepers in the form of cigarettes, biscuits, and whatever they find suitable” (Malsawmkima, 2015, p.102). The re-grouping of villages and the curfew imposed caused so much trouble for the people, affecting their livelihood, the majority of the Mizo people who relied on jhum cultivation being located in an entirely new direction have no means of reaching their farm and continuing their work. This has resulted in scarcity of food, with empty belly they lived in fear as they were never safe under the rule of the Indian Army,

Many men suffered assaults from the Indian army, women were raped. Curfews were imposed now and then which causes the people to not be able to look after their cultivation and thus ended in another famine in certain villages. Schools were closed and the children then could not continue their education...people had to leave their beloved homes without any warnings and had to try to acclimatise to a new village, new neighbours and new families. At the same time, people belonging to the grouping centre also suffered a lot too because each family was added with another three to ten families and living condition was hectic and unhygienic. Starvation, for

sure, would not be an alien word to the people and to think that hospitals or health centres, or least medicines were hardly available was such a tragedy” (Zohmingliani & Lalmangaihzuali, 2022, p.76).

4. Conclusion:

The war that had erupted between the MNF and the Indian Army had caused enough damage to the innocents to be numb with pain and horror, all the terrible and horrifying traumatic experiences that the Mizo people had suffered during the Rambuai will always remain like a scar in the hearts of the victims. The sufferings of the people did not stop on the physical pain and mental wound that festered, since the functioning of the Mizo society was disrupted for a long time, it has affected the core of the Mizo people. Malsawmi Jacob pointed out this in the novel; Zorami recalled her colleague Pu Tluanga’s analysis of the Mizo Society, commenting on the forefathers of the Mizo and how much things have changed after the Rambuai,

They were satisfied with their lot. Then the rambuai took place. We were plunged into terror, starvation and extreme poverty that devastated our whole society. Our back was broken, and our nation lost its character. The structure of our society collapsed (Jacob, 2015, p.206).

However all the horrifying sufferings that caused immense trauma to the victims did not stop the Mizo people to move forward, although the spirit of the people was extinguished. Malsawmi Jacob did not end her main character depressed and hopeless, but we see her finding her peace and healing in the end of the novel. Zorami spiritual awakening towards the end has reflected the rise of the Mizo people from the ashes that they were turned into by the inferno of Rambuai atrocities that they had fallen into. A ‘blame game’ could not be played like the tale of ‘Chemtatrawta’, a painful memory may be found but hatred has no place as the peaceful people have returned to peace after twenty years of an awful pause.

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LOVE IN THE TIME OF WAR: MASCULINITY, VIOLENCE, AND ROMANCE IN SHYAM SELVADURAI'S FUNNY BOY

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Abstract:

War is probably the most masculinist enterprise in the history of human civilization. Not only does it promote violence and aggression but also psychologically manipulates the society to breed hyper-masculine men. This paper seeks to read Shyam Selvadurai's Funny Boy from this viewpoint to understand how masculinities are constructed in the time of war. The paper would further interrogate how Arjie's failure to subscribe to the above mentioned tenets of masculinity complicate his life; and how his lack of willingness to roughen himself up becomes a cause of concern for his parents, especially his father, whose heteropatriarchal mindset goads him to believe that a society torn apart by civil war would inevitably ostracise a boy who chooses to be an 'other'.

Keywords: War, Conflict, Masculinity, Feminine, Sexuality

1. Introduction:

War is probably the most masculinist enterprise in the history of human civilisation. Not only does it promote violence and aggression but also psychologically manipulates the society to breed hyper-masculine men. Gilbert Holleufer writes,

...In the past, male violence was seen as inevitable, it was also held up as a value to live by, the expression of an idealized vision of virility, or at the very least, something made tolerable by putting down boundaries that limited its excesses. In traditional societies, the warrior's honour, the honour bestowed on the alpha male who made use of his power, was valued without question. (n.p.)

This inevitability of masculine aggression has been at the heart of social arrangement since time in memorial; and even if one is not directly associated with war, he is supposed to be manly enough to blend in with the social structure. During the time of war and armed conflicts, men -- even today -- are supposed to be combative and hateful towards the outgroups - the enemies. Shyam Selvadurai's Funny Boy, the novel which is analysed in this paper, is not a war novel as such but it subtly underscores various effects that war has on human psychology; and how it also affects the interpersonal and romantic relationships. The novel shows how the failure to subscribe to the above mentioned tenets of masculinity complicate Arjie's (the protagonist) life and how his lack of willingness to roughen himself up becomes a cause of concern for his parents, especially his father, who believe that a society torn apart by civil war would inevitably ostracise a boy who chooses to be an 'other'.

2. Arjie and his Effeminacy:

Funny Boy is a kind of a bildungsroman that starts by telling the story of an adolescent Arjie who grapples to come to terms with his 'otherness'. While all the boys prefer playing cricket at his grandmother's house -- where they go for family lunch on Sundays -- he prefers to remain indoors with girls to play a game which they call Bride-Bride. Not only does Arjie feel comfortable inside the house, but also impresses everyone with his performance as a Bride. The line between manliness and femininity is clearly drawn in the way Selvadurai projects the physical spaces: the outside world belongs to men and the inside world to women. When he is found out dressed as a bride, his father gets terrified and furious; and orders him to play in the sun with the boys. His father's fear can be termed 'effeminophobia' - the fear of the feminine. Sports is supposed to be masculine -- therefore, violent and war-like -- while fine arts are supposed to be feminine. In this context, one is reminded of how Jairaj's father, Amritlal, forces his son to stop dancing in Mahesh Dattani's play *Dance Like a Man*. He claims that he would rather build a cricket pitch. Unlike Arjie, a true man is not supposed to be afraid of the sun and sweat. They are not supposed to be afraid of blood as well. These internalized ideals of masculinity are disseminated through both war and sports. Therefore, Arjie's father believes that playing cricket will go a long way in masculinising Arjie.

The other plan that Arjie's father later comes up with is to send him to The Victoria Institute, a school notorious for its strict disciplinarian Principal, Black Tie. He hopes that this school would make Arjie a 'true' man. Now, the question that needs introspection is what the constituents of a 'true man' are. The atmosphere of the school - which is filled with the air of bigotry and sectarianism-- suggests that boys are taught the values of combativeness which, in turn, gives birth to hatred. The young boys are seen fighting among each other over their ethnic identities. It is almost as if the school prepares the boys for future wars and conflicts. Using Louis Althusser's argument, one may suggest that this school, where Arjie is sent, can be seen as a typical example of an 'Ideological State Apparatus' that functions as an important instrument of spreading the state's ideological belief among young minds.

The traumatic effect of war has been well documented in literature and art. To understand the faulty nature of the Victorian Institute's pedagogy, one may refer to Wilfred Owen's poem where the speaker warns not to teach children with high zeal '(T)he old lie: Dulce et decorum et Pro patria more'. Pete Seegar and Tom Paxton's satirisation of the role that schools play in brainwashing young children in this context is worth remembering as well,

What did you learn in school today,

Dear little boy of mine?

What did you learn in school today,

Dear little boy of mine?

I learned that Washington never told a lie,

I learned that soldiers seldom die,

I learned that everybody's free,

And that's what the teacher said to me,
And that's what I learned in school today,
that's what I learned in school (Partridge, p.662).

3. Love in the Time of War:

Before encountering the world of hatred, Arjie believed that love and marriage were indeed fairy tales. While his 'feminine inclinations' make him funny to most of his relatives, they also bring him close to Radha Aunty who allow him to indulge in the 'feminine' world. Radha Aunty would allow him to try her pottus and lipsticks and also lets him be a part of her secretive romantic journey with Anil, a Sinhala man. Arjie is happy and excited to witness a non-normative romantic relationship take shape. Before meeting Radha Aunty, he imagined Radha to be an actress like Nalini Foneska but Radha's physical appearance did not quite match his expectations. When Radha developed the relationship with Anil, it probably excited him thinking that their journey would turn out to be a filmic one. However, in real world scenario, an intimate friendship between a Tamil and a Sinhalese was an inflammatory proposition because the two ethnic groups are supposed to hate each other. And the controversy that follows leads Arjie to know more about the history of conflict between the two ethnic groups and he 'realize[s] these problems were not a thing of the past' (Selvadurai, 53). But the tales he comes to know does not really make him a hate-monger; and he continues to be a witness of the defiant friendship between Radha and Anil. Though Ammachi¹, upon coming to know about their 'affair', goes to Anil's house to ask him not to indulge with Radha, the latter chooses to defy the sectarian view of life and visits Anil's place herself to apologise for her mother's behaviour. This defiant act of Radha Aunty is an act of love and tolerance in the time of war and hatred. At a symbolic level, it also denotes a woman's subversion of the heteropatriarchal ideas that dictate the social mores. When the society taught individuals to hate others belonging to the outgroups, Radha chooses to embrace and fall in love with an 'enemy'.

However, the reality is much harsher than the world one envisions in dreams. And Arjie's make belief world -- which was built on ideas of love and tolerance -- comes crashing down when Radha chooses to ignore Anil after becoming a victim of the ethnic violence. It so happened that Radha was sent to Jaffna by Ammachi in order to restrain her from meeting Anil. On her journey back to home, the train, in which Radha was travelling, was attacked by the Sinhalese and Radha got injured. This violence changes Radha for once and all. Anil, worried, comes to meet her secretly, but Radha, as it seems to Arjie, appears harsh to him: "As I stood watching her in the moonlight I realized that she had changed. There was a seriousness to her face that was new, a harshness that I had never seen before" (Selvadurai, 55). The riots changes Radha so much that she chooses to cut all ties with Anil and marries Rajen Nagandra, a Tamil man who was originally chosen as Radha's husband by her family. At the end of the chapter, Arjie's travel into the world of Experience becomes almost complete as his belief in marriages being magical occasions is proven wrong.

¹ Radha's mother and Arjie's grandmother. Radha is Nalini's (Arjie's mother) sister.

While this section projects the psychological effect war has on individuals, the next section of the novel is more straightforward in projecting the violent effects of armed conflicts. Though the ethnic conflict changes Radha and corrupts Arjie's world of innocence to a certain extent, he does not stop to believe in the power of love. One may hypothesize that this is perhaps because of his 'alternative', non-masculine inclinations. It has been mentioned earlier that war is a masculinist phenomenon and it perpetuates gendered binaries. Members of the outgroups -- the 'enemies' -- are often effeminated and sodomised in public discourses by men. To understand how the rhetoric of war functions, one may refer to the rhetorical war that was fought between India and Pakistan after the attack on Indian Armed Forces in Pulwama in 2019. What followed -- besides military activity and high-level diplomatic dialogues -- was a frenzied exchange of sexist, misogynist, and phallogocentric rape metaphors couched in evocative nationalistic thought in which the 'sons' of 'Bharat Mata'² -- a feminine figure in need of protection -- took it upon themselves to avenge their 'mother's' humiliation by symbolically, and verbally, raping (or threatening to rape) the enemy. Pakistani citizens were not to be left behind either as it became evident by their jingoistic celebration through phallic metaphors when the Pakistani Air-Force crossed the Line of Control in response to India's surgical strike. The two nations' engagement in this orgiastic, violent, and bacchanalian venture of symbolically raping -- and sometimes sodomising -- the other into femininity is, in essence, an exhibition of the superiority of masculine activity over feminine passivity -- an idea also perpetuated by the governments to effeminate anyone who chooses to deal with the nuances - rather than the ostensible axioms - of patriotism.³ In this age of communicative abundance, social media and cable news channels play an important role in precipitating the jingoism and perpetuating these metaphors which, conversely, have shaped the body politic (and the body politics) of both the nations in recent times. Among the phrases that became

² Bharat Mata is the personification of the Indian nation-state in the form of a Hindu goddess clad in saffron. The concept of the nation-state as a feminine figure was first espoused in a play named Bharat Mata by Kiran Chandra Bannerjee in 1873. In his 1882 novel Ananda Math, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay expropriated the image of the goddess to instil nationalist sentiments in the minds of the Bengali. Abanindranath Tagore painted a picture of Bharat Mata in 1905 as a four armed Hindu goddess wearing saffron-colored robes, holding sheaves of rice, the Vedas, a garland, and a white cloth. The painting along with the hymn 'Vande Mataram' composed by Bankimchandra was widely used during the Swadeshi movement of 1905.

See also,

<https://scroll.in/article/805247/history-lessons-how-bharat-mata-became-the-code-word-for-a-theocratic-hindu-stat>

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharat_Mata_\(Abanindranath\)](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharat_Mata_(Abanindranath))

³ the people who decide to question the actions of the incumbent government at the centre are being labelled anti-nationals and their refusal to participate in the frenzied violence - verbal or otherwise - is being deemed as a sign of their weakness, cowardice, and effeminacy.

trending on various social media platforms, the most popular was #PKMKB⁴, an acronym for Pakistan Ki

Maa Ka Bhosda which can loosely be translated as Pakistan's Mother's vagina. The use of the word Bhosda is noteworthy, as it means a very wide vagina which has been 'opened up' by numerous (and 'illicit') sexual intercourses over time. This shows the binarisation between not only a good country and a bad country, but good, here, implies male or the phallus, which almost always symbolises strength and chastity, while Bhosda or the vagina is relegated to promiscuity, immorality, and impurity. Through this heated exchange of normalised rape metaphors, an attempt was also made to reinforce Bharat Mata's chastity and sanctity while the mother of Pakistan was calumniated. Interestingly, the normalisation of rape threats attained a new dimension this time around, for the memes shared with #PKMKB it is not only the women who are targeted but the toxicity of language promotes rape and sodomisation of men as well. Raping a man is probably construed as a grander achievement as it helps to consolidate and stoke the phallogocentric ego of the hegemonically masculine members of the nation-state. Though it may sound ironic, women often promote violence and celebrate war and hatred in the same way as men. Ammachi is an example of that type. And though Radha seems different at first, she also becomes a victim of the psychological effect of war. Ammachi's vigour and zeal to represent patriarchal ideals are examples of what one may call internalised patriarchy. Patriarchy thrives in binaries and women like Ammachi perpetuate these binaries. However, it seems, that Selvadurai wants to make sure that Arjie, whose sexual orientation is non-binary, does not perpetuate such heteropatriarchal binaries.

Since Arjie's position and beliefs do not totally change even after what happens to Radha, he gets to witness another incendiary relationship: between Nalini, and Daryl Uncle. Young Arjie does not, initially, realise the true nature of the friendship between the two, but Neliya Aunty's uneasiness with the presence of Daryl in Nalini's (Arjie's mother) life makes him interested. Arjie also notices that the presence of Daryl makes his mother happy-- happier than she is with his father. While more 'masculine boys' might have found this friendship inflammatory and offensive (something that his brother Diggy does), Arjie's fascination with the power of love (and marriages) allow him to be more accepting of the presence of an 'outsider'. His mother, much like Radha did while meeting Anil, feels comfortable meeting Daryl in his presence. This acceptance of Arjie by women who indulge in 'illegitimate' and incendiary relationships may be said to stem from Arjie's 'feminine' inclinations. It is almost as if Radha and Nalini consider him to be a female companion, a sakhi, who would understand the repressive nature of heteropatriarchy that tramples the desire and opinion of women.

⁴ As already explained, the word PKMKB stands for 'Pakistan Ki Maa Ka Bhosda' which, loosely translated, means 'Pakistan's Mother's wide vagina'. Interestingly enough, a whole website has been created to spread such hateful and misogynistic memes.

See, <https://pkmkb.com>.

Every chapter in the novel furthers Arjie's journey into the 'world of experience'. While he realises his 'otherness' at the end of the first chapter, he understands that love cannot flourish in a society which is torn apart by bigotry and sectarianism at the end of the second one. When Daryl dies while covering the news of the atrocities carried out by the Sinhalese in a village at the end of the third chapter, this journey becomes much more intense. Nalini tries to pursue the truth after Daryl's death and his mother's passionate search for truth makes him uncomfortable. Though Arjie was initially sceptical of her mother's affection for Daryl and feared about the family's reputation if the matter came to light, he becomes sad when his mother finally decides to stop pursuing the truth and lets go of Daryl. Arjie, in hindsight, realises that he himself had developed a sense

of affection for Daryl, that he had never had for his father. While his father tried to masculinise him, Daryl indulged him by gifting *Little Women*. In a way, Daryl Uncle became closer to his heart by recognising and respecting his otherness.

4. Conclusion:

It is often thought that *Funny Boy* is an autobiographical novel, and Arjie is what Selvadurai used to be. Therefore, it may be argued that while other boys appear to be combative and violent, Arjie's averseness to hypermasculine behaviour is drawn by Selvadurai in keeping with how he visualises the politics and the priorities of a non-binary person. As has been mentioned earlier, Arjie was sent to 'The Victoria Institute' in the hope being masculinised but it is in this school that Arjie meets Sehan Soyza who Arjie falls in love with and who helps him eradicate his confusion about his body and desire. It is ironic that it is in the chapter titled 'Best School of Them All' that Arjie's journey into the world of experience reaches its completion. Arjie thought that he was being sent to the worst kind of school but it turns out to be a place where he discovers his 'true self'. However, just as the other romantic relationships, the relationship between Arjie and Sehan comes to a halt because of the communal conflict as Arjie and his family are forced to leave the country to save themselves from the rampaging Sinhalees.

If one looks at the romantic relationships carefully, one would notice that the relationships that suffer in the face of violence are non-normative and non-conforming in nature. Unlike the world envisioned by Arjie, love and marriage are socio-political institutions and they have very little to do with emotion, especially in the time of war when bigotry, sectarianism, and hatred wreck havoc. The non-normative relationships end in tragedy because they run the risk of threatening the heteropatriarchal rubric of a bigoted and sectarian society.

End Notes:

i Radha's mother and Arjie's grandmother. Radha is Nalini's (Arjie's mother) sister.

ii Bharat Mata is the personification of the Indian nation-state in the form of a Hindu goddess clad in saffron. The concept of the nation-state as a feminine figure was first espoused in a play named *Bharat Mata* by Kiran Chandra Bannerjee in 1873. In his 1882 novel *Ananda Math*, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay expropriated the image of the goddess to instil nationalist sentiments in the minds of the Bengali. Abanindranath Tagore painted a picture of *Bharat Mata* in 1905 as a four armed Hindu goddess

wearing saffron-colored robes, holding sheaves of rice, the Vedas, a garland, and a white cloth. The painting along with the hymn 'Vande Mataram' composed by Bankimchandra was widely used during the Swadeshi movement of 1905.

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iii the people who decide to question the actions of the incumbent government at the centre are being labelled anti-nationals and their refusal to participate in the frenzied violence - verbal or otherwise - is being deemed as a sign of their weakness, cowardice, and effeminacy.

iv As already explained, the word PKMKB stands for 'Pakistan Ki Maa Ka Bhosda' which, loosely translated, means 'Pakistan's Mother's wide vagina'. Interestingly enough, a whole website has been created to spread such hateful and misogynistic memes.

See, <https://pkmkb.com.v>

v The word sakhi refers to female-female bonding. The queer nature of the word has been underscored by Ruth Vanita.

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WOMEN'S WOR(L)DS WAGE WARS

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Abstract

The present paper looks at Afghan women poets' war poems, starting from the last three decades of the twentieth as these were the years when war became a reality in that unfortunate strife stricken land. Beginning with the 're-vision' apparent in such folk forms as "landay's", the paper would analyze how Afghan women have re-presented war. Next, the paper would look at Nadia Anjuman Herawi's poems from this angle. The paper argues basically that in a context like the Afghan realities, war becomes a complex phenomenon in women's writings. War in such contexts is not waged merely out there. Rather, it shapes the very understanding of/by women in multiple ways. The paper would attempt to tease out all these aspects, as mentioned above, through a few "landay's", and some of Herawi's poems. The paper, moreover, compares and contrasts women's representation of war with A Thousand Splendid Suns, the most well-known and brilliant representation of the Afghan war years and what such a conflict does to women, and how such phenomena 'de-sign' women's selves/identities. The paper would also relate these issues to try and understand whether/how Third World women writers' texts wage wars against the co-option by the First World feminism.

Keywords: Afghan women poets, war, co-option, First World feminisms

The women folk tend to remember the abuses to which they have been subjected rather than the endearments. What is left of kisses? Wounds, however, leave scars.

-With an apology to Bertolt Brecht

'Women and war' is a theme that has occupied the central space in literature from times immemorial. We have 'the' Antigone who sees in war victims, her own brothers, a conflict between the state and religion. Similarly, we have the St. Joan figure, as represented by G.B. Shaw or Jean Anouilh, who uses a war to construct the national identity of her country. Who can forget Brecht's Mother Courage? Be it Anna Fierling or Yvette Pottier, Brecht shows us many victimisations of women due to war. Katrina, the apparent sacrificial lamb, is an obvious victim of the deadly combination of war and religion as she tries to save the Protestant Halle from Catholic soldiers. The good Shen Te in The Caucasian Chalk Circle gets into trouble with the aristocracy/class, governor's son's 'abduction/ the state due to an uprising, a so-called revolution, which is actually nothing more than acquisitive war-mongering. Such examples can be extended ad infinitum. These major ones should suffice for the present purpose.

1. The Afghan Realities:

Women in Afghanistan have indeed faced, and consequently suffered hugely due to, the tragic wars that hardened the manacles of patriarchy citing an obsolete version of

religion. The tragic story begins as early as 1979. That year, Soviet troops took control of the very confused and unstable Afghanistan after the Afghan king, Zahir Shah, was overthrown in a bloodless coup circa 1973. The Mujahedeen's fought the Soviet Occupation. Afghanistan thus entered an era of civil war that was to continue for years, nay, decades.

The rise and fall of Najibullah during the Soviet Occupation which ended in 1989, the rise of tribal warlords such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyr made the ground fertile for the rise of the Taliban. Given the regional and ethnic/tribal imbalances in the country, not to forget the religious sectarianism (Sunni/Shia), the Taliban literally harassed the local people as per the archaically interpreted Sharia laws. Women were obviously the worst to suffer.

Given September 11, 2001 and the support offered to Al-Queda and Osama bin Laden by the Taliban, the American troops, along with other countries, ousted the Taliban in 2002. Thus came the interim government of Hamid Karzai, and the so-called 'reconstructing of Afghanistan'. The slowly but surely dithering American commitment and the unmistakable re-grouping of the Taliban, not to forget the ostrich role of the international coalition, and by institutions like the NATO, till the recent U.S. troop withdrawal and the resulting rise of the Taliban yet again is a tragic travesty that has kept the country constantly on the boil.

2. Women Poets' Depiction of the War Realities: The Landay's:

This thumbnail history of the literally bloody years is indeed necessary to understand the women poets' depiction of war. Actually, women in Afghanistan hardly have the freedom to write poetry. In one of the most perceptive article in Poetry magazine (2018) by Eliza Griswold, we understand the Afghan version of the truism, namely; men make wars; women live the consequences.

Most interestingly, Afghan women poets, especially when we read the almost always anonymous 'landay' poems, we realize, suffer a lot, and yet they refuse to be mere victims. They may not be combat fighters. Yet they are spirited in their rejection of a subservient role foisted on them by the dominant patriarchal and zealously religious paradigm. In fact, it would not be too off the trajectory of truth to say that they are the silent but transformative agents of change. Undoubtedly, the conflict zone adds fuel to gender inequalities. Yet they tend to assert their individuality. They are not non-entities under a tent-like burkha.

Griswold and Seamus Murphy, a photographer, 'collaborated on a collection of words and images that would reflect the complex response' of the Afghans in the troublesome era mentioned above. According to Griswold, even girls from far-flung rural places would use dedicated mobile lines to recite their versions of the landay poetry. She states that war, conflict and the resultant displacement has led to using virtual means such as the Internet, Facebook, text messages, and the radio. Groups like Mirman Baheer who meet in Kabul every Saturday afternoon also run a phone hotline for girls from provinces who call in with their own work or to talk to fellow poets. In her article published at <https://static.poetryfoundation.org/o/media/landays.html>, Griswold quotes (amongst many other such pathetic tales as of Muska and Zermina) the case of Meena Muska. She is from Garesh, the rural hometown of Zarmina, a young poet who set

herself alight to save herself from a certain early marriage with an old man, and arranged by her family for the sake of family honour. In the epilogue to her moving article, Griswold writes,

She phoned in regularly to read her fledgling poems. On the phone, she called herself ‘the new Zermina’, yet she had never met the girl who had recently died. Like Zermina, she had been pulled out of school by her father. Like Zermina, poetry was her only link to ongoing education and the wider world. Like Zermina, she seemed to be careening toward a family disaster which they were powerless to stop. This alarmed the members of Mirman Baheer in Kabul, who feared that she too might kill herself. But as with so many young Afghan girls, it was hard to tell, over a patchy phone line, whether she was ...under serious threat...For more than a year, I haven’t spoken to her. Her numbers (she had three mobile phones in her purse, clearly a well-heeled girl) don’t work anymore...” (2018).

A Kabul-based literary group named Mirman Baheer and its cohorts, in far-flung interior parts of the country or in refugee camps, such as the poet and intellectual Sayd Bahodine Majrouh, or a professor of literary theory like Muhammad Ali Rahyab would help these Landay-constructing women (often, outside Kabul, but naturally, they could be illiterate) to express themselves. Griswold narrates extremely difficult, hair-raising encounters full of suspense and unexpected adventure that she faced while collating the ‘Landay’ poems. In the article quoted above, she argues,

Like many long suffering people, Afghans have learned to use laughter as a survival skill. This is especially true for Afghan women. However, finding, collecting, recording, and translating these little poems word by word posed an extraordinary challenge. Gathering them led Seamus and me through the pages of out of print collections, and in secret into refugee camps, private homes, a horse farm, and several weddings. Since landay’s belong to the secret world of Afghan women, many won’t share them in front of one another out of fear they’d later be gossiped about. Some requested their names be changed or that I not record how I came by the landay’s they whispered to me...To find these poems, we started in refugee camps...Since landay’s belong to the rural tradition, and the rural Pashtun heartland is a war zone, travelling to remote villages would endanger women as well as us. In some cases, women asked that I come to their houses dressed in a burqua so as not to be seen by spies or nosy neighbours. Slogging away in the same fashion that we have for the past ten years as journalists, Seamus and I joke that this was investigative poetry (2018).

If Griswold had to assume an incognito avatar, including wearing a burkha during her mission, facilitators like Majrouh or Muhammad Ali Rahyab had to make do with a makeshift sewing/stitching/embroidery class to listen to these women and to enunciate great classics to the budding poetesses, explains Griswold. When making poetry or reading literature is itself a subversive act, the depiction of women suffering the inter-war years possibly cannot be that of mere victimhood. They rebel, they assert themselves, even when minutiae might be the size of such rebellious identity creation/formation.

3. The 'Landay' Poems:

Apparently, in the Afghan culture, traditionally, poetry is hugely admired. For women though, poetry, music are a strict no-no. A woman attempting such an innocent creativity is considered to be a woman of loose morals, and she seems to sully the 'honour' of the family/clan, and can be punished severely, mostly by death, if the alternative of marrying off to someone or the other is not available. Griswold narrates a number of many such scary cases. Instead of repeating such realities, much documented, let us concentrate on the poems themselves.

A 'Landay' apparently is a folk couplet. It is an oral tradition basically. Traditionally sung to the beat of a hand drum (daphali), like all sorts of music, it was banned by the Taliban from 1996 to 2001, and in some places, the ban continues, it seems. Each 'landay' has twenty two syllables; nine in the first and thirteen in the second. They may have rhyme, and the lilt of the couplet is helped by the line final ma/na.

They can be downright risqué, too. One such couplet denounces the very patriarchy by simply stating, "Widows take sweets to a saint's shrine/I'll bring God popcorn and beg him to kill mine". Like any folk form, they are elastic enough to accommodate creatively the contemporary life. Reads a Landay, "How much simpler can love be? /Let's get engaged now. Text me"(2018).

Apparently, love/separation are the typical themes in this genre. Yet look at the dare in the following, "My body belongs to me/ to others its mastery/'. Equally unmistakable is the satirical overtone in the bitter comment, "I dream I am the president. / When I awake, I am the beggar of the world"(2018).

Let us look at how war is re-presented in such poems. The following couplets show the women's acceptance of the cruel war that may deprive them of their loved ones, and yet for the sake of the honour of the motherland, they are ready for the supreme sacrifice.

1. "My love gave his life for our homeland/ I'll sew his shroud with one strand of my hair."
2. This one exhorts the lover in to bravery. It asserts, "Be black with gunpowder or blood-red/but don't come home whole and disgrace my bed."
3. Here is a motherly benediction, "Who will you be but a brave warrior/ you who've drunk the milk of a Pashtun mother?" (2018)

There is this bitter comment on the perils of war, "In Policharki prison, I've nothing of my own/except my heart's heart lives in its walls of stone"(ibid.). The memory of the 'watan'" is presented in a brilliant image in the following lines, " I'm tired of praising exotic flowers. /I miss Sangin's gardens; they were poor, but ours"(ibid.). Sangin, incidentally, is a town in Helmand province of Afghanistan where, like many parts of the country, the major export, unfortunately is opium that beggars the poor, but the trade is convenient to the warlords of all varieties. The anger is scalding in "May God destroy the White House and kill the man/who sent U.S. cruise missiles to burn my homeland" or "Bush, don't be so proud of your armoured car/ My remoti bomb will blow it to bits from afar". Or have a look at the defiance in "The drones have come to the Afghan sky/ The mouths of our rockets will sound in reply"(ibid.). How about the following frontal, direct attack, "May God destroy the Taliban and end their wars./They've made Afghan

women widows and whores.” or “God kill the Taliban’s mothers and girls/If they’re not fighting jihad, why do they oil their curls?”(ibid.) Unmistakable is the mock and derision at Karzai, “Hamid Karzai came to Kabul/to teach our girls to dress in dollars” while sending the sons to Iran to make them ”slaves of heroin” as the Sangin reference above would prove. These quotes from Griswold’s overview of this tradition prove that the so-called illiterate women poets belonging to an oral tradition are extremely aware and critique-ing commentators on the evils of the long-drawn war infested realities. These women suffer, but they do not grovel. They may not be blazing heroines; but despite their ordinariness, they are neither silent spectators nor muted victims. They have their own voice. However invisible they may be, they are enabled, and through such agency, they choose to proudly make the personal/private in to the political. Neither the cruel and binding customs of patriarchy jade them nor do the vicious realities of the motherland defeat them in to acquiescence. They make history, however much realities may try to break them!

4. The Daughter of Poem and Songs:

Nadia Anjuman’s tragic death at the age of twenty-five proves how the notion of ‘honour’, born of a horribly heady mix of patriarchy and religious fanaticism, victimises women. Nadia Anjuman Herawi was talented. Her images are indeed unusual. In her poem entitled “Strands of Steel”, she questions, “which plunderer’s hand ransacked/the pure gold statue of your dreams” (2009). Such an image is possible only from/by a woman poet whose motherland has for generations suffered pillage and looting in the public space which hardens in the private space such as the family certain fixed notions of womanhood, of what a woman should/must do/not do. The wounded bird image is often found in her poetry. In her poem entitled “Songstress”, quoted in Nadia Anjuman Herawi (Nadja Anjoman): a Biography and Lyrics of the Poet of Herat, she writes,

Within its stark white ribcage, how the heart must flutter wildly, O, and
always sing against the pressing darkness: all it knows until at last it feels the
numbing sting of death.

.....

And yet it was not death so much as you who sealed your doom; you could
not help but sing and not be silenced. Here, behold your tomb’s white
alabaster cage: pale, wretched thing!

But you’ll not be imprisoned here, wise wren!

Your words soar free; rise, sing, fly, live again’

In “nazm” after “nazm”, in “ghazal” after “ghazal”, Anjuman talks of this unique imprisonment born out of ‘honour’. Her own family found it shameful that this poet, whose very first anthology made her famous in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, should bother to write at all. She somehow survived the horrible hand of the Taliban by pretending to sew while actually attending secret literature reading sessions. It is believed though that her immediate family felt that her publishing of her poems was a shameful act that sullied their ‘honour’. Yet another problem stared hard at her kind of creativity. Not only did she, and many others of her ilk, not have a room of her own, but she was also bound by traditional femininity which demanded that she marry early, and as

per the decisions of the clan. The female roles, moreover, trapped her. As a wife, mother, daughter-in-law, her poetic preferences would clash with her traditional duties. Apparently, hence, her husband, a university professor, beat her to death.

Her fate shows how freedoms supposedly inborn are denied to women poets from a country that has religious misogyny in the public sphere and in the private space, patriarchy rooted in the traditional mindset. She laments (opp.cit),

I am caged in this corner full of melancholy and sorrow my wings are
closed and I cannot fly I am an Afghan woman and so must wail.

She was denied any agency at all. Her basic identity, being a poet, being able to write, to express her feelings and ideas openly, was denied to her. She exclaims (opp.cit),

I was discarded everywhere, the poetic whisper in my soul died.

Do not search for the meaning of joy in me, all the joy in my heart died.

If you are looking for stars in my eyes, that is a tale that does not exist.

In other words, her poetry in the confessional mode pries open the cage of the personal/private sphere that denies a woman any public space.

5. A Thousand Splendid Suns:

Such tragic fates of the Afghani women were first brought in a big way to the attention of the world by Khaled Hosseini. In his novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), he traces the lives of four generations of women, Nana, Mariam, Laila, Aziza to show the tragic fate of Afghan women. The novel traces roughly a period of forty years, an era when Afghanistan was the land of political coups, terrible civil wars, the Taliban reign, and indifferent interventions by foreign powers interested in their own gains and games. The novel mentions the 1973 bloodless coup which dethroned the King, the 1978 Communist coup, the 1979-1989 Soviet rule, the Mujahedeen opposition, the Taliban-Sharia oppression, and the American occupation, post September 11. The author interweaves in the fictional lives of the four generations real historical events. He even names the political villains openly. Undoubtedly, he does show how these decades impacted the very Afghan existence, but what interests him the most is the women's plight and the ingenious, though innately tragic, solutions to existential problems that the unfortunate women are forced to explore.

The novel unravels brilliantly the unfair treatment of Afghani women. He shows the gender inequality they face in every sphere of life, be it the denial of education, or of an independent livelihood. Non-existent are their choices/preferences/rights as far as marriage is concerned, or even within the family. Almost reduced to being a sexual toy and a child-bearing machine as per the whims and fancies of the lord and master, they do not even have any control over child-rearing. Aziza, for example, is not only hated for being born a daughter. She is the first casualty when family income is under strain. Zalmai, the son of the family, is however a little tyrant in the making, a fate he is saved from due to historical realities and the selfless bravery and sacrifice of Miriam.

Undoubtedly, the novel does show the bravery, the innate strength and resilience of his compatriot women. Surely, Hosseini as a novelist and as a human-being, even as a man, is deeply considerate of his women characters who represent Afghan women. He does

expose the physical and psychological brutalities of patriarchal misogyny through individuals and societal patterns. Yet the novel is too neat and nice, almost like a melodramatic TV serial, with convenient villains, with a rather black-n-white depiction of characters and issues hurtling towards an apparently life-like and yet neat and rather predictable end.

6. (Mis) Representation:

In a way, though not as blatantly, the depiction in the novel is like the famous Mona Lisa of the third world. The iconic photographer, Steve McCurry, could thus build a dazzling career for himself. Tony Northrop, a disciple turned competitor, showed in detail the unmistakable misrepresentation of the Afghan girl in the portrait. It has also been discussed how the portrait, which was on the cover page of the National Geographic, was a photograph that was taken against her explicit denial, how it was 'framed' every which way, and how the subsequent tracing her made her life miserable. Hosseini's novel, too, was born out of his 2003 visit and his 'citing' of the unfortunate burkha clad women with a brood of children following her at the heels.

In other words, like the first world feminism, such depictions are also interested in a certain stereotypical narrative about the unfortunate women. In a way, even the women poets we initially discussed do not escape this fate. To begin with, they are mostly in the confessional and testimonial mode. They are, moreover, mediated by the translation process wherein a power language like English helps in the unmistakable co-option of the unfortunate Afghan realities.

As Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak's analysis has already established, the subalterns of history such as the Afghan women lack any 'voice'. The mediating 'translators', be it McCurry and his portrait, be it Hosseini and his novel, be it the translators who choose which poems to translate, inevitably and unmistakably 'other' the subalterns in multiple ways that subtly suit their purpose(s).

In the process, the subaltern voice gets 'spoken', is re-presented in a way that is suitable to the first world academic feminism, and its process of inclusion which is a mode of containment, of co-option. Amal Amireh and Lisa Majaj have extensively analysed this phenomenon. In a deeply sensitive and intellectually energizing introduction to the book they edited, they show how the discursive, institutional and ideological structures of the first world feminism determine what the third world women/'subjects' could say. The subaltern texts thus get assigned predefined spaces and roles as insider-alibi exposing the third world patriarchal, socio-cultural injustices, oppressions that feed in to the always already existing stereotypes the first world feminism has in its superior feel structured for the suffering sisterhood from the third world Amireh-Mejaj argue that the first world publishing praxis and pedagogic contexts choose texts that can continue their convenient paradigms. Consequently, texts that present the third world women as victims of religion, patriarchy, poverty get chosen.

7. Conclusion:

In a way, this conundrum of representation as mis-re-presentation, as a de-sign-ing is a complex phenomenon as underlying it is the complex issue of how to represent the subalterns of all types without containing/co-opting them as convenient insider-alibi. Well, let me end this analysis with a story by Aesop.

A lion and a man once quarrelled about who is far superior and stronger between them both. They came across a representation of Heracles in the act of tearing the jaws of the Nemean Lion. Boasted the man, “We are so strong that the King of Beasts is wax in our hands!” Laughed the lion, “A man made the statue. Had a lion made it, it would have been quite a different scene!” In brief, it all depends on who tells whom which story!

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**EXPLORING THE PSYCHE OF CHILDREN DURING THE MIZORAM
INSURGENCY IN *WHEN BLACK BIRDS FLY*: TRACING THE TRAUMATIC
IMPACT THROUGH PSYCHOANALYTIC AND NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract:

*This paper will lay stress on the impact of the violent armed conflict between the Mizo National Front (MNF) and the Indian Army during the 1960s in Mizoram, specifically focusing on the pivotal year of 1966 when the Indian Airforce conducted airstrikes in Mizoram. The novel *When Black Birds Fly* will be primarily utilized to trace and emphasize the psychological effects on children by exploring the intricate workings of the psyche and narrative represented by the protagonist from the novel. After the independence of India, Mizoram was just an integrated part of Assam as one of its districts. In the year 1959, Mizoram was hit by a famine called the 'Mautam famine' which tormented the people, when they reached out for help the indifferent response from the government, and the feeling of neglection aroused and intensified the existing spirit of nationalism within the community. Mizo National Famine Front was formed as a relief group in 1960 which was later turned into a political party named Mizo National Front with 'Independence of Mizoram' as their fundamental policy. In 1966, the MNF initiated a raid, targeting multiple security posts throughout the hills marking the twenty-year-long insurgency. However, Lalhlanpuii approaches the portrayal of this dark time not by focusing on the motives of the rebels or the harsh response of the state, but through the perspective of a child. The analysis uses Narrative theory including Leech and Short's speech and thought presentation and Psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud to explore how the conflict profoundly affects the protagonist's thoughts, emotions, and actions.*

Keywords: psychoanalysis, narrative, armed conflict, children's psyche.

1. INTRODUCTION:

When Black Birds Fly is a Mizo historical fiction novel by Hannah Lalhlanpuii, published in February 2022. The story is set in the year 1966 and peeked into the events of the armed conflict between the army of the Mizoram National Front and the Indian Army which enclosed bloodshed and loss of life including the innocent and disruption of their normalcy. The story recollects the horrific scene when the Indian Airforce airstrike parts of Aizawl to suppress the movement in March 1966, which is illustrated from the angle of the little boy who becomes entangled in the upheaval caused by the movement.

The 1960s-1980s in Mizoram witnessed a violent armed conflict between the Mizo National Front (MNF) led by Laldenga and the Indian Army, a period known as the Mizoram insurgency. Amidst the chaos and strife, the innocent civilians including the children bore the brunt of the conflict, endured hardships, and witnessed atrocities that no child should ever witness. This paper delves into the psychological effect it had on the child protagonist in the novel who embodies the innocence and vulnerability of

children during this uprising, aiming to shed light on the conflict's experiences and lasting effects.

Understanding the historical context surrounding this conflict is crucial to grasp the significance of the timeframe under examination. After India gained independence, Mizoram, previously part of Assam, faced challenges as a marginalized region. In 1959, Mizoram was struck by the devastating 'Mautam famine,' characterized by a cyclic increase in bamboo rat populations, resulting in the overconsumption of bamboo forests and scarcity of food crops. The famine worsened the socioeconomic conditions and led to increased reliance on assistance. The government's inadequate response deepened the sense of neglect, fueling nationalist sentiments among the community. In 1960, the Mizo National Famine Front emerged as a relief group and later transformed into a political party known as the Mizo National Front (MNF) in 1961, advocating for Mizoram's independence. In 1966, the MNF launched an attack on security posts, it is when the Indian army air raids different places initiating a tumultuous era of armed conflict, displacement, and suffering that lasted for two decades.

The narrative unfolds over a few days, with an unnamed little boy as the protagonist and narrator. His world revolves around his father, grandfather, and his friends Zuala and Rini, and his immediate community. The novel places its focus on exploring the boy's inner world amidst the larger conflict. The author beautifully portrays the boy's deep love for his peaceful life, emphasizing his independence and contentment in his small world. Even as those around him become immersed in political discussions and actions, the protagonist avoids getting entangled. This intensifies the impact of the abrupt and dramatic changes in his environment. In a matter of days, the situation escalates from demonstrations and armed forces movements to the eruption of gunfire, explosions, bombings, and a widespread fleeing of people from the area. The main source of tension arises from the stark disparity between the boy's formerly carefree life and the daunting decisions imposed upon him as a result of the conflict. The narrator personally observes and endures the terrifying consequences of the war, ranging from witnessing the suffering of injured youngsters to confronting the dread of his father's potential demise in the explosion. Furthermore, the narrator undergoes the anguish of being torn apart from cherished individuals and sets off on a journey away from his home in order to survive. The narrative captures the transformative journey of growing up amidst incredibly challenging circumstances. From having a sheltered life, the boy is suddenly entrusted with the responsibility of caring for his sick and old grandfather while on the run. The collapse of his world reaches its peak when his best friend Zuala tragically passes away in front of him. As a result, the protagonist accompanies Zuala's lifeless body back to his friend's family home.

In her exploration of this violent period, Lalhlanpuii takes a distinct approach to depict the dark atmosphere. Rather than delving into the motivations driving the rebels or the harsh measures implemented by the state, she chooses to narrate the events through the innocent lens of a child. By adopting this perspective, she crafts a nuanced portrayal that expands beyond the political intricacies of the conflict and delves into the emotional and psychological impact it has on individuals. Through the eyes of the child protagonist, readers are invited to experience the profound disruptions and transformations that unfold within the personal sphere, transcending mere historical accounts. This narrative

choice enables Lalhlanpuui to delve into the universal aspects of the human experience, exploring themes of resilience, loss, and the fragility of childhood innocence.

The child's perspective acts as a poignant and relatable vehicle through which readers can witness the shattering of dreams and the profound ramifications of larger conflicts in individual lives. In doing so, her work provides a unique and compelling perspective on this dark period in history, offering a subtle understanding of the complexities and enduring effects of political upheaval on the human psyche. By exploring the complex psyche and narrative of the protagonist, the paper aims to understand the traumatic impact on children during the period of the armed conflict in Mizoram. Analyzing the protagonist's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors aims to illuminate the adverse effects of the insurgency on the psychological well-being and resilience of individuals.

This research draws upon two key theoretical frameworks to analyze and interpret the traumatic impact on children during the Mizoram insurgency: psychoanalysis and narrative technique. Within narrative theory, the analysis specifically focuses on examining the narrative techniques employed in portraying the experiences of children during the insurgency. These frameworks provide valuable insights into the psychological, emotional, and narrative dimensions of trauma, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the experiences portrayed in the novel *When Black Birds Fly*. Psychoanalysis offers a lens through which to explore the profound psychological effects of trauma, emphasizing unconscious processes, defense mechanisms, and the interplay between conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche. By employing a psychoanalytic approach, we can delve into the protagonist's inner world and examine how the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors reflect the deep-seated psychological impact of the insurgency. Psychoanalysis allows us to explore unconscious motivations, the dynamics of repression and defense mechanisms, and the influence of early childhood experiences on the protagonist's psychological responses. On the other hand, narrative theory recognizes the significance of storytelling and narrative construction in making sense of traumatic experiences. This framework highlights how individuals create narratives and employ specific narrative techniques to make meaning from their traumatic events and integrate these experiences into their identities. By utilizing narrative theory, including the analysis of narrative techniques, we can explore the protagonist's narration in the novel and examine the ways in which the storytelling and narrative techniques serve as coping mechanisms and means of reconstructing the fragmented sense of self. The selection of these two frameworks, psychoanalysis and narrative theory, is justified by their ability to provide nuanced insights into the psychological and narrative dimensions of trauma. Psychoanalysis helps us understand the underlying psychological processes and defenses at play, while narrative theory, with a focus on narrative techniques, sheds light on the complex process of meaning-making, identity reconstruction, and the specific storytelling strategies employed in the context of traumatic events. It is important to acknowledge that no single theory can fully capture the multifaceted nature of trauma. Alternative perspectives, such as sociocultural or postcolonial theories, could also offer valuable insights. However, due to the scope of this research, it is chosen to focus primarily on psychoanalysis and narrative theory as they align most closely with the research

objectives. In the following section, we will outline the methodology employed to analyze the traumatic impact on children during the Mizoram insurgency, integrating

the theoretical frameworks of psychoanalysis and narrative theory. By combining these theories with the research approach, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of children affected by the conflict and the implications for psychological well-being and resilience.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK:

2.1 Psychoanalysis:

Psychoanalysis, developed by Sigmund Freud and expanded upon by subsequent theorists, offers a rich theoretical framework for understanding the complexities of the human mind and behavior (Mambrol, 2017). At its core, psychoanalysis explores the unconscious processes, early childhood experiences, and the interplay of conscious and unconscious motivations. Freud's theories provide valuable insights into the psychological dimensions of trauma (Bohleber, 2007). By applying a psychoanalytic approach, we can delve into the depths of the protagonist's psyche, exploring the unconscious mechanisms, defence strategies, and the lasting impacts of early experiences. This framework allows us to analyse how trauma is repressed, processed, and manifests in the protagonist's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

2.2 Narrative Theory:

Narrative theory, within the field of literature, emphasizes the significance of storytelling and narrative construction in shaping individual and collective experiences. This framework highlights how individuals create narratives and employ specific narrative techniques, such as speech and thought presentation, to make meaning from their traumatic events and integrate these experiences into their identity. In the context of trauma, narrative theory provides a valuable lens through which we can examine the protagonist's attempts to construct a coherent narrative from fragmented memories, reconstruct the sense of self, and negotiate complex emotions. By employing a narrative approach and analysing the protagonist's storytelling strategies, and narrative devices, including speech and thought presentation, we gain insights into their approach to meaning-making and the formation of their identity. This framework enables us to explore how the protagonist weaves the traumatic experiences into a coherent narrative, highlighting the transformative power of storytelling and the role of narrative techniques in their approach to trauma and identity formation.

3. SYMBOLISM AND IMAGERY:

3.1 Black Birds:

In chapter four, the writer, Lalhlanpuii, depicts the protagonist's restless state as he is unable to sleep amidst the chaotic sounds of explosions and gunfire outside. Anticipating the arrival of a new day, he patiently waits for the sun to rise and eagerly looks forward to the sight of blackbirds playfully moving against the backdrop of the purple sky outside his window.

I patiently wait for the sun to come up and the birds to play near my window. I open my window to see the tiny blackbirds freely moving about against the purple sky (Lalhlanpuii 2022, p.59).

Later, toward the end of chapter five, the narrative takes a somber turn. The protagonist and others witness the appearance of small black objects in the sky, which they mistakenly associate with the harmless blackbirds that visit the protagonist's window in the morning. The protagonist assumes no threat from these objects.

As all heads turn towards that direction, we see it. One small black object appears in the sky, then another. They look like the blackbirds that come to my window in the morning. They seem pretty harmless- circling in peaceful motion on the endless blue canvas (p.76).

The protagonist's observation of the Indian Airforce plane as black birds flying on the day of the airstrike holds significant symbolism. It represents the convergence of innocence and destruction, as the peaceful image of birds is juxtaposed with the violence and chaos of the conflict. This imagery captures the sudden and jarring intrusion of war into the protagonist's world, forever altering his perception of safety and tranquility. The recurring mention of blackbirds in the story adds depth to the symbolism. The chirping of blackbirds in the morning, which used to wake up the protagonist, symbolizes the familiar and comforting routine of daily life before the insurgency. However, as the conflict intensifies, the sounds of explosions replace the peaceful chirping, shattering the tranquility and causing the protagonist distress. The protagonist's longing for the sun to rise and the birds to play near their window reflects a desire for normalcy and a return to a time of innocence and joy. The tiny blackbirds moving freely against the purple sky symbolize a longing for freedom and the restoration of a sense of safety and happiness. Overall, the repeated presence of black birds in the narrative serves as a powerful metaphor for the traumatic impact. It highlights the loss of innocence, the disruption of daily life, and the yearning for peace and stability. This connection between the title and the story reinforces the thematic exploration of the protagonist's experiences and underscores the lasting impact of armed conflict on children's lives.

3.2 Collecting used Cartridges:

In the novel, Lalhlanpuii portrays poignant details and evocative imagery, the author reveals how violence permeates every aspect of children's lives in the midst of the Mizoram insurgency.

Zuala and I have our own collection of used cartridges, which we keep in an empty ghee can (Lalhlanpuii 2022, p.31).

Children's collectibles consisting of used cartridges symbolize the pervasive presence of violence. These items, which should be associated with innocence and playfulness, instead serve as grim reminders of the conflict that surrounds them. The author emphasizes the stark contrast between traditional childhood mementos and the harsh reality of living in a war-torn environment.

The 'spot' is a small mound on McDonald Hill, just a stone's away from our school. It is a trench dug-out that the Indian Army uses to shoot the rebels.(p.31).

Adventures for the protagonist and other children involve visits to army camps, where they are exposed to the machinery of war. This highlights the abnormality of their experiences and the disruption of a carefree childhood. Schools, once places of

education and growth, have been transformed into food collection centers for the Mizo National Front (MNF), further accentuating the upheaval and displacement faced by the children.

3.3 Dreams:

In the closing moments of the chapter, the protagonist is left shattered after witnessing his best friend's demise before his very eyes. Memories of haunting nightmares resurface, depicting him standing alone amidst a desolate and empty landscape, amplifying his overwhelming sense of isolation and hopelessness.

When I have nightmares, I often find myself stranded in a barren land with not even a single human being in sight. Maybe that's the worst thing that can happen to me- being left alone in nothingness (Lalhlantpuii 2022, p.116).

As he finds himself helplessly beside his friend's deathbed, a chilling realization sets in—the nightmares that once tormented his sleep have now become an unsettling reality.

I realize that my deepest fear has somehow turned into reality. I feel as if I am standing alone in this wide barren wilderness with everything dead around me. With Zuala gone, the life I once knew is somehow dead too (p.117).

The life he once cherished feels irretrievably lost, leaving him with an indescribable heaviness akin to that of fathers and grandfathers who have endured profound loss. Through these evocative words, the protagonist skillfully captures the depths of his despair and the transformation that has consumed his existence. In the story the boy undergoes a profound transformation, aging before his time as he confronts his worst nightmares.

I no longer feel like a boy who loves life. I feel old, like father and Grandfather, and many old people who have lost someone (p.118).

This metamorphosis reflects the loss of innocence and the psychological toll of living in an environment defined by violence and fear.

According to Freud, dreams can serve as a manifestation of suppressed desires, fears, and unresolved conflicts from the unconscious mind. The passage depicts the protagonist experiencing recurring nightmares and how these dreams reflect their deepest fears and anxieties. Freud believed that dreams are symbolic in nature, using symbols and imagery to disguise and express unconscious desires and emotions. In the passage, the barren land and the absence of human beings symbolize the protagonist's overwhelming sense of loneliness and isolation. This can be seen as a representation of the protagonist's fear of being left alone and abandoned. The nightmares serve as a conduit for the protagonist's deepest anxieties, and his experiences parallel Freud's belief in the symbolic nature of dreams and their connection to unconscious conflicts.

3.4 Vivid Imagery:

There is a gust of wind every now and then. A few miles before the town, the wind carries ashes, which fall softly on us. White-grey pieces of ash reminding us of what could be waiting for us. I remember how I used to dream about seeing snowfall. I put

out my palm and a weightless lump of ash falls on it. it is not snow but it feels cold (Lalhlanpuii 2022, p.98).

The protagonist's recollection of dreaming about snow falling adds depth to the narrative. The contrast between the protagonist's dreams and the reality of falling ashes further emphasizes the loss of innocence and the transformation of hopeful aspirations into

harsh realities. This juxtaposition highlights the profound impact of the war on the protagonist's perspective and underscores the shattered dreams and disrupted sense of normalcy caused by the conflict. The thick covering of grey represents not only the physical aftermath of the burnt town but also the psychological and emotional weight experienced by the protagonist. It conveys a sense of gloom, despair, and uncertainty, reflecting the protagonist's internal state and the enduring effects of the war.

Getting tired of seeing everything in just black and grey, I glower at the sky with heavy eyes. the sky itself is filled with thick covering of grey clouds that stretch as far as I can see. is it the leftover smoke of the burnt town or a sign of coming rain? (p.99)

In the context of psychoanalysis, the desire for Color which is when the protagonist's remark about being tired of seeing everything in black and grey suggests a yearning for vibrancy and a return to a more colorful and hopeful world. The falling ashes symbolize the remnants of destruction and the loss of what was once familiar, evoking a sense of foreboding and uncertainty. This symbol can be understood as a manifestation of the protagonist's unconscious longing for emotional restoration, as Freud's pleasure principle suggests a drive for gratification and a return to a more vibrant and hopeful world. The heavy gaze and glowering of the sky reflect the psychological burden and fatigue experienced by the protagonist.

3.5 Home:

From a narrative theory perspective, the passage contributes to character development and the overall narrative arc.

I am happy to see Grandfather sitting in his usual seat by the window, smoking a pipe. he has barely spoken since our return but I can tell from the look on his face that he is content to be back home after everything that had happened (Lalhlanpuii 2022, pp.103-104).

It presents a turning point in the protagonist's understanding of home and the significance of the people within it. The shift from fear and vulnerability to contentment and a sense of safety creates an emotional journey for the character and adds depth to their experiences.

This is why it's called Home, because no matter how badly we had been shattered there is always something a sound or a sight to make you feel safe. this is what home feels like, I smile (pp.103-104).

Furthermore, the passage explores the theme of resilience and the ability of individuals and families to find solace and strength in the face of adversity.

I turn and look at our little house through the open door, it looks a lot smaller than it already did. without saying a word, I walk inside the house, not knowing what to do (p.83).

Freud's concept of mourning and loss is applicable here. When the protagonist looks at their small house and realizes its insignificance without the people living in it, it reflects a sense of loss and vulnerability. This realization can be seen as the beginning of the mourning process, as the protagonist acknowledges the absence of their loved ones and the potential danger they face.

As I pace anxiously between the wooden dining table and the window, I realize home, without the people living in it, is nothing more than just a wooden structure, home is Father, Grandfather and me (p.83).

It signifies a disruption in their sense of security and attachment. The helpless last glimpse of the house can be analyzed as an expression of the defense mechanism known as denial. The protagonist might temporarily deny the reality of the imminent danger, finding it difficult to accept and comprehend the gravity of the situation. Denial acts as a protective mechanism, allowing the individual to shield themselves from the full weight of their emotions and the potential trauma they might experience. Overall, the passage aligns with Freudian concepts of mourning, defense mechanisms, and coping strategies. It demonstrates the protagonist's initial stages of mourning, their engagement with defense mechanisms such as displacement and denial, and their emotional response to distressing circumstances. Analyzing the passage through a Freudian lens provides insights into the protagonist's psychological journey and the ways in which they navigate their internal world in response to external threats and losses.

4. Narrative Analysis through Speech and Thought Presentation:

When *Black Birds Fly* is a novel that employs a first-person narrative, characterised by the perspective of a central character who actively participates in the story. This narrative style places emphasis on the narrator's experiences, thoughts, and emotions, shaping the overall storytelling. The utilisation of speech and thought presentation in literature holds significant potential as a powerful technique, enabling authors to unveil character traits, emotions, and motivations through the direct expression of their characters' words and thoughts. This literary device establishes a profound connection between the reader and the characters by granting insights into their innermost rumination and sentiments. Such an approach fosters a deeper understanding and empathy toward the characters, enriching the reader's engagement with the narrative.

I hope you're safe, wherever you are' I say aloud to the darkness. And suddenly I feel a sharp cut of loneliness and my eyes start to water (Lalhlantui, 2022, p.90).

The protagonist narrates this passage within the context of an Indian army airstrike on their town, forcing them to flee for survival. In the midst of the chaos, they leave behind his father who was in a school building slightly further away from their home. As the protagonist and his grandfather escape, the thoughts of his father weigh heavily on his mind, particularly his anxious hope for the father's safety. The author employs a combination of direct speech and direct thought to convey the protagonist's inner turmoil. Through the use of single inverted commas and the phrase "I say," the

protagonist's own words are highlighted, while direct thoughts express the desire to cry out loud but he restraint due to the presence of others. "I feel like bursting into tears but somehow I hold myself in check" (p.90).

The passage begins with the protagonist addressing the darkness, expressing his concern for the safety of someone who is elsewhere. This direct speech reveals his underlying worries and empathy, emphasizing the connection to the unseen individual and setting the tone for the ensuing events. As the protagonist sits among a group of unfamiliar people, the author employs direct thought presentation to delve into his emotional turmoil. The sudden surge of loneliness and the welling up of tears exemplify the protagonist's intense emotional response to the precarious situation where he finds himself in. This internal struggle reflects the traumatic impact of the airstrike and his sense of uncertainty regarding his loved ones' well-being. The protagonist's internal conflict is further emphasized through his struggle to hold back tears in the presence of others. This conflict between the strong urge to express their emotions and the need to maintain composure underscores the depth of the vulnerability and the challenging circumstances he faces. It highlights the theme of resilience and the strength required to navigate such distressing situations. At that moment, a woman approached and asked if he was okay. It was in that instance that he became aware of the tears streaming down his face, uncertain of how long they had been flowing. The subsequent interaction with the concerned woman provides an external perspective on the protagonist's emotional state. Her inquiry, "Are you all right, son?" serves as a catalyst for the protagonist's realization that tears have been streaming down their face, demonstrating the magnitude of the emotional release. This moment not only showcases the impact of the traumatic event but also reveals the support and care offered by a stranger during a time of distress.

The protagonist's response "... of course, I lie. 'I'm just really tired. That's all.'" (p.90) exemplifies the use of short speech presentations to convey their attempt to conceal their true feelings. This dialogue illustrates their resilience and the coping mechanism of downplaying their emotional vulnerability. It also reflects the strain of carrying the weight of their emotions while trying to navigate an unfamiliar and unpredictable environment.

5. CONCLUSION:

The novel *When Black Birds Fly* by Hannah Lalhlanpuui offers a unique and compelling perspective on the traumatic impact of the armed conflict in Mizoram during the 1960s. Through a combination of psychoanalytic exploration and narrative theory, the research aims to understand the psychological effects on children during the Mizoram insurgency and analyze the protagonist's experiences, thoughts, and emotions.

The novel's adept utilisation of speech and thought presentation allows readers to connect intimately with the protagonist, gaining insight into his inner world and the complex emotions they navigate. By employing this technique, the author effectively portrays the protagonist's resilience, struggle to conceal true feelings, and the strain of carrying the weight of their emotions while surrounded by an unfamiliar and unpredictable environment.

Additionally, the symbolism and vivid imagery in the novel contribute to the portrayal of the protagonist's experiences and the overarching themes. The presence of blackbirds symbolises the convergence of innocence and destruction, while the collection of used cartridges represents the pervasiveness of violence in their lives. Through dreams and nightmares, the protagonist's deepest fears and anxieties find expression, reflecting the profound psychological impact of the conflict. The use of powerful imagery, such as falling ashes and the grey sky, further emphasises the loss, destruction, and emotional burden experienced by the protagonist.

By blending the insights from the psychoanalytic lens and narrative theory, this research uncovers the profound psychological effects on the protagonist, including the loss of innocence, isolation, and premature transformation. It highlights the protagonist's storytelling as a coping mechanism and a way to reconstruct the fragmented sense of self. The findings underscore the enduring psychological impact of armed conflict on children and emphasize the importance of understanding their individual experiences and well-being.

Overall, the narrative analysis through speech and thought presentation in *When Black Birds Fly* enhances readers' understanding of the protagonist's journey, emotions, and motivations. This literary technique, combined with symbolism, imagery, and psychological exploration, deepens the reader's connection to the story and fosters empathy toward the characters. The research contributes to a broader comprehension of the complexities and long-lasting effects of political upheaval on individuals, particularly children who bear the brunt of such circumstances.

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**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHILDREN IN THE BIAFRAN WAR?: A
CRITICAL STUDY OF CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *HALF OF A
YELLOW SUN***

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Abstract:

*War affects humanity in every possible way, but the damage it does to children is beyond any repair. The power conflict between the two nations can severely disrupt the basic supply of food, water, shelter, health services, and education to the children and their families. The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is an integral work of fiction that portrayed the horrors of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War in the late 1960s. The proposed paper aims to critically understand how the Ngozi portrayed children in the Biafran war. It attempts to comprehend the influence that the war had on children's bodies and minds. The novel presents several young characters like Olenna's adopted daughter Baby, a servant boy Ugwu, Ugwu's sister Angelika, and a young girl Adanna who dies due to kwashiorkor. Each character represents the horror of the war through their respective experiences. The study aims to critically analyse each character's journey amid the Biafran war.*

Keywords: Trauma, Starvation, Horror, Childhood, and Conflict

The Nigerian Civil War (6 July 1967–15 January 1970), also known as the Biafran War, became the turning point in the history of postcolonial Nigeria. For the majority of Nigeria's population, the civil war with the state of Biafra is usually considered a regrettable event that brutally destroyed the economic stability of the whole nation. The war that happened between the two states—Nigeria and Biafra, led to the demise of millions due to the lack of food supply and necessities.

Nigeria became an independent state in 1960; similar to Indian independence, the new nation combined diverse linguistic groups under the umbrella term "Nigerian". The tension resulting from creating an independent state that ignored the significant Igbo population and other ethnic groups like Muslims was one of the primary reasons why the people from east Africa started to demand their nation, called Biafra. Along with that, the demand for the new nation was also the result of ethnic cleansing that was happening around Nigeria in the early 1960s. This forced people in different parts of Nigeria to move back to their native land in the east in search of a safe home. The continuous violence and mass killing didn't stop until the people from the east started demanding their own land. The state of Biafra officially called the 'Republic of Biafra' was the outcome of the violence that was happening in Nigeria. The state was established on May 30, 1967, under the leadership of Odumegwu Ojukwu. Biafra remained independent from the state of Nigeria until 1970 when the territory was seized by the Nigerian army.

In 1967, when the civil war broke out between the Nigerian government and the newly established state of Biafra, it nearly cost three million lives belonging to the diverse ethnic groups of Eastern Nigeria. In one of the biggest humanitarian blunders that lasted for almost 30 months, the children were the ones that suffered the most. When the sovereign nation of Nigeria imposed the blockade of food and other essential living necessities on Biafra, thousands of children died due to starvation and malnutrition. The war killed approximately six thousand children because of starvation. It's crucial to note that the issue of malnutrition is still very much relevant in Nigeria.

This horrific event in the history of Nigeria became the backdrop for several literary texts like *Never Again* by Flora Nwapa, *Sunset at Dawn* by Chukwuemeka Ike, *Sunset in Biafra* by Elechi Amadi, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War* by Alexander Madiebo, *The Man Died* by Wole Soyinka, etc. All these texts represented the terrible sight of the war, which influenced millions of people. It is crucial to note that the Biafra and Nigeria conflict was indeed a political and historical reality where the majority suffered because of the actions taken by the authorities. The historical narratives of the event recount the struggle of many people but still don't cover the pain of the people who were on the margins. The literature on the Biafra war can be seen as filling in the blanks that are left by the bare facts of the event. It gives space to the people who were silenced in the conflict. The fiction of war became the mirror of reality and allowed scholars to understand the impact of violence on memories and the trauma that people suffered.

Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one such literary work that sheds light on the horrors of the Biafran war. The novel by Adichie put the history of the Biafra War on the global stage when it won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and the Orange Prize for Fiction. The work was the result of extensive research done by Adichie. The book depicts the harsh reality faced by the people from the Igbo community during these war years. She put much emphasis on the experiences of middle-class people with lower-class populations to depict the atrocious savagery that happened to the common people during the war. It is interesting to note that Adichie's body of work emphasizes the current Nigerian culture and how the existing culture was influenced by the west. In her novels *Purple Hibiscus* in 2003, *Half of a Yellow Sun* in 2006, and *Americanah* in 2013, she deliberately creates specific political backgrounds for her characters (Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus* and Ifemelu in *Half of a Yellow Sun*) that influence their decisions and choices.

The select novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, narrates the story of three characters that represent the three different classes of the Igbo community. The novel is divided into four parts, the first and third parts are set in the early 1960s and depict life before the war, while the second and fourth parts are set during the war years. Through this division, Adichie compared the lives of individuals before and after the war.

The novel has three principal characters, and most of the story is written from their perspectives. The first character is named Ugwu, a village boy who represents the lower class; Olanna is the second character, which depicts the middle class; and Richard Churchill, who distinguishes himself as Biafran, shows the elites of Biafra. Through these characters' points of view, the author presented the horrifying image of the Biafran war. These characters represented the diverse society of the Igbo community

and allowed readers to get a sense of the destruction (both mental and physical) caused by the war. In the paper, we shall discuss how the war influenced people of various ethnic groups, including the Igbo community. Subsequently, we'll elaborate on how the Biafran war deeply affected children's lives. In the article, we shall discuss four separate characters: Baby or Chiamaka, Olanna and Odenigbo's adopted daughter, Baby's friend Adanna, who dies due to kwashiorkor, Odenigbo's houseboy Ugwu, and at last her sister Angelika.

Dan Ben Amos, speaking of the trauma memory, said the mundane, ordinary archives of everyday life are equally significant when it comes to trauma (p.297). All of these characters that Adichie portrayed are mirror images of those ordinary children from Biafra who were starved to death during the war. She emphasized the sufferings that are so ordinary yet horrific in reality, which makes the novel a crucial piece of Biafran war literature.

The novel begins from the point of view of Ugwu, a thirteen-year-old Igbo boy. At the beginning of the novel, we saw that he moved to Odenigbo's house as a house servant in Nsukka. As a young boy, he witnessed several incidents, including Odenigbo's infidelity, which became the major turning point in both Olanna's and Odenigbo's lives. He was an integral member of Odenigbo's household until the war broke out. The turning event in Ugwu's life happened when the war became an atrocious reality for everyone. In his master's home, he listened to all those ideological debates regarding the idea of a new nation that comes with new hope. He becomes a marginal observer of the academic community in his master's home. Though all of the discussions became a vain thread of arguments when the war began.

The trope of representing a young child figure as a young nation has been used generally in many postcolonial novels, like *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, *Graceland* by Chris Abani, etc. In his article "Composite Consciousness and Memories of War in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*," critic Christopher E.W. Owen argued that the character of Ugwu's evolution from a houseboy to a war soldier and then to a writer represents the traumatic memory of the nation at large. Michael Donnelly also elaborated that Ugwu's development as a character was representative of Biafra as a nation. He said that Adichie made "Ugwu's decidedly uneven development as a character representative of Biafra's national identity, thus making Biafran sovereignty legible but not unimpeachable" (p.247).

The character of Ugwu allowed the readers to understand how the people who belonged to the margins of Nigerian society suffered the most. His role as a house servant made him a reliable voice who witnessed the war firsthand. In the novel, we see that the character of a thirteen-year-old boy goes through an "epistemological evolution" (Owen, p.16): as a houseboy who was naive and innocent, then as a student who had a curiosity towards learning about the world that he had never witnessed, then as a teacher in a refugee camp where he witnessed the dark times, and at last as a child soldier.

It is fascinating to note that Adichie portrayed the figure of a child soldier in two different ways: one depicts helplessness and weakness, and the other image delineates a fierce youth with violent tendencies. Egodi Uchendu described child soldiers as both victims and perpetrators of violence at the same time (p.393). In the novel, we see

Ugwu being taken to the army against his will, and later in the book, we see that the war brutally destroyed his innocence and naive perspective. He was indeed a victim of war but eventually became a savage by raping a girl in the bar. The trauma that he suffered after that incident stayed with him, and later he wrote an autobiography titled 'The World Was Silent When We Died' to share his experiences fighting as a child soldier. His encounter with multiple characters belonging to the elite, as well as the bourgeoisie, allowed him to eventually become an author in the novel.

Ugwu was almost a tabula rasa when the novel started; he watched the immediate results of postcolonial modernity in the form of a new nation. Unlike most of the houseboys, he was more involved in political discussions due to his master's visitors. He also realizes the fact he has more privileges than the rest, as Odenigbo enrolls him in the primary school. His journey reached a final stage when the war began, and he turned into a 'child of war' who was not less than an experienced man. In the van, when he was forcefully conscripted into the war, he was "startled to see a boy sitting there, humming a song, and drinking from an old beer bottle. Perhaps he was a stunted man and not a boy" (p.357).

During the war, he made an acquaintance with High-Tech, another child soldier, but unlike Ugwu, he was exposed to the brutal reality of the army's food and their bare resources. His authorial voice begins to emerge during his time as a soldier, along with an urge to note down his day-to-day activities. The desire to preserve his everyday memory through the action of writing a diary gives him authenticity in the novel.

The fierce and violent side of child soldiers has also been discovered through the character of Ugwu. In the novel, we see that Ugwu's ability to denote Ogbunigwe led him to his reputation as a "target destroyer". The violence against women and the problematic masculinity of the military have been graphically depicted in the scene when the soldiers, including Ugwu, raped a bar girl, an action he regretted immediately after doing it. In the novel, we see that Ugwu never recovered from the trauma.

His mind wandered often. He did not need the echo of pain on his side and in his buttocks and on his back to remember his ogbunigwe exploding, High-Tech's laughter, or the dead hate in the eyes of the girl (p.397).

It is crucial to note that the war was even more brutal for teenage girls than boys. For instance, Ugwu's sister Anulika, who was a cheerful young girl, drastically lost her charm when she was gang raped during the Biafra war. When there is a conflict like war, it is the women who suffer the most. Through this minor character in the novel, Adiche delineated the brutality that was committed against the female children. Anulika's character represents those young girls who were denied education and were helpless during the war. They lacked the courage to speak against the traditions and customs that were put ahead of them. Their bodies were depicted as the symbols of the community's culture, continuity, and growth.

The action of rape is often considered the destroyer of family honour and moral values in the culture. It is not just the invasion of innermost intimacy; it gets to the families. Diken and Lausten explained that the main target of committing rape is to destroy family ties and group solidarity (p.111). These ideas depict the misogynist structures of society that see women's sexuality as an object that needs to be dehumanised. During

the war, when there is no law and order, it is the women's bodies that become a symbol of victory. The Nigerian military was referred to as "vandals", as they were not after winning the war but looting and raping young girls. As Adichie narrates: "And they choose the best houses and force people's wives and daughters to spread their legs and cook for them" (285). The violence represented in the description of Anulika's rape presented the harsh realities faced by the girls in the war:

'They forced themselves on her—five of them.' Nnesinachi sat down and placed the baby on her lap. Ugwu stared at the distant sky. "Where did it happen?' 'It has been more than a year'. 'I asked where?' "Oh, Nnesinachi's voice quavered, 'near the stream.' "Outside?" "Yes." Ugwu bent down and picked up a stone. They said the first one that climbed on top of her bit him on the arm and drew blood. They nearly beat her to death. One of her eyes has refused to open well since (p.421).

Another aspect that needs to be looked at is how Adichie depicted the sufferings of children through the eyes of their mothers. In the novel, we see that it's both the women as mothers and the children who suffer the most due to the war. When the war broke out in Nigeria, the shortage of food supply was the first blow to the people of Biafra. As Adichie narrates through the eyes of Olanna:

A mother was sitting on the floor with two children lying next to her... They were naked; the taut globes that were their bellies would not fit in a shirt anyway. Their buttocks and chests were collapsed into folds of rumped skin (p.349).

The pictures of war-affected children with bloated stomachs on the covers of several political magazines and news channels depicted the alarming consequences of war. The starvation and malnutrition among the young children were a horrific sight that was witnessed by this young nation of Biafra. Starvation became a grave danger during the war when Biafra started losing its territory to Nigeria. The blockage of food supplies and necessities led to the unimaginable hardships faced by children. The character Richard, who intends to write a book titled 'The world was silent when we died,' notes that the blockage of the food supply was a deadly weapon used by the Nigerian government against Biafra. This brought fame as it put the sufferings of Biafran citizens on the global stage and "made Biafra last as long as it did".

Adichie didn't shy away from depicting the brutal reality of war and how it affected the children's lives. One of the powerful images that Adichie portrayed to show the impact of starvation in the novel is through the character of Adanna, a minor character who dies due to a disease called kwashiorkor that happens due to a lack of nutrients and minerals. Her death in the novel highlights the tragedy of several children. Adichie presented Adanna as a lively and curious kid full of hope. The child's innocence has been depicted in one of the scenes where she plays with Baby Olanna's daughter. Despite the constant threats and lack of several basic resources, both the children became friends and started playing together with the limited resources they had.

Another character, Baby or Chiamaka, helps us understand the impact of war on children. She was the biological child of Odenigbo and Amala. She was conceived from the affair that they had in the absence of Olanna. When Amala rejected her, Olanna

adopted the child. Adichie delineated the character of the baby as a symbol of hope and possibilities in a world that had been destroyed by war. Despite living in a refugee camp, she finds joy within the tiny space that they had. Be it a dog named Bingo or her friend

Adanna, she found something to get attached to. She remained curious and eager to discover and learn, and her determination in the face of adversity depicted hope in the darkest of times.

Throughout the novel, we see that Adichie explores the psychological toll of war on her characters. In her novel, she captures the horrors of the war and its severe consequences. Her young characters in the novel struggle with the emotions of isolation and despair. She portrayed these emotions with the utmost empathy and conveyed the complexities of war to the readers. Her depiction of children in the Biafran War is extremely powerful and vulnerable at the same time. The graphic depiction of humans starving and the malnutrition of young children captures the physical and emotional trauma of the characters in the novel. The novel offers a nuanced depiction of a significant event in African history.

In the narrative structure of the novel, we see how the innocents suffer the most in this deadly conflict of interests. The damage that the war did to their emotional as well as their physical selves is beyond repair. However, we also see that Adiche portrayed a sense of hope through these characters alone. Ugwu's redemption was found in his autobiography, while Baby remained a hopeful child till the end of the novel. Adichie's vivid narration of the war offers an enthralling tribute to the spirit of humans in the face of brutal adversity.

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THE REFLECTION OF GENOCIDAL CONFLICTS IN THE NOVEL 'THE KITE RUNNER' BY KHALED HUSSEINI. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CDA ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

The Kite Runner is a novel specifically about two ethnic groups Pashtuns and Hazaras. The present discourse aims to explore the causes of genocidal conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras. The result of the study shows that Hazaras became the victim of the Genocidal conflict owing to their prior history as they are the decedent of Mongols who had a war with Pashtuns and loathed them so much. Later, the conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras took the shape of cultural, socioeconomic, and religiopolitical conflicts, which in turn killed thousands of Hazaras and the conflict still goes on. The text also reveals that Hazaras are discriminated against by Pashtuns because of their physical appearance which echoes an amalgamation with the Chinese people as both tribes are the descendant of a parallel tribe, Mongols. Furthermore, in The Kite Runner, racial Prejudice depicts negative psychological and social consequences which are clearly reflected in the characters: Hassan, Amir, Ali, Sanaubar, and Baba. The genocidal conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras started back in the late 19th century when Abdur Rahman Khan was the ruler of Pashtuns. In his regime, he had killed 60 percent of the Hazaras population. Since that time to till Hazaras are sub dominated, Objectified, and dehumanized by Pashtuns. Thence, it can be stated that Hazaras are subjugated since the 19th Century due to clashes between Pashtuns and Hazaras later they adopted political, social, and religious colors. Resultantly, they are marginalized, subalternized, and Othered which is clearly divulged in the novel.

Keywords: Genocidal conflict, Battle/ of Parvan, Mongols, Pashtuns, Hazaras Conflict

1. Introduction:

The present study gestures at the factors that play a vital role in terms of genocidal violence in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. It exposes the very bedrock of genocidal conflict in its historical context in the *Kite Runner*. Pashtuns have colonized the Hazaras who fell prey to high-scale violence. In other words, it can be claimed that there is a class hold developed in Afghanistan where Pashtuns have a stronghold as they are higher in number, 50% to 54% of the total population (Mazhar, Khan, & Goraya, 2012). Due to the higher frequency of the Pashtuns population, they have dominated Afghanistan since the mid-eighteenth century (Hanley, 2011). On the other hand, Hazaras are only 7% of the total population of Afghanistan (Rais, 2008). Just like Hindu

society where they have divided society into four classes, the classification is based on occupation, which ultimately determines wealth, power, and privilege (Deshpande, 2010). Similarly, Hazaras are at the bottom in Afghanistan and are considered untouchable.

In *The Kite Runner* they (Hazaras) have been stereotyped as “mice eating, flat-nosed, load-carrying donkeys.” (Hosseini, p. 23). Owing to this racial prejudice, the Pashtuns (Baba and Amir) refuse to embrace Hassan and Ali despite how loyal they are to them. In the text, it can be noted that Pashtuns reject human beings (Hazaras) for no reason other than racial difference, though they are equally harmless to both humans and non-humans. Hassan is a fine example of “judging a book by its cover.” Though Amir and Hassan grew up and played together, he never took his friend, Hassan, for granted because the community marked him as an outsider and alienated because of his ethnicity. A community that knew Hassan based on his ethnicity rather than who he genuinely was. Regardless of historical accounts, your ethnicity does not define whether you are an insider or an outsider. Hazaras are deprived of good jobs, they cannot own private property, thus, it leads to their downfall. Hazaras are usually workers, farmers, artisans, and laborers. These people are regarded as outcasts because they do odd jobs that are deemed dirty such as foraging, peeling, and dead animals. Therefore, they are not regarded to be a part of any caste system. This dehumanizing act takes us back to the history of the Genocidal conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras. The hatred is solely based on ethnicity; they are called dirt and garbage because they are Hazaras. It seems like Hazaras are not considered humans in Afghanistan but more like dirt that no one wants to exist in Afghanistan.

2. Research Questions:

1. What are the causes of the genocidal conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras in Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*?
2. What are the impacts of genocidal conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras?
3. What role did civil society organizations play during the genocide?
4. How did grassroots thinking help to reduce or support the genocide?
5. Under what circumstances did vulnerability and poor living conditions contribute to genocidal violence?

3. Literature Review:

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country where live different ethnic groups or communities. Till 19th Century, there was no such term as ‘Ethnic Groups’ people were unconscious of the ethnic hierarchy. It was the foreign academicians and governments who injected the idea of ethnic hierarchy and split the people of Afghanistan into different groups based on cultural, religious, social and linguistic differences and so on, but all this did not exist before the mid of 20th century (Boboyorov, Poos & Schetter, 2009). It was during the monarchy of Durrani in 1747 which caused a dramatic turning point and an ethnic group “Pashtuns” constituted an irresistible majority. After the Achaemenid period, multiple states rose and fell on the territory of what is now Afghanistan (Saikal, 2006). Since then, Afghanistan is dominated by Pashtuns, and

whoever tries to raise against them, they smash them. Rais (1999) stated that ethnically Afghanistan is, indeed, a very “diverse country that has been under the rule of the Pashtun majority at the top level since all the monarchs came from this tribe.” Nevertheless, before the Saur Revolution, ethnicity had never been a major issue in Afghan politics. Same is the case with Hazaras who are the decedent of Mongols, who have had a war with Pashtuns in the late 19th century later it turned into a religious conflict that exists till today.



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In the territory of Afghanistan Pashtuns are one of the largest ethnic groups in the country consisting of 50% to 54% of the total population. It is the Pashtuns ethnic group who have dominated the country since the mid of 18th century (Hanley, 2011). In contrast, Hazaras came to Afghanistan with Genghis Khan in the 13th Century and settled there. The total population of Hazaras in Afghanistan is just 7% and they are the poorest and the most marginalized ethnic community in the country (Rais, 2008). Throughout the world, ethnic features are as same as that of kinship both keep the base for developing identity. Although, at the same time ethnic groups play a key role in the history of Afghanistan when it comes to violence (Hanley, 2011). Owing to the fact that, the ethnic hierarchy, there is a great impact on the people of Afghanistan which is resulted in violence. Conventionally, there is no clash on resources but it is based on the ethnic and religious hierarchy since Afghanistan is a country consisting of different ethnic groups with various cultural traits, including language, religious practices, and physical appearances (Goodson, 1998). The plot and events of *The Kite Runner* revolve around the two ethnic groups, Pashtuns and Hazaras where Pashtuns are dominant, powerful, and honored while the Hazaras are the subdominant, oppressed, and maltreated.

4. A Historic Massacre of Genocidal Conflicts Among Different Nations:

The word 'Genocide' is derived from Greek and Latin languages. Therefore, it is the combination of two words where the first part 'Genos' is derived from the Greek

language means tribe, whereas the second part 'Cide' is derived from the Latin language which means Killing (Lemkin, 1944). The term Genocide can be defined as the holocaust (ethnic cleansing) of several people with particular ethnicity deliberately abolishing their existence, based on their race, ethnicity, religion, or hateful behavior towards their ancestors. Lemkin (2007) believes that genocidal conflicts are threats to the existential rights of a particular group. Genocidal conflicts result in illegal activities such as the massacre of a group of people based on ethnicity, harming a particular ethnic group physically or mentally, performing such activities that cause physical, mental, and even spiritual destruction in a particular ethnic group, illegal birth control in a particular ethnic group by imposing illegal measures, transferring the ethnicity of children from one group to another forcefully. For instance, in the war between Athenians and Melos in 416 BCE, the Melians were attacked by the Athenians. All the adult Melian men were killed, children and women were captured and enslaved, and their island was occupied (Strassler, 1996). In the same way, during the battle of Béziers in 1209, the brutal massacre of the Albigensian Crusade (Pope Innocent III) against the Cathars. During the battle 20000 inhabitants were killed and it was declared by the Abbot of Cîteaux, "Slaughter them all!" (Harris, 2020).

In the same line of reasoning, in world War I, the great catastrophe of Armenian by the Turkish Ottoman Empire. De Waal (2015) pointed out in his book *The Great Catastrophe* that the number of corpses was constantly changing, for instance, during the war in 1915, historians estimated that one million Armenians were killed but later after the war in 1919 the number decreased to 800,000, which was also approved by Kemal Ataturk. Then the massacre of European Jews Roma (Gypsies), and other groups by Nazi Germany during World War II.

5. A Historical Genocidal Conflict Between Pashtuns and Hazaras:

Hazaras are one of the populated groups in Afghanistan who have undergone various forms of persecution such as enslavement, Exploitation, and displacement of their ancestral homes and territories by the Pashtun leaders and governments. As a result of these events, some individuals see Hazaras as one of the world's most oppressed groups. During the rule of Abdur Rahman Khan in the late 19th century, he fought a vicious war against Hazaras, which caused the ethnic cleansing of 60 percent of Hazaras, the rest got enslaved and the land was transferred to Pashtun tribes. Some scholars termed this bloodshed as genocide.

In it, I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It said the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had 'quelled them with unspeakable violence.' The book said my people had killed the Hazaras driven from their lands, burned their homes, and sold their women (Hosseini, p. 9).

Until the 1970s, they were continuously suppressed, discriminate and socio-economically marginalized to the extent that they started hiding their identities. They could not get access to education, service in the army, or secure good jobs. In 1993 most of the Hazaras occupied Kabul's Shia areas which led the president, Burhanuddin Rabbani to decide to begin an aggressive operation against them. As a result of the

extreme bombardment, random executions of civilians, and targeting of Hazaras 'men caused hundreds of slain and forcibly vanish. When the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1998 and captured Mazar-e-Sharif, a city in northern Afghanistan, went on a rampage targeting Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras. According to Human Rights Organization, at least 2,000 individuals from various ethnic groups, including Hazaras, were massacred. According to the Hazara group, the number of deaths might be as high as 15,000 (Askary and Mohammadi, 2021).

This is one side of the coin that leads us back to the historical battle of Pervan fought between the Pashtuns and the Hazaras in 1221. At that time Julolidine Manguberdi was a Muslim ruler of Pashtuns with many other tribes, and Genghis Khan was a non-Muslim ruler with his soldiers and Hazaras. It is claimed that Hazaras are the descendants of Mongols who came to Afghanistan with Genghis Khan's army (Vambery, 1864; Pouchepadass, 1978; Burnes, 1839 & Quvondiq-qizi & Abdug'affarovich, 2021). According to Bellew (1880)

Mongol soldiers were planted here (central Afghanistan) as military colonists in detachments of a thousand fighting men by Genghis Khan in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. It is said that Genghis Khan left ten such detachments here, nine of them in the Hazarah of Kabul, and the tenth in the Hazara of Pakli (Pakhlai) to the east of the Indus." (Bellew, p. 114).

Even the Hazaras themselves claim that they are the descendent of Mongols. In the present day, many Hazaras 'tribal and family names are taken from Mongol leaders and commanders (Temirknanov, 1980; Orazgani, 1913). The battle of Parvan was a massive battle between Muslims and Mongols which fought for constantly three days and finally on the third day the Mongols got defeated. Since then, this historical conflict between Hazaras and Pashtuns growing up day by day in different shapes. Presently, Pashtuns do not consider Hazaras as Afghans, but colonizers rather who came in the 12th Century and got settled there. The reflection of this hatred between these two ethnic races (Pashtuns and Hazaras) can be clearly observed in *The Kite Runner*,

Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood. He made a sweeping, grandiose gesture with his hands. Afghanistan for Pashtuns, I say. That's my vision (Hosseini, p. 40).

From the above quote, it can be noted that Pashtuns have never accepted them and considered them outsiders. In *The Kite Runner*, different characters such as Assef, Baba, Amir, and Rahim Khan can be the evidence that the land of Afghanistan is the Watan of Pashtuns and Hazaras are there to serve them and take care of their lands. We can observe Assef's view about ethnic supremacy from the above quotation. Assef claims that Afghanistan is meant for the Pashtuns. In Afghanistan, "the quasi-caste system" prevails according to Pashtuns who live in the uppermost positions. The Hazaras, of whom Hassan is a member, would be considered "second-class" citizens. In a similar line of reasoning, Assef is someone who is inspired by Hitler as he killed hundreds of Jews in ethnic cleansing. Similarly, Assef wants ethnic cleansing of

Hazaras as per their appearance and sameness with Mongols. Therefore, Assef considers them pollutants in Afghanistan and wants them to be banished. It was not only Assef who hated Hazaras or the Taliban but the whole of the Pashtuns tribe for instance the old man. After the kite competition, Amir looked for Hassan and asked people about Hassan, and came across an old man. The old man did not like this behavior of Amir as he was a Pashtun, someone superior, therefore, he should not be concerned with Hazaras so much as they were nothing but garbage for them,

What is a boy like you doing here at this time of the day looking for a Hazara? He also says, He is? Lucky Hazara, having such a concerned master. His father should get on his knees, sweep the dust at your feet with his eyelashes” (Hosseini, p.70).

The above quotations, signifies how Hazaras were beheld so down upon and suppressed. They are considered worshipers of Pashtuns, not men of their own will. Likewise, the old man dehumanises Hazaras and attributes them as slaves. Historically, Pashtuns defeated Mongols, whose descendants are Hazaras. Hence, it is expected that the only purpose of their life is to worship Pashtuns. By mentioning Hazara sweep the dust at your feet with his eyelashes is like treating him worse than an animal.

Similarly, in the very scene, Assef questions Hassan and Amir’s friendship. Hassan tries to justify his friendship with Amir but Assef asks him to put himself in Amir’s shoes and whether Amir would sacrifice himself for Assef. Assef tells the whole scenario that you are nothing but an ugly pet for Amir as you are Hazara.

But before you sacrifice yourself for him, think about this: Would he do the same for you? Have you ever wondered why he never includes you in games when he has guests? Why he only plays with you when no one else is around? I’ll tell you why Hazara. Because to him, you’re nothing but an ugly pet” (Hosseini, p. 72).

The above quote indicates the relationship between Hassan and Amir perceived by the people as well as how Amir is being selfish and disloyal to Hassan. For instance, he mocks Hassan while teaching him words meaning. He never defends Hassan, and when other friends visit him, he starts to avoid playing with him since Hassan is Hazara and he does not want to be ashamed.

Afghanistan is like a beautiful mansion littered with garbage, and someone has to take out the garbage. That’s what you were doing in Mazar, going door-to-door? Taking out the garbage? Precisely. In the west, they have an expression for that, I said. They call it ethnic cleansing (Hosseini, p. 284).

The story of hatred is not finished yet. In the final meeting of Amir and Assef who has become the commander of the Taliban. Assef’s statement illustrates strong and intensive rhetoric that motivates and supports ethnic cleansing. So here history is repeating itself. The first ethnic cleansing of Mongols occurred in the 19th Century. Now Assef wanted to repeat the history of the ethnic cleansing of Hazaras who are the descendants of Mongols. Assef has been taught that Afghanistan is a beautiful mention but without Hazaras who are the ‘Garbage ’that makes Afghanistan dirtier thus, they should be

thrown out. Assef does not have any human feelings for Hazaras but rather thinks of them as some filth that he does not want to be in the country. But Amir responds to him very ironically that, "in the west...they call it ethnic cleansing" (Hosseini, p. 284) one that exposes the barbarousness of that vision. Amir can realize how brutal and vicious Assef is who does not think of Hazaras as humans but as dust that he wants to remove.

6. Research Design:

The current study is qualitative in nature where the data is collected from both primary and secondary sources based on genocidal conflict such as 'Great Catastrophe' (De Waal, 2015), 'A Question of Genocide' (Suny, Göçek & Naimark, 2011), 'The Hazara of Afghanistan' (Mousavi 1998) and 'History of the Indian Caste System and its Impact on India Today' (Deshpande, 2010) as well as some websites. The procedure of data analysis for the present paper is given below.

7. Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical framework adopted for the current research study is Critical Discourse Analysis CDA (Fairclough, 2001). CDA is an investigative tool used for the analysis of texts (written or spoken) concerning their discursive stance and their influence on the power structure and dominance relating to any social feature like social class, culture, gender, religion, or sexual identity (Trappes-Lomax, 2004). In the same line of reasoning Woodak & Meyer (2010) specified that CDA seeks to explore the links between explicit social structures and their implicit supportive discursive practices. With regard to literary analysis, CDA helps the readers comprehend the relationship between language and the social distribution of power. It has the potential to engage readers' interest in seeking out and addressing the link between texts, ideologies, and power (Cummins, 2000). Therefore, it can be claimed that CDA help in revealing the hidden ideologies, power structure, and social identities (Fairclough, 2001). Every text has its meaning related to social issues to discuss such as social class, cultural, religious, political, or economic no text is neutral but has a specific purpose to achieve (Meacham, 2003). Likewise literary texts, like *The Kite Runner* is not neutral but rather carry a sociological stance that needs to be dug out for the purpose to have a clear understanding of the underlying issues in connections with the texts. The article adopts a critical theoretical lens as an investigative tool to assess the genocidal conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras

8. Data Analysis:

The data analysis is based on Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough's three-dimensional model is adopted to reflect the nature of social practices which comprises an understanding of discourse as a text (micro-level) discourse practice (Meso-level) and socio-cultural practice (macro-level). Its purpose is to examine the relationship among language, ideology, and power in order to determine how power is exercised in society by a certain group to oppress others. The reason Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis is adopted for this research study is to focus on

the power dynamic executed by Pashtuns in the context of Afghanistan because of which Hazaras are being victimised by genocidal conflict for all these years.



Figure 2.1 Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA

9. Findings and Discussions:

The Repercussion of Genocidal Conflicts can be examined in *The Kite Runner* written by Khaled Hosseini (2003). The after-effects of genocidal conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras resulted in racial discrimination, dehumanization, sexual abuse, religious conflict, socio-political conflict, and economic conflict. The repercussion of genocidal conflict can be observed in the novel through different characters such as Ali, Hassan, Sanaubar, and Sohrab. Through these different characters, the Hazaras are presented as enslaved by Pashtuns, objectified, sexually abused, and killed for no good reason but racial differences.

10. Racial Discrimination Towards Hazaras:

In *The Kite Runner* the causes of racial discrimination are social structure and psychological factors. The social structure factor has an impact on the way society regards Hazaras. The only thing that was different between Pashtuns and Hazaras was their physical appearance as Hazaras were looking like Chinese as they are the descendants of Mongols. Hazaras were considered of no good work but someone who carry loads, sweep, and clean. This is how Amir was also told by the teachers at a very young age. Which later turned Amir into someone who start hating Hassan. Even if Amir would try to have a friendship with Hassan, society would not allow that due to ethnic prejudice,

The book said a lot of things I didn't know, things my teachers hadn't mentioned ...It also said some things I did know, like that called Hazaras Mice-eating, flat-nosed, load-carrying donkeys (Hosseini, p. 9).

Amir personally might would not have any grudges or hatred towards Hassan but it was a social factor that would force him to do. For instance, when Assef and his gang were raping Hassan, Amir wished to help Hassan but he could not do as he was afraid of the consequence though as a regret, he could not face Hassan rather he tried to get rid of him. Assef and his gang raped Hassan to satisfy their ego as he was a Hazara as well as

to show an ethnic and racial prejudice towards Hazaras. Assef hated Hazaras so much that they did not count rapping a Hazara as a sin. When Wali said to Hassan that my father says it is sinful to which Hassan replies that there is nothing sinful about it since they are teaching a lesson to a disrespectful donkey,

Your father won't find out," Assef said. "And there's nothing sinful about teaching a lesson to a disrespectful donkey." "I don't know," Wali muttered. "Suit yourself," Assef said. He turned to Kamal. "What about you?" "I... Well..." "It's just a Hazara," Assef said (Hosseini, p. 75).

On the other hand, Amir stood there and watched all this but could not do anything since he was afraid of Assef and also wanted to win Baba's trust. Hence, he turned his back on Hassan and ran away down the alley,

I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what he would do to me. I was afraid of what he would do to me. That's what I told myself as I turned my back to the alley, to Hassan. That's what I made myself believe. I actually aspired to cowardice, because the alternative, the real reason I was running, was that Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world. May Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba. Was it a fair price? The floated to my conscious mind before I could thwart it: He was just a Hazara, wasn't he? (Hosseini, p.77)

It can be observed here how Amir got double-minded. On one hand, he wanted to help Hassan and save it from Assef and his friends but was afraid of the consequences. On the other hand, he also wants to get the kite in order to show it to his father to win his trust thus he sacrificed Hassan by letting him there. But later at the end of the novel, when he realized therefore in the last line, he ironically showed why would he care as he was Hazara who does not have to exist. Similarly, at the end of the novel, he willingly puts himself in a big trouble to pay the price for his previous sins,

I hadn't been happy and I hadn't felt better not at all. But I did now. My Body was broken---just how badly I wouldn't find out until later---but I felt healed. Healed at last. I laughed (Hosseini, p.289).

When Amir came back to Afghanistan for Sohrab who was captured by Assef beats him so much that some of his bones got broken and deep in his heart Amir was feeling he deserved thus he felt relief. Amir saw there Sohrab, Hassan's son who was turned into a shemale and would sexually abuse since he was the son of a Hazara, Hassan. Amir was ready to be beaten up by Hassan since he was having a pang of great guilt in his heart as he nothing but a disloyal friend who have always betrayed Sohrab's father Hassan and made him a sacrificial lamb in the name of friendship. To atone for the sins and the guilt he was having in his heart, he reappeared in front of Assef to take Sohrab from him and give a life an innocent child deserved. Amir knew that it would not be that easy to take Sohrab from him but he was ready to face all the consequences. All the hatred Assef was having towards Hassan and Sohrab was just based on racial prejudice as Assef was a Pashtun and Hassan and his son were Hazaras. And the only thing that made Pashtuns and Hazara differ was their physical appearance since Hazaras were the descendants of Mogul who looked like Chinese (Hosseini, p. 9). Therefore, it can be determined that

Hazaras are regarded as second-class citizens who can never be equal to Pashtuns. It also makes it clear that Pashtuns are the boss while Hazaras are their servants,

Hassan and I fed from the same breasts. We took our first steps on the same lawn in the same yard. And, under the same roof, we spoke our first words

(Hosseini, p.11).

The only thing which helped Amir to realize the strong bond between Amir and Hassan was the long segregation from Hassan. Amir was still thinking about all the childhood memories he and Hassan had in the past. Although, Amir knew that they were not brothers yet they spend their lives like brothers. Both of them were raised together, in the same house, fed with the same breast, which explains the depth of the emotions he has for Hassan. This quote discloses the true Amir and the bond of friendship he was having with Amir,

But he's not my friend! I almost blurted. He is my servant! Had I really thought that? Of course, I hadn't. I hadn't. I treated Hassan well, just like a friend, better even, more like a brother. But if so, tan why, when Baba's friends came to visit with their kids, didn't I ever include Hassan in our games? Why did I play with Hassan only when no one else was around?
(Hosseini, p. 41)

Amir's thoughts reveal the chaotic nature of his connection with Hassan right away. Hassan is from the Hazara ethnic minority, which is oppressed in Afghanistan, and Amir is from the Pashtun ethnic group, which has traditionally subjugated the Hazara. Hassan is living with Amir not just as an illegitimate child, but also as a member of an "inferior" ethnic group in Amir's eyes. As a kid, Amir strives to balance his sentiments of racial superiority with natural friendship relationships.

11. Dehumanization of Hazaras:

Deing (2014) (a special adviser on the prevention of Genocide in the UN) pointed out that genocide begins with 'dehumanization'. Thus, genocidal conflicts are the products of dehumanization. In the novel, Khaled Hosseini portrayed the genocidal conflicts of Pashtuns and Hazaras through the character of Assef, who is the representative of the Taliban and very inspired by Rudolf Hitler for the ethnic cleansing of Jews. Similarly, he wanted the ethnic cleansing of Hazaras and would treat them like garbage. Since childhood Assef hated Hazaras. Once after the kite competition Assef and his friends Kamal and Wali caught Hassan and took him down the alleyway. Assef asked Hassan to hand him over the kite but he refused which irritated Hassan and raped him as he was a Hazara. Assef always says to Amir that he should not befriend and be kind to Hassan as he was a Hazara and Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns, not this "Flat nose here" (Hosseini, p.40). Later, in the last meeting of Amir and Assef, who has since turned out to be a Taliban commander explained how he brutally killed Hazaras in August 1998 which shows his idea of 'Freedom',

You want the real show, you should have been with me in Mazar. August 1998, that was." "I'm sorry?" "We left them out for the dogs, you know." I saw what he was getting at. He stood up, and paced around the sofa once,

twice. Sat down again. He spoke rapidly. "Door to door we went, calling for the men and the boys, we'd shoot them right there in front of their families. Let them see, let them remember who they were, where they belonged." He was almost panting now. "Sometimes we broke down their doors and went inside their homes. And ... I'd... I'd sweep the barrel of my machine gun around the room and fire and fire until smoke blinded me (Hosseini, p. 277).

The above quote shows how mercilessly Asif who is in actuality represents the Taliban killed Hazaras. They did not even forgive children and killed them too. The way Assef murders shows that he did not even consider them as human beings but rather killed them like dirty mosquitos. He did not even realize how sinful and guilty the act was but above all this, he felt proud of it. He further added that he did not have any personal interest but for the sake of God. This is how he put all blame on Islam. Although every single Muslim knows that this is not Islam. Islam never gave us such teachings, but this was his grudges and hatred towards Islam. This is what Assef called freedom,

You don't know the meaning of the word 'liberating 'until you've done that, stood in a roomful of targets, let the bullets fly, free of guilt and remorse, knowing you are virtuous, good, and decent. Knowing you're doing God's work (Hosseini, p. 277).

Assef pointed out that in the name of the Quran, he was on a mission of eliminating and cleansing the garbage from Afghanistan to purge it. Hereby the garbage, he meant Hazaras whom he thought of not more than garbage. Assef believed that true freedom means shilling a room full of bullets, and having the belief that you obey God's command. It also revealed the Taliban's misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Islam. Assef feels that his deadly activities are honorable and desirable, and his thoughts demonstrate how the Taliban was nothing more than a radicalized form of Islam. Although Islam and the Quran have intensively focused on peace and brotherhood. The Messenger of Allah always encouraged people to share their food and blessing with others. Allah says in the Quran "And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the Cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors, and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help" (Al Quran, 004:075).

Thus, it clearly shows that it is not Islam the way Assef is portraying but this was personal harsh feelings and grievance towards Hazaras that turned him into a monster. After the Quran, there is the quote of the holy Prophet (SWA) who said killing one human is just like killing the whole of humanity. Therefore, in no case, you cannot kill someone without any reason especially when someone is weak and subdominant.

The Taliban moved into the house, Rahim Khan said. The pretext was that they had evicted a trespasser. Hassan's and Farzana's murders were dismissed as a case of self-defense. No one said a word about it. Most of it was fear of the Taliban, I think. But no one was going to risk anything for a pair of Hazara servants (Hosseini, pp. 219-220).

When Amir returned to Pakistan to meet Rahim Khan as he was very sick there, Rahim Khan explained to Amir the scenario of Afghanistan. Rahim Khan elucidated how Hassan and Farzana were murdered by the Taliban and the extinction to which Afghanistan was ruined into disturbance and chaos. Under the leadership of the Taliban, law and or

der have all but disappeared, and cases are frequently rejected on weak grounds. Racial and ethnic discrimination is widespread and the Taliban murders are arbitrary. The fact that no one will risk anything for a couple of Hazara servants validates the oppression of Hazaras in Afghanistan. All these events clarify how Hazaras have been humiliated by Pashtuns and the Taliban. Hazara is an oppressed group in Afghanistan who cannot do anything regarding their right.

12. Sexual Objectification of Hazaras:

In the novel *The Kite Runner*, it can be observed how the Baba, Assef, and the soldier sexually abuse Hazaras in the shape of Hassan, Sanaubar, and Sohrab. In the novel, it is shown that not only Hazara women are raped but also male children. It can be observed how Baba used Sanaubar's and Ali's wives as sexual tools and even have an illegitimate son from her but neither Sanaubar nor Ali could do anything in this regard since they knew their racial position in the society. It was not only Baba who sexually objectified Sanaubar but also the soldiers around who used her as a sexual toy. The soldiers and Baba all knew that neither Ali nor anyone in his family could do anything about this since the Hazaras were treated like slaves and they did not have a voice for themselves nor would someone listen. The soldier was so confident about the sex he had with Sanaubar that even he said it to Hassan on his face that he had sex with his mom. As Hassan was a child, he could not do anything but bend down his eyes and run away.

You! The Hazara! Look at me when I'm talking to you!" the soldier barked. He handed his cigarette to the guy next to him, and made a circle with the thumb and index finger of one hand. Poked the middle finger of his other hand through the circle. Poked it in and out. In and out. "I knew your mother, did you know that? I knew her really good. I took her from behind by that creek over there (Hosseini, p. 7).

Therefore, when Sanaubar gave birth to Hassan she got escaped since she could not face the people around her who were using her as a piece of pleasure. It was not only Sanaubar who became the prey of sexual abuse but as well as her son Hassan and even her grandson. After the escape of Sanaubar, it was her son, Hassan, who got sexually objectified for showing loyalty toward his friend, Amir. To win Baba's trust, Amir left Hassan there to Assef and his friends who raped him. Amir, for whom Hassan was showing loyalty, watched all this but did nothing for Hassan and ran away from there as he thought of Hassan as a sacrificial lamb.

At the end of the novel when Amir was attempting to atone for being disloyal to Hassan came to Afghanistan to save Sohrab from sexual slavery. At the end of the novel, it was Sanaubar's grandson who became sexual to the public. It was again Assef who turned

the young Sohrab into a sex toy. In the same line of reasoning, Thakur (2020) pointed out that *The Kite Runner* is a dramatic story about 'Bacha Bazi,' or "same-sex pedophilia limited to adult males and teenage boys." (Thakur, 2020, p.1) widespread in Afghanistan.

The boy had his father's round moon face, his pointy stub of a chin, his twisted, seashell ears, and the same slight frame. It was the Chinese doll face of my childhood, the face peering above fanned-out playing cards all those winter days, the face behind the mosquito net when we slept on the roof of my father's house in the summer. His head was shaved, his eyes darkened with mascara, and his cheeks glowed with an unnatural red. When he stopped in the middle of the room, the bells strapped around his anklets stopped jingling.

13. Socio-Political Conflict Towards Hazaras:

Genocidal conflicts are not results of common causes rather it depends on the different historical, social, and political background of each country or race like how the perpetrators define the group and how they determine who is a member of that group (Karen, 1996). In the novel, it can be observed that genocidal conflicts result from political and social factors. Since Afghanistan was ruled by a Pashtun ruler Dawood Khan at that time and Pashtuns were the ruling class of society, thus, to dominate the Hazaras, both socially and politically, they were not given the opportunities for higher education or jobs. The rulers were deliberately promoting the genocidal conflicts against Hazaras to keep them weak so that they never become strong and revolt against the Pashtuns and their government. Thus, it reflects that the rulers were promoting genocidal conflicts against Hazaras for political and social reasons.

Similarly, in the novel, there is a clear reflection of social hierarchy. Baba (Amir's father) has great faith in Ali and trusted him a lot but never considers him his friend. To maintain his social status in society he treated him like a servant though he cared for him. At once Amir was recalling his memories where he thought of the relationship of Baba and Ali that we would set together and Baba would tell the stories of his life but in none of the stories, Baba has ever mentioned Ali as his or with whom he has a memory. The same was the case with Amir as he would spend the whole of his day with Hassan playing with him but never granted him as a friend.

Amir talks of the closeness of Baba and Ali that Baba would tell us their childhood stories and laugh together. But in none of his stories did Baba ever refer to Ali as his friend (Hosseini, p. 25).

At the time when Baba and Hassan were leaving Afghanistan, they showed no care for Ali and his family but rather asked him to watch over the land till they return. This indicates the careless behaviour of Baba towards Ali and his family as they were Hazaras and Hazaras were having no value in Afghanistan. Although Ali and his family were very loyal to Baba, rather Hassan was the illegitimate son of Baba, yet, they turned their back on them. It was not only Baba who did not give equal opportunities to Hazaras but the whole of Pashtuns treated them this way to oppress them. Sometimes, Amir would think to himself that if he would have considered Hassan as his friend but

the society would have never allowed that at last because they were from completely different ethnic races. And thinking of the equal status of Pashtuns and Hazaras was like committing a sin. Amir concludes, In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing (Hosseini, p. 25).

This quote reveals that no matter how close a Hazara becomes to a Pashtun but can never be friends due to ethnic prejudice. And there is a huge power gap between Pashtuns and Hazaras.

14. Religious Conflicts Towards Hazaras:

Religious factors also play a major role in causing genocidal conflicts. In 1996 when the Taliban took over Kabul since then the political conflict turned into a religious conflict

between Pashtuns and Hazaras. It is a conflict based on differences in religious beliefs. Pashtuns are Sunni, while Hazaras are Shia, "the reason of Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras that Pashtun is Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras are Shia." (Hosseini, p. 9) The discrepancy arouses between Pashtuns and Hazaras started after the prophet Muhammad (SAW), the founder of Islam, died. It is mentioned in the Hadith that Muhammad (SAW) himself asked Abu Bakar (RA) to offer the prayers therefore after Muhammad (SAW) one group of Muslims elected Abu Bakar (RA) as their leader while another group wanted Ali (RA) to be the leader. This disagreement divided them into two groups and they started having grudges against each other. The Taliban also hated Hazaras as they were accusing the Hazaras of having collaboration with their enemies, the Iranian army.

Similarly, the reflection of this religious conflict can be observed in the novel in the case of Amir and Hassan. Early in the novel, Amir's thought illustrates the religious conflict that develops in Amir and Hassan's relationship throughout the novel.

Never mind any of those things. Because history isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was Sunni and he was Shia and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing (Hosseini, p. 25).

Here Amir argues that just like history religion is not simple to get rid of. It is a clear indication of the division that religion and history may cause. Although the relationships of family and friendship that Amir and Hassan enjoy are natural and strong but deep in his heart Amir knew that it is going to end.

15. Economic Conflict Towards Hazaras:

Economic factors are also major causes of genocidal conflicts. Economic factors shape and worsen the effects and extent of genocidal conflicts (Utterwulghe, 1999). According to Turshen (2001) four socio-economic factors shaped the extent of the genocide. Firstly, the sudden drop in the prices of coffee coupled with a 1989 currency devaluation and rapid inflation after 1990. Secondly, a program of structural adjustment combined with a drought in the southern regions turned into a famine. Thirdly, the war in the north (1990) drained the resources of governments and created huge refugee camps in the north of Kigali. Fourthly, the 'paradox of democratization in Africa' caused opposition to the already embattled government.

Likewise, in the novel the economic factors can be determined as the major cause of genocidal conflicts between Pashtuns and Hazaras. Historically when President Rabbani realized in 1993 that the majority of Kabul regions were occupied by Shias and financially got stable, he immediately began an aggressive operation against them. Hazaras were deprived of their lands and Pashtuns took over the land which made the Hazaras weaker and financially unstable. In the same line of reasoning, it can be observed that Pashtuns are having a more stable and high economic status as compared to Hazaras. Hazaras are poorer and weaker in status and they are not allowed to have properties and higher position jobs in Afghanistan. As Ali and his son, Hassan, both are the servants of Baba. Baba and Amir were living in a big house while Ali and his family were living in a hut. Thus, because of their weak economic status and being in minority, they are unable to make Pashtuns accountable for doing any injustice to them.

16. Conclusion:

In *The Kite Runner* the two sides of the coin are presented for interpretation. On one side, there is evidence of the historical battle of Pervan fought between Hazaras and Pashtuns which cemented the hatred between these two ethnic groups, on the other side, the novelist demonstrated reflection on the present discrimination Hazaras face. From the novel, it can be concluded that Hazaras have no place in Afghanistan. In the eyes of Pashtuns, Hazaras are not indigenous people, who came to Afghanistan and got settled in though their language is different, their religion is different from Pashtuns (Sunni, Shia Clash), and their culture and norms are different, henceforth, are considered second class citizens and can never be equal to Pashtuns. Hazaras are getting killed in one way or the other after the battle of Pervan, but nobody is there to ask about their right. Pashtuns in Afghanistan are masters and Hazaras are like slaves who are born to serve Pashtuns. In *The Kite Runner* it can be observed that Pashtuns treat Hazaras like dirt, which is supposed to be thrown away.

The ethnic cleansing of Hazaras back in September 1221 CE was the starting point of conflict between Pashtuns and Hazaras later in the 19th century during the rule of Abdur Rahman Khan, the ethnic cleansing of Hazaras caused 60% of its population dead, after 1993 the time of Burhanuddin Rabbani again the ethnic cleansing of Hazaras killed hundreds of Hazaras and forcibly vanish them. In 1998, when the Taliban took over, they also massacred 1500 Hazaras. Till today, Pashtuns dominate Afghanistan, and Hazaras are sub-dominated and suppressed and their voices muted just on the basis of tribal, religious, cultural and physical differences. Similarly, in *The Kite Runner*, Hazaras are shown as the weakest and poorest race in Afghanistan so they have negative stereotypes like - poor, slave, illiterate and disabled. Therefore, Hazaras are often disrespected and discriminated in the society.

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BULLETS, BATONS AND BARRICADES: IMAGERY OF TERROR IN THE NOVEL *HALF MOTHER* BY SHAHNAZ BASHIR

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Abstract:

Kashmir is known for its topographical beauty all over the world. It has been regarded by many as 'paradise' on earth. The other aspects of this location, however, have been hidden by the moniker "paradise." The question that needs to be explored is: how does indigenous people feel about the place called 'paradise'. The literary works that portray the various facets of this troubled region provide an answer to this topic. Being one of the most militarized zones in the contemporary world, Kashmir needs to be explored beyond the epithet ascribed to it. Through the medium of literature, Writers from/outside Kashmir have been trying to depict the atmosphere of terror and what it means to live in that atmosphere. When one reads contemporary literature about Kashmir conflict, one realizes that the place is not all green, there are red spots as well; it is not unlikely to hear shrieks and wailings amidst sounds of crickets, nightingales and cuckoos. The present paper will explore the imagery of terror in the novel 'Half Mother' by Shahnaz Bashir with the aim of deconstructing the epithet 'paradise' associated with Kashmir.

Keywords: Kashmir, Paradise, Conflict, Trauma, Imagery, oppression, literature

1. Introduction:

Kashmir has been regarded by many as heaven on earth. Its magnificent beauty and amicable population are well known. However, it is also one of the most conflicted and militarized zones in the contemporary world. Following the Independence of India and Pakistan, the valley as a 'land of desire' has continuously confronted oppression. The ceaseless and ruthless conflict has stimulated the writers to narrate their fact of life through the agency of literature. In areas of armed conflict, art bears the responsibility of providing evidence to the numerous atrocities onto humanity. Kashmir has endured the anguish of war for a very long time. This has resulted in a violation of human rights as well as a "psychological rape" of the locals, who already experience continual fear and a sense of being under siege (Parray, 2017, p.523). Being insiders who have lived the experiences of conflict, these narratives have adequately portrayed the diverse aspects of this prolonged dispute. Neha Rana, maintains that Since Kashmiri narratives often have nearly identical plots, this is not a sign of delayed creative development but rather a sign of widespread "post-traumatic demoralisation syndrome" (Rana, 2021, p.211).

With the release of his first book, "The Half Mother", Shahnaz Bashir established himself in the literary community. The novel won the Muse India Young Writer Award 2015. It has been translated into French in addition to Marathi and Telugu, making it the first ever Kashmiri novel to be translated into a foreign language. Scattered Souls,

his second book, was long-listed for the 2017 Tata Lit Live Award for Best Book - Fiction. HarperCollins published it in 2016. It received the 2017 "Talent of the Year Award" from The Citizen.

Comparing him with Manto and Chekov, *The Asian Age* commends Shahnaz Bashir in the following words,

With Bashir's writing there is a sense that the stories tell themselves, such is the intimacy and familiarity he shows with the collective consciousness of his hometown. There are easy comparisons with Manto in the often-shocking glibness with which Bashir lays bare a character's innermost feelings, or with Chekov in the rootedness of the characters to their circumstances. What he shares most with such illustrious predecessors however is the way his stories feel authentic and historical, everyone in the collection a snapshot with a time and date stamp (Attari, 2017, p.58).

Shahnaz Bashir is one among many writers of the contemporary period, besides Basharat Peer, Mirza Waheed and Sidharath Gigoo, who depicts the dreadfulness of violence and the unceasing misery engendered by the conflict. When one reads contemporary literature about Kashmir conflict, one realizes that the place is not all green, there are red spots as well; it is not unlikely to hear shrieks and wailings amidst sounds of crickets, nightingales and cuckoos. The present paper will explore the imagery of terror in the novel "Half Mother" (2014) by Shahnaz Bashir with the aim of illuminating the other side of this place, popularly associated with the 'garden of Eden'.

2. Discussion:

Half mother starts with a gloomy description of the "reverie in retrospect", "snow, dust, roads, paper planes, plastic bags..." (Bashir, 2014, p.1) The focal point of the novel is a woman who, besides being divorced, has lost her father, then her only son, to the Indian Armed forces. She is left to bear the burdens that are unbearable. Grief turns her into a living corpse. What keeps her alive is the hope that someday her son would come to her. Haleema is the prototype of all Kashmiri mothers who have lost, or who are always afraid about the sudden disappearance of, their children. The text tells the tale of every mother in Kashmir who lives in a state of uncertainty and does not know what will happen the next day, not just the experience of a single mother; it is not just the experience of a single mother (Kumar and Gazanfar, 2021, p. 25).

Let's examine the situation of a grieving mother who loses interest in everything when her son is taken away by the military. She perceives sadness in everything that formerly could have made her feel better:

The colour of everything is sorrow,
The colour of the moon is sorrow,
The colour of the streets is sorrow,
And the colour of the memories is sorrow.
The colour of my heart, in its own heart, is sorrow.

The colour of my breath is sorrow,

The colour of sorrow is sorrow (Bashir, 2014, p. 5).

Her condition could be explained through Iqbal's verse: "...Kya lutf anjuman ka jab dil hi bujh gaya ho." What pleasure could the assemblages provide when your heart is extinguished. (Iqbal 2) Everything is engulfed by sorrow. Sorrow is the colour of Kashmir. sorrow seeps in from everywhere. People are so accustomed to sorrow and fear that it becomes habitual to live in such circumstances. In her book 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness', Arundhati Roy writes about the usual agonies that occur in Kashmir and become habitual when people get used to them: "In Kashmir when we wake up and say "Good Morning" what we really mean is "Good Mourning" (2017, p.188). The present novel delineates the atmosphere of horror generated by the conflict. It is replete with images of terror. Terror is hovering over lives of people in this novel. One can hear gun shots and perceive the bullets piercing the body of Ab Jaan (beloved Father of Haleema) when he is brutally killed by the armed forces as a means of assuaging their anger. The narrative centres on a woman, named Haleema, who witnesses her father being pierced bullets by the armed forces. "Three bullets were pumped into Ab Jaan. One in the neck. One in the heart. One in the stomach. The rapid staccato startled the birds in the plum trees". (Bashir, 2014, p.49) one's father is torn apart and one is made to watch and keep the record. No longer has the pain of losing her father subsided, Haleema's lone hope for survival, her son Imran, is snatched from her by the same armed forces. She is left to perish in the world of traumas. Her search for her son connects her with people who share the same tragedies of disappearance of their son's. A woman living in 'paradise' is desperately looking for her only son in police departments, jails, army camps and all the places where the unknown dead bodies are supposed to be found. She leaves no stone unturned but does not find any trace of her son. Instead, she sees,

bunker[s], checkpoints and army camps, whose numbers had insidiously grown since everything began. Kashmir almost couldn't tell itself from the maze of bunkers. Yet, she lost count of them too'...passing a convoy of dozens of army trucks. Each truck had a trooper-masked in a black scarf and wearing black goggles-popping out from under the turreted roof with a heavy ordnance machine gun (Bashir, 2014, pp. 85-86).

The novel provides a vivid account of the ways subjugation is maintained through extreme forms of violence in Kashmir. It is replete with images of horror, manifested through acts of violence by the powerful. People are kidnapped or killed or put behind bars on grounds of mere suspicion. The novelist depicts kidnapping of Imran, Haleema's son, in the following words,

Outside the flimsy wooden gate, the olive-green jeeps began to chug. Imran cried and screamed impulsively. He strove to break free from the trooper's hold, but they continued to drag him towards one of the jeeps...Haleema chased the Gypsy until it vanished in the thick blanket of darkness (Bashir, 2014, pp. 56-57).

“Thick blanket of darkness” that devours people in this land called ‘Paradise’ is the appropriate image of terror. Death pervades everywhere in Kashmir as it does in Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. Eliot’s “brown fog of a winter dawn” and Kashmir’s “Thick blanket of darkness” are shadows of death under which “sighs, short and infrequent, [are] exhaled, and each man fixe[s] his eyes before his feet”. The atrocity unleashed by the armed forces is graphically portrayed. There are countless incidents of violence perpetuated by the military men. They raid houses and beat everyone without any reason. The troops beat her elderly husband and threw their belongings, utensils, rice and flour onto the street, setting them on fire.... Minutes later, a picket of troops donning camo jackets arrived from nowhere and prowled around the crowd with the rifles in one hand and freshly peeled, creamy willow sticks or bamboo canes in the other (Bashir, 2014, p.55).

There is a heart wrenching description of prisoners who are tortured inhumanly. In search of her son, Haleema reaches the army hospital, located behind the Badami Bagh Cantonment. She finds,

...inside, captive young boys and men recovered from custodial torture, only to become fit again for further interrogations and torture...Haleema saw limbless, fingerless, nail less, hairless, toothless, eyeless, earless detainees- a variety of wriggling, howling, yowling amputated souls (Bashir 2014, p.80).

In her article “Call the crime in Kashmir by its name: Ongoing genocide,” Benish Ahmed gives a statistical account of human rights violations as recorded by the United Nations report in 2018,

They are occupying Kashmir through use of colonial war measures acts, including the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, the Public Safety Act and martial laws that have given Indian troops complete impunity...Gross human rights violations have occurred under their watch, according to a 2018 United Nations report. They include gang rapes by military and mass disappearances of approximately 8,000 to 10,000 people. As many as 100,000 Kashmiris have been killed and several thousand wounded, blinded and maimed, including through torture tactics in custody (Ahmed, 2019, p.16).

The novel, without giving exact figures of deaths, delineates masterfully the frequent killing of civilians like this: “Haleema began looking for the news about Imran. As usual, the lead story carried a picture of the dead under the headline: *Sheher mein mazed paanch afraad halaak- ‘Five More Dead in the City’*”. (Bashir, 2014, p.78). The novel depicts death as a usual business in Kashmir. It chronicles the process of oppression through the story of a woman whose traumatic experiences highlight the whole situation of Kashmir: “People kept dying, houses and schools kept crumbling. Bunkers and army camps mushroomed. The valley dwindled. Haleema was oblivious to all. Her search for Imran had become her habit, a habit she couldn’t do without. Jails and courts became routine affairs, like going to school” (Bashir, 2014, p.127).

Kashmir is beautiful only for the outsiders or for those in power. There is a passage where the novelist describes the house of a politician whom Haleema approaches with

the hope that he will help in finding her son. While waiting in the house of the politician she contemplates over the surroundings of the house that are maintained properly,

She approached member of the parliament Rafi Bhat to try her luck...Haleema sat on Bhat's verandah and gazed...she waited, observing his neatly mowed lawn, all green...For a brief moment Haleema thought

she was dreaming. It was after a long time she had

seen a green piece of earth like this garden. A garden, incredibly incompatible to the Kashmir outside this house. Her thoughts strayed to her untrimmed, unpruned patch of a lawn, a spectacle of despair and loss. She thought of the weeds that had grown everywhere. Flowerbeds that once smiled from their clumps of foxgloves, mimosas, pansies and carnations had vanished under tufts of overgrown grass...there were now patches where the earth was naked...the orchard too had had its share of decline. Most of its trees were now afflicted with plum-pox, with yellow blotches on the leaves and deformed fruit (Bashir, 2014, p.81).

Her thoughts turn to her diseased house that used to be healthy, like the Bhat's house, at one time before misery has made her indifferent towards her own health and the health of her house. Haleema's deteriorated house is the condition of Kashmir which has been made sick, like William Blake's 'Rose', by the worm who has found out the "bed of crimson joy". Bhat's house, shielded by the walls of power, signifies security and prosperity whereas, Haleema's house that falls outside the boundaries of power signifies insecurity, affliction and vulnerability. What used to be her safe heaven, turns into a wilderness. Haleema's flowerbeds are colonized by the weeds that have grown everywhere. The image of weeds taking over the flowerbeds could be associated with the oppression of Kashmir. Under the shadows of oppression, everything withers away.

There used to be a time when life was peaceful in this piece of land; a time when life was lived ordinarily but fearlessly; a time when the leaves were green before "yellow blotches" appeared on them; a time when the fruit was sweet before weeds squeezed the sweetness and made it bitter. War has snatched peace and prosperity and rendered life to mere survival. War has turned smiles into tears and laughter into wailings. No longer do families sit together and discuss the usual business of life. War has occupied every space-physical, emotional and psychological. The atmosphere of the novel is bleak. Terror is looming over Kashmir like "crows and vultures hovering on the horizon over the ridges of Zabarwan..." (Bashir, 2014, p.87). There are "Endless coils of barbed wire" everywhere. Images of predatory birds and barbed wire signify the pervasiveness of the hunter and the helplessness of the prey who is cordoned off from all sides. One of the most pathetic and horrific images of oppression is evoked when Haleema meets the coroner named Khizir, commonly known as Khizir Post-mortem, to confirm whether he has done post-mortem of her son. When she presents her son's photograph before the post-mortem Khizir, he narrates his experience of the job as coroner like this:

I shall tell you something very important...In this ugly business of the dead, which I have been engaged in for what feels like ages, if you were me, you wouldn't be able to tell whether you have opened and sewed a person or not from a picture. How will you say, 'Yes, I have sewed up a particular person who resembles this picture', when the person didn't have a face. I have stitched heads on bodies; heads, which anyway failed to form a face-so defiled, so disfigure. You must bear me out, sister. But I have to tell you that I hardly Falter (Bashir, 2014, pp.133-134).

He initially found it difficult, but after being accustomed to dead bodies, it doesn't affect him whether the body is in good shape or not. The person in charge of dealing with the deceased has become so hardened by death, which is a daily occurrence in Kashmir, that he now handles bodies like leather. He admits: "In the beginning, my hands would tremble and the scalpel would go off the mark. Just touching the skin of the dead would give me jitters. Now, it feels like leather. When I would take home fruits...my youngest daughter would say that they smelt of the dead, along with my hands" (Bashir, 2014, p.134).

3. Conclusion:

To sum things up, Shahnaz Bashir has succinctly delineated the horrors of oppression in Kashmir. The novel, though centred around the life of a single woman named Haleema, gives a panoramic picture of devastation caused by the conflict in Kashmir. One does not hear the soothing sounds that one would expect to hear in a heavenly place like Kashmir. Bullets have replaced the cachinnations of Kashmir. "The sound of gunshots is 'the new music of Kashmir'". (Bahir, 2014, p.77). Oppression is manifested through bullets, batons and barricades along with other forms of violence. Through this novel, Bashir has skilfully captured the atmosphere of absurdity and chaos, created by the conflict. The novel goes beyond the statistical records and chronicles suffering of Kashmiri people more intimately. It visualises how the havoc is wrought upon the people of Kashmir. Through its depiction of horror, it deconstructs the sobriquet 'paradise on earth' that has been ascribed to Kashmir. The novel has successfully portrayed one of the many aspects of violence perpetrated in this land called Kashmir. We do not meet any character who finds solace in the physical beauties of Kashmir. Rather, all are entrapped in the grip of tyranny.

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ABOUT THE EDITOR



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ABOUT THE BOOK

A war is the manifestation and mainstay of power systems. No war has assisted in establishing peace rather it has incurred irreparable loss and trauma. Its aftermath not only unveils the shifting borders of the countries but also the pulverised lives of the indigenous. The desire of the warring nations to grow geographically, economically, politically and maintain a hegemonic position internationally blinds it to the threats it causes to the people.

As long as there have been conflicts and wars, authors have attempted to comprehend them by turning the atrocities of the war zones into stories and endeavouring to salvage anything of value from their wreckage. Joe Woodward, in his article *The Literature of War*, wrote, "as long as there has been war, there have been writers trying to understand it." The book is an attempt to examine the impact of wars and conflicts on individuals, society and nations. It critically discusses the writings of myriad authors who have either experienced war or have been witnessing the cataclysm as a distant observer. The book will assist the researchers to critically evaluate the politics of war and its everlasting impact on the survivors. It brings forth the race for justifying racial, cultural and national superiority that seems to have obliterated every speck of humanity. The book is an effort to understand the enigma of war which destroys peace and reinforces terror.



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