

Tracing Elements of Ethnic Conflict and Refugee Trauma in *Sea Prayer* and *Remnants of a Separation: A History of Partition through Material Memory*.

Dissertation submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in English

Nima P M

Register Number: 180011002139



The Post Graduate Department of English

Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara

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Certificate

Certified this that this is a bonafide report of the project entitled “*Tracing Elements of Ethnic Conflict and Refugee Trauma in Sea Prayer and Remnants of a Separation: A History of Partition through Material Memory.*” done by Nima P M (Reg No.180011002139) for the fulfillment of the requirement for the M.A. Degree in English under Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam during the year 2018-2020.

Project Guide

Ms. Merin Jose

Assistant Professor

Post Graduate Department of English

Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakkara

Ms. Lissy Kachapilly

Head of the Department

Post Graduate Department of English

Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakkara

Declaration

I, Nima P M, hereby affirm that the dissertation titled “*Tracing Elements of Ethic Conflict and Refugee Trauma in Sea Prayar and Remnants of a Separation: A History of Partition through Material Memory*”. is a genuine record of work done by me under the guidance of Ms. Merin Jose and Ms. Lissy Kachappilly of the Post Graduate Department of English, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakkara and has not been submitted previously for the award of any masters or degree.

Date: 22-07-2020

Nima P M

Place: Thrikkakkara

Register Number: 180011002139

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Contents

	Page No.
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: From Narratology to Semiotics; an overview	8
Chapter 3: A Journey through Material Objects	17
Chapter 4: Unraveling the Graphics: Refugee Trauma in Sea Prayer	29
Chapter 5: Conclusion	38
Works Cited	

Chapter One

Introduction

"No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark" says Warsan Shire, "You only run for the border when you see the whole city running as well". The refugee crisis has been making headlines each day (viz Syrian refugee crisis, European refugee crisis, Jordan refugee crisis etc). This ongoing issue of migration and the following crisis has gained wide range of popularity. The fear of persecution and imprisonment makes millions of people leave their home and they are forced to become refugees in a foreign land. The two world wars unfold the history of the refugee crisis, confrontation of violence, Nazi regime; the concentration camp paved the way for migration and it results in the overflow of refugee camps all over the world. Even today the problems of refugees remain unresolved.

There is usually a confusion regarding the term refugees and migrants. Migrants are those people who leave their country in search of better economic possibilities and job offers whereas the refugees are those who are forced to leave their country due to conflicts, violence, war, foreign occupation and the fear of being persecuted. They have no choice left but to flee from their land. The 1951 Geneva convention define a refugee "as any person owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".(Rifai, Aljazeera)

Ethnic conflicts, Civil war, and religion might be the roots of the refugee crisis that have contributed to this situation. The ongoing crisis in Syria is the largest refugee crisis of the time. The Syrian civil war caused more than 5 million to be internally displaced and more than 6 million fled to their bordering country. What caused Syrian civil war is the "Arab Spring" in Syria and other Arab countries. "The Arab Spring was a series of anti-

Government protests, uprisings and armed rebellions that spread across much of the Arab world in the early 2010 (“Uprising in the Region and Ignored Indicators”. Payvand). The protest was against the poor condition of Syria caused by unemployment, poverty, monarchy etc and the oppressive regime under Bashar al-Assad, the leader of Ba' atheist Syrian Arab Republic whose guidelines worsened the standard of living. The protest had its origin in Tunisia and soon it became a whirlwind and spread to other neighboring countries such as Syria, Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Bahrain. The aspiration behind these uprisings was the replacement of the existing government with one that could provide Democracy, Employment, and Secularism. When the Syrian government tried to suppress the protests through military operation, the conflict turned into armed violence. The government even inhibits restrictions on certain sites and blocks internet connection completely in some places. The groups that took active participation in this war were Syrian Armed Forces along with its international allies, Sunni Opposition rebel groups, Salami jihadist groups, Kurdish-Arab Syrian Democratic Groups and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Thousands lost their lives in this bloody war. The condition of the refugees is much worse than that of the dead ones. They have to live in a small area or in a tunnel without food, water and shelter. Life in crowded spaces and that too in unhygienic conditions deteriorates their health.

Though developed countries turned their backs against the refugees, some writers used their pen in order to bring out these issues through their writings. Writers like Khaled Hosseini, Aanchal Malhotra and Don Brown gave a truthful representation of refugee struggles and experiences.

In his recent work *Sea Prayer*, Afghan American novelist Khaled Hosseini provides some gruesome facts of refugee life and the book is also noted for its depiction of real life

Situations of being a refugee and its manner of including the contemporary refugee crisis. Born and brought up in Kabul, Afghanistan and with his own experience of being a refugee, there are refugee elements in most of his works. For instance his second novel "*Thousand Splendid Suns*" deals with the problems of Talibanism. The characters in this novel express a kind of emotional attachment towards Afghanistan. Even though there was an insurgency in Afghanistan, the people refused to leave their country. Those who left the country always had an urge to return to their home land where their ancestors are buried. His "*The Kite Runner*", the novel that made him famous, also talks about the ethnic conflict in Afghanistan. If observed closer one can find Afghanistan plays a vital role in Hosseini's works.

Khaled Hosseini was born on 4th March 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan. When he turned 11 years old, his father got a job in Paris and his family moved there. The Saur Revolution of 1978 which is also known as April Revolution or April Coup and the following Soviet-Afghan War forced them to seek asylum in the United States. Initially he felt difficulty to adapt to American culture and "he describes the experience as a culture shock and very alienating". Hosseini graduated from Independence High School in San Jose in 1984 and he took a bachelor's degree in biology at Santa Clara University in 1988. He took his M.D at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine in 1993.

Khaled Hosseini's graphic book *Sea Prayer* bears testimony to the horrors of ethnic conflicts and its resultant refugee crisis. The book unfolds the story through a letter, wherein a father tells his son about the current situation of their home land and the perilous voyage they are about to undertake. The inspiration behind writing this book was the death of Alan Kurdi, a Syrian boy whose body washed on the beach when his family attempted to escape from their home land through a dangerous sea crossing. This poetic letter contains the

Heartbreak of the Syrian crisis and the following bloodshed which jeopardizes life in Syria. Arab Sunnis of Syria were the largest ethnic group in Syria who occupied a considerable amount of fertile land. Though the deadly civil war created a mess, the Sunnis were reluctant to leave their Home. The Syrian government tried all possible ways to get rid of these ethnic groups; they threatened them, tortured and even killed them so that they would flee from their land and seek shelter in Turkish border. Hosseini excellently depicts the pre and post war period of Syria through several watercolour pictures. Syria was once a peaceful land but by the advent of the war, it transformed into a deadly war zone. The first section of the book deals with the golden age of Syria, its glory and pride. The father recalls his good old days in Syria, the night before their journey to Europe. He spoke to his sleeping son how he enjoyed the long summer in "Homs". He still remembers his grandfather's house in Syria, the stirring of olive trees in the breeze, the bleating of his grandmother's goat, the clanking of cooking pots etc. The beauty of the Homs is enhanced by its crowded lanes, its mosque and its grand souk. Suddenly everything changed; brothers became enemies, the sky showers bombs and grenades. Small protests and siege turned the Homs into a gory war field. People had to leave their war-torn country. The people gathered to a shore with their small possessions to embark on a dangerous sea crossing. They were well aware of the fact that the journey was not a piece of cake, anything could happen; and the only thing they could do was a Sea Prayer.

Every refugee story is unique in its own way. The world witnessed a massive evacuation and bloodshed during the time of India-Pak partition. As the result of long protests and siege, finally Great Britain retreated from India in August 1947. But the happiness was short lived. The Muslims in British India demanded a separate nation of their own. The main proponent of the partition was Muhammad Ali Jinnah the leader of Muslim League. The partition was done mostly on the basis of religion rather than language and ethnicity. In 1905 the viceroy,

Lord Curzon's division of Bengal presidency initiated the partition of India. The surprising fact is that not all the Muslims in British India liked the idea of the partition of India. But Jinnah tactfully handled the situation. Jinnah upheld the ideology of two- nation theory which "was the founding principle of the Pakistan movement and the partition of India in 1947" ("Two Nation Theory Exists"). Lala Lajpat Rai, the leader of Hindu Mahasabha also advocated the partition of India. Jinnah demanded that the Muslim majority areas of British India should be grouped together to form an autonomous and sovereign independent state. Clement Atlee, the Prime Minister of Britain sent a cabinet mission to settle down the political issues in India. "The Cabinet mission scheme encapsulated a federal arrangement consisting of three groups of provinces. Two of these groupings would consist of predominantly Muslim provinces, while the third grouping would be made up of the predominantly Hindu regions. The provinces would be autonomous, but the center would retain control over the defense, foreign affairs, and communications" ((Metcalf, Thomas R Metcalf). At first the Muslim League accepted the agreement but later in fear of Hindu domination Jinnah rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan. Later on 16th August Jinnah conducted a Direct Action Day, a strike demanding a separate nation for the Muslims. On that day a group of armed Muslims unleashed violence in Calcutta. They attacked the Hindus and the next day the Hindus retaliated by killing the Muslims and hence began the ethnic cleansing. This violence later became known as the Great Calcutta Killing of August 1946. There was no choice left for Lord Louis Mountbatten except the partition. Thus, on August 14, Pakistan was established as an independent nation. No one thought the division would bring about such brutal violence and ethnic cleansing. As part of ethnic cleansing the Muslims in Pakistan killed the non-Muslim groups especially the Sikhs who remained in Pakistan; likewise the Sikhs in Republic India has killed the Muslims who refused to leave their home

Land. Approximately 7 million lost their lives and more than 7 million fled across the manmade line. This large scale migration caused a refugee crisis in both the countries.

There is a wide range of narratives relating to India's freedom struggle, independence and partition. But Aanchal Malhotra's *Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition through Material Memory* gives a new life to the refugee stories. Aanchal Malhotra is an artist and oral historian who is interested in memory and material culture. She was born in New Delhi in 1990. She received a BFA in Traditional Printmaking and Art History from Ontario College of Art and Design, Toronto and an MFA in Studio Art from Concordia University Montreal. Her debut book *Remnants of a Separation* was published in India in 2017. The book was noted for its different narrative style.

The book *Remnants of a Separation* deals with the India-Pak partition that took place in 1947. It comprises 21 stories about the people who experienced the brutality of partition. Aanchal Malhotra narrates the stories through different objects that the refugees carried with them across the border. These mundane objects are filled with a lot of memories and they are also the symbol of their hardships and sacrifices. The objects like Gaz, Ghara, Maang tikka, a string of pearls, a set of kitchen utensils and a shawl hide a history in them. The pearls of Azra Haq indicate a glorious time in history. Azra received these pearls as a gift from a Maharaja who is very kind towards his subject. Now these objects are the only thing that connect them with their past, their life in Undivided India.

This dissertation explores the possibilities of unique narrative techniques in refugee narratives by analysing the narratological and the semiotic elements in the two books *Sea Prayer* and *Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition through Material Memory*. The theoretical underpinnings of narratology and semiotics are provided in chapter two.

Chapter three particularly deals with the book *Remnants of a Separation* and Chapter four encapsulates the book *Sea Prayer*. Fifth chapter is the conclusion which suggests that the use of different narrative styles in Refugee Narratives helps the readers to empathize with the refugee life in a deeper manner thereby rendering the genre more impactful.

Chapter Two

From Narratology to Semiotics: An Overview

Narratology is a growing literary theory which aims to study the different narrative techniques and methods in literary works. Narrative is usually associated with the novels and short stories but the term does have a direct relation to the verb narrate. Any piece of information such as newspaper, news reader on the radio/television, conversation between two people etc, can be a narrative. The roots of the narrative theory can be found in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Gerard Price claims that narratology helps to understand the structure of a text. "Narratology examines what all narratives have in common, and what allows them to be narratively different" (Price, 1982). Like semiotics narratology is also derived from structuralism and the development of this theory and its associated terms accelerated in the mid-twentieth century.

Narrative technique is the soul of narrative process that function as an ornament or rather an element that gives additional value to the content. Every narrator uses a specific narrative technique to convey his idea and the technique varies according to the writer and his theme. According to Mark Schorer, "technique is the tool or means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning and finally of evaluating it". There are different kinds of narrative technique some of them are settings, style, magic realism, Intertextuality, multidisciplinary pursuit, mixed genre, Meta fiction, hybridity and chutnification.

"Setting is the background against which the action of a narrative occurs, referring to the time and place of events in a story, including the specific time or period, geographic location, cultural environment as well as social and political realities. The setting depends on the theme and the author is free to choose any place depending on his selection of theme. The

Word setting is used to cover the places characters appear in, social context of characters such as their families, friends, and class, the customs, beliefs, rules of behavior, location of events, the atmosphere, and mood and feel that all these elements create. Although defined as the background, it can have great significance in the story” (Narrative techniques- Shodhganga 68).

“Style is the selection, arrangement and appropriation of words, phrases, sentences, figures of speeches, images and symbols to present one’s ideas. Style is any specific way of using language which is characteristic of an author, period or genre. A particular style may be defined by its diction, tone, syntax, imagery, rhythm and use of figures of speech or by any other linguistic feature. Style is not just throwing together of words in combination but it is finding and using of suitable words, phrases and sentences to express one’s thoughts on a subject” (69)

“Magic Realism’ is one of the most important and subversive anti-realist postmodern and postcolonial narrative devices. It is the introduction of fantastic or impossible elements into a narrative that is otherwise normal. Magical realism denotes a mode of narrative presentation and vision that mixes the real and the fantastic in such a way that the real turns magical (non-realistic) and the improbable seems real. Magical realism is a striking feature of the postmodern and postcolonial imagination that blurs the distinction between the real and the fantastic. One example of magic realism is when a character in the story continues to be alive beyond the normal length of life and this is subtly depicted by the character being present throughout many generations. On the surface the story has no clear magical attributes and everything is conveyed in a real setting but such a character breaks the rules of our real world” (71).

“Intertextuality is the shaping of text’s meaning by other texts. It can include an author’s borrowing and transformation of a prior text or to a reader’s referencing of one text in reading another. The term “intertextuality” has itself been borrowed and transformed many times since it was coined by poststructuralist Julia Kristeva in 1966. It is argued that an individual text is read in a manner determined by its relations with other texts with any content of other texts in the individual texts. This is with reference to reading a text, thus reading of the Mahabharata keeping Iliad as a model in mind amounts to intertextuality. In the postcolonial and post-modernist context, intertextuality is not the sign of the influence of other texts but it is the conscious attempt of the author to oppose the notion of the novel as a single text. The device of intertextuality has, in other words, to be seen as a form of parody and travesty” (75-76).

“Mixed genre - It is needless to say that literature is classified broadly into three forms such as poetry, prose and drama. They are called genres of literature. What determines a genre is its medium. Generally it is agreed that the medium of poetry is verse with certain norms to the effect of musicality, the medium of prose is a plain language with the diverse sentence patterns and the medium of drama is physical acting. Mixed genre is a narrative technique that blends the elements of two or three different genres. Arundhati Roy's *A Ministry of Utmost Happiness* shows a best example of mixed genre. It is a blend of prose and poetry” (77).

“Metafiction assimilates Intertextuality, hybridity, magic realism and all the perspectives of criticism into fictional process itself, because Metafiction is what Hawthorn calls “literally a fiction about fiction” (Hawthorn, 205). The characteristics of Metafiction include renunciation of context, tendency towards formalism, lack of suppositions about

Human nature and preference of method to metaphysics. In a way, it amounts to no interpretive criticism which is also known as metacommentary because the novel of Metafiction does the function of criticism without actually interpreting any particular text. Metafiction suspends the illusion/innocence of mimesis through a host of strategies which unveil the identity of narrative and undermine the isomorphic fallacy that life and narrative are identical. Metafiction is an anti-illusionist mode of narrative self-consciousness (i.e., the condition of artifice and the process of invention of the novel are laid bare) that reveals the identity of narrative as an order of discourse and not a mirror of life” (78).

“The concept of Hybridity has got currency at the advent of post-colonialism. Hybridity is born of the union of two or more opposed factors. Hawthorn describes a hybrid text precisely as “one formed by cutting two other texts together- in either a planned or a random manner. A term hybrid text can also be used to describe a text in which two separate and often opposed, elements can be detected, on a thematic or an IDEOLOGICAL level”(Hawthorn, 205). In this sense it is akin to intertextuality. Hybridity is classified into various types depending upon the source of the background. Thus there are biological hybridity, cultural hybridity, and linguistic hybridity” (80).

“Chutnification refers to the process of making the diction suitable to present the narrative which is an amalgamation of several cultural, social, and regional factors appropriately. The formation of a new brand of Indian English is similar to the process of ‘chutney’ making. As various ingredients, spices, grains-and flavors etc. are ground into powder or paste for final dish called ‘chutney’, various national and regional languages, registers, speech acts, rumors, jokes etc. are dissolved into the narrative medium called diction. It is a mixture of several linguistic categories like the mixture of several flavors in

Chutney making. Chutnification is originated in India to refer to the Indian English into which have entered new vocabulary of Indian words, the rhythms and sound patterns of Indian English. It refers to the language and linguistic styles of recent Indian novelists in English” (81).

The term narrative is a kind of text is used in the narrow sense of linguistics and literary studies, as well as in the broad sense of semiotics, which considers as ‘texts’ any semiotics entities- pictures, movies, photos etc.

As Roland Barthes puts it: “narrative may be transmitted through oral or written language; through static or moving images, through gestures and through an organised mixture of all these substances. There is narrative in myth, legend, fables, fairy tales, novellas, novels, history, epos, tragedy, drama, comedy, pantomime, pictures, comics, events and conversation. In these almost infinite forms, narrative exists at all time, in all corners of the earth, in all societies. Narrative begins with the history of mankind (Popova).

“In a broad sense, narrative is the semiotic presentation of a series of events semantically related in a temporal and casual way. Movies, plays, comics, novels, newsreel, diaries, chronicles or treaties on geology are all narratives in this broad sense. In this sense, narratives can be constructed through the use of a wide range of semiotic environments: the written and spoken word, visual images, gestures and actions, as well as combination between them. Any semiotic construct, anything made of characters, can be called a text. Consequently, we can talk about many types of narrative text: linguistic, theatrical, pictorial or filmed” (Popova).

Semiotics generally refers to the study of signs that analyses how meaning is produced within a society, language or any communicative system. The theory of semiotics flourished through the works of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. The origin of semiotics lies in the early works of Saussure who is well known as the father of linguistics. A sign can be anything, verbal or non-verbal. According to Saussure a sign is the combination of signifier and signified. He believes that the relationship between the signifier and signified is arbitrary. Charles Sanders Peirce develops a different kind of semiotic theory.

“Peirce’s Sign Theory, or Semiotics, is an account of signification, representation, reference and meaning. He defined “sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called Objects, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former” (Atkin). What differentiates Peirce’s theory from that of Saussure is that Saussure finds only two parts of signs whereas Peirce claims that there are three inter-related parts in signs. “Peirce argued that signs consist of three interrelated parts: a sign, an object and an interpretant.

For the sake of simplicity we can consider sign as the signifier, for example, a written word, an utterance, smoke as a sign for fire etc. The object, on the other hand, is best thought of as whatever is signified, for example, the object to which the written or uttered word attaches, or the fire is signified by the smoke. The interpretant, the most innovative and distinctive features of Peirce’s account, is best thought of as the understanding that we have of the sign/ object relation. The importance of the interpretant for Peirce is that signification is not a simple dyadic relationship between sign and object: a

Sign signifies only in being interpreted. This makes the interpretant central to the content of the sign, in that, the meaning of a sign is manifest in the interpretation that it generates in sign users (Atkin).

Throughout his career Pierce spent his time to define and re-define his ideas about signs and semiotics. Pierce writings on Signs can be classified into three: Pierce's Early Account (1967-8), The Interim Account (1903), The Final Account (1906-10). From his early account to the final one Pierce developed his ideas about signs and recorded the changes which were more complex and confusing from the earlier accounts. Pierce then specify the signifying element of a sign.

As in the sign, an object as a whole is not required to the process of signification, certain characteristic of an object is enough to signify the sign. For Pierce, the relationship between the object of a sign and the sign that represents it is one of determination: the object determines the sign. Pierce notion of determination is by no means clear and it is open to interpretation, but for our purposes, it is perhaps best understood as the *placing of constraints* or conditions on successful signification by the object, rather than the object *causing* or *generating* the sign. The idea is that the object imposes certain parameters that a sign must fall within if it is to represent that object. However, only certain characteristics of an object are relevant to this process of determination (Atkin).

The interpretant can be defined as an outcome of the sign- object relationship. The interpretation provides a better understanding of sign's object.

Just as with the sign/object relation, Pierce believes the sign/interpretant relation to be one of determination: the sign determines an interpretant.

Further, this determination is not determination in any casual sense, rather, the sign determines an interpretant by using certain features of the way the sign signifies its object to generate and shape our understanding. For Pierce, then, any instance of signification contains a sign- vehicle, an object and an interpretant. Moreover, the object determines the sign by placing constraints which any sign must meet if it is to signify the object (Atkin).

Pierce claims that a sign can be considered as a signifier and it can be classified into three types: an icon, an index, or a symbol. An icon has a physical resemblance to the signified, the thing being represented. A photograph is a good example of icon. An index shows evidence of what's being represented. A good example is using an image of smoke to indicate fire. A symbol has no resemblance between the signifier and the signified. The relationship between them should be culturally learned. Numbers and alphabets are good examples since their order are culturally learned. "The icons we use in digital interfaces are all signs and not specifically icons as defined by semiotics. Icons as discussed here are one possible type of form a sign might take. An icon is meant as a direct imitation of the object or concept. Icons bear a physical resemblance to what's being represented. A photograph is an example of an icon signifier" (Bradley).

An index denote the relation between the signifier and the signified. Signifier and signified is inter-related to each other, one cannot exist without the presence of the other. For example, smoke is an index of fire. Dark clouds are an index of rain. A foot print is an index of a foot. In each case the presence of the former implies the latter exists. An index is a sign

That shows evidence of the concept or object being represented. An index may not look like the object or concept it represented. Instead it resembles something that implies the object or concept.

Symbols are at the opposite end from icons. The connection between the signifier and the signified in symbol is completely arbitrary and must be culturally learned. The letters of an alphabet are a good example of symbols. The shape of each letter and the sound it represents bear no physical connection to each other. There is no logical connection between a symbol and what it represents. The connection must be learned and it usually becomes associated with the concept it represents over time. Language, numbers, traffic lights and flags are symbols. What's being communicated, must be learned. An icon or index can also become a symbol over time through repetition. For example the floppy disk is still used to represent saving a digital file, even though no one uses floppy disks anymore and lot of people have probably never even seen one (Bradley).

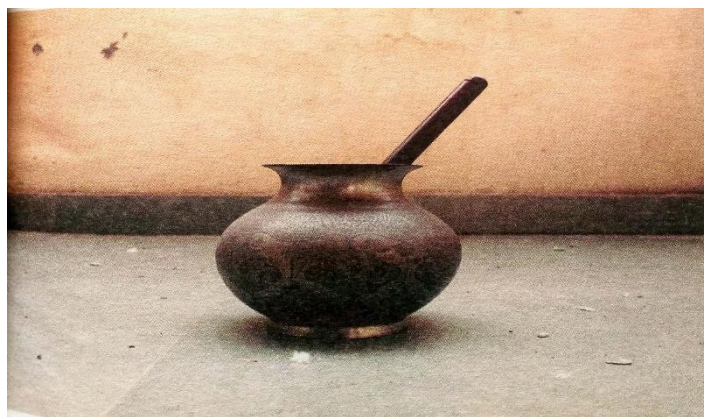
Semiotics plays a significant role in the meaning production and thus it became an area of interest for many scholars. Using Pierce's theory of semiotics, this dissertation focuses on the refugee trauma in the two books, *The Sea Prayer* and *The Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition through Material Memory*

Chapter Three

A Journey through Material Objects

Once a person has experienced a traumatic event in his life, he will never recover from the impact it has had on him. People may forget the good things that are happened in their lives, but it is difficult to erase the memory of something terrible that happened to them. The partition of India was one of the scariest events in the history of India, causing the massive migration that took the life of several people and left millions homeless and refugees. Protests erupted in many places as soon as the news of partition spread among the people and in no time many parts of India became a land of gruesome violence where the people threatened and killed each other. On one hand the Muslims invaded the homes of Hindus, beat them, kidnapped their women and threatened to kill them if they decided to remain this part of the border. But this was not one sided, the Hindus especially the Sikhs retaliated by persecuting the Muslim. When the situation became out of control the people gathered their possessions and fled across the border before the rioters took their lives. Their journey was not that much simple, they have witnessed horrific events along their way but somehow they managed to reach their destination but the sight of such brutal violence lingers in their mind and it will remain in them until their last breath. The majority take nothing with them across the border but some were able to take their possessions with them. They have no time to decide which one is important and which one is not. They took everything they could carry and covered it with their clothes to hide it from the robbers and later these objects became their family heirloom, a treasure that gave them strength to adapt to a new life in the new world. Aanchal Malhotra's *Remnants of a Separation* investigates the role of these objects in the life of the people who migrate across the border.

These objects are not a mere material thing “they serve as a catalyst for memory, a trigger for remembering as well as a portal into the past” (Malhotra, 24). Malhotra’s grandparents were hailed from Pakistan or the other side of the border. They used to tell her stories about the other side of the border, their past and the partition. On one such occasion her granduncle showed her an array of objects from his wardrobe. But “two objects are kept away from the pile of other objects: a round-bottomed vessel – a *Ghara* and a thin metal stick – a *Gaz*. The *Gaz* was medium sized round bottom vessel with an elegant neck. It was made up of a combination of alloys hence it had been occupied by rust and its surface turned into a dark metallic colour due to oxidation. A pattern of leaves and line works was engraved on its middle portion” (Malhotra, 43-44). The design was very common in those days and people often draw their names on the metallic things especially when give it as a gift on occasions like weddings and naming ceremonies. When his parents moved to Delhi they brought this from Lahore before the partition.



When he holds these objects in his hand and feels it smell, it takes him back to his past, the past of his family. At that time when the brides went to their husband’s house, they would carry some utensils with them as part of their trousseau. His mother used it in her household

chores and now her descendants used it to make *lassi* just like she does. In those days they used the Gaz, the yardstick to measure the fabric. His grandfather had a textile shop in Lahore and when his father used to work there this is the yardstick he used to take the measures of the clothes. His parents moved to Delhi in search of better fortune and they set up a jewelry business in old Delhi but it provoked the Hindus. The Hindus are afraid these Punjabi people might pose a threat in their business. Moreover they are anti-Punjabis who do not like anyone who was not from Delhi. In spite of these turmoil, his father's business prospered and they became the leading jewelers in Delhi. He still remember the middle aged Sikh man who was a victim of a Muslim auto driver. When the riot broke out everyone was scared, they were told to stay safe in homes and the violence continued several weeks even after the partition. Their Muslim neighbours seek shelter in their homes because if they were caught in the hands of the insurgents their lives would be in danger but eventually they moved across the border. His parents were lucky that the partition didn't affect them compared to others, even amidst the crisis they lived together under the single roof.

In a sense these objects symbolize the migration, the pain of uprooting indeed they serve as a link between the past and present. There is a semiotic relation between these objects and the migration. The *Gaz* and *Ghara* act as signs since they represent the migration of the Vij family (Malhotra's maternal family). Moreover they represent a time when these objects are being used for everyday life.

Azra Haq brought her with her some pearl jewellery when she moved to Pakistan during the time of partition and she kept it like a treasure that woven the history and memory together. She was born and brought up in India and they had an ancestral *haveli* in Jullundur, because of her father's job and his continuous transfer she spent most of her life in her

Ancestral *haveli*. When Malhotra asked her about the partition she showed a long necklace and a pair of earrings made of fine Basra pearls. Each pearl was sparkling in the sunlight and they were all joint together in a golden chain. There was various kinds of necklace like *saat lada* which made with seven strand and *paanch lada*- one with five strand. The size of the necklace varies according to the number of the strands they are made with.

This jewellery was very close to her heart because it remind her of her grandmother who used to tell stories when she was young. These pearls has a significant place in the history of India, they refers to a time when kings were ruling. Mian Ehsan-ul-Haq, Azra's uncle who later became her father-in-law, was the legal adviser of the king Maharaja Ganga Singh. Azra got these pearls from the maharaja as a parting gift, when she is about to leave to Jullundar. At that time these pearls were a kind of rare things and were a mark of elegance and class. But these pearls was not only represent her childhood, her great time in India but also remembers her about the days of partition. She still remember a stranger was beaten up by the guards just because of his clothing, he wore a dhoti which was enough to identify his nationality. By August, the problem became serious, the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs causing Agitation across the punjab. They could not stand there and with the help of Sir Francis Mude, the first governrr of West Punjab they travelled across the border in army trucks. Her uncle take all of his expensive furnitures and silver wares but eventually they had to thrown of them to make space for the people who had no means of getting across the border. They took long mountain route to travel so that they could avoid the danger. When they reached Lahore they had nothing with them, no house, no belongings, the riot destroyed the city as a whole.

There used to be many beautiful monuments that had been burnt down amidst the violence. The garden city had been pillaged, many people had been killed, bodies lay everywhere. Many Hindu and Sikh girls had been carried off by muslim men... there were five camps in total in Lahore. And everyday quite a number of trucks would go around the villages to extract Hindus women especially, who had been abducted by force – dragged out of their villages, raped and abused. And the saddest thing was that many of these women refused to go back to their families across the border for fear of no longer being accepted(Malhotra, 70).

For Azra these Pearls convey her memory of a time, a luxuries life in India but now they had to live on a budget. Since these pearls invoke the memory of partition it can be considered as a signs of migration.

Malhotra's paternal grandfather Balraj Bahri put a veil on his memory because he didn't want to go back to those days to revisit the horrors of partition but his old age unravelled the veil and enables him to look back to the days that actually moulded him to lead a comfortable present. They lived in Malakwal, a small town in the Mandi Bahauddin district of Punjab. Even though Half of the population was Muslims, there was mutual respect between Hindus and Muslims. Everything changed with the announcement of partition in june 1947, the city was mutilated by communal violence. The Hindus hide inside of their houses with all the lights out to escape from the insurgents who roamed the village screaming "Pakistan zindabad". His mother takes some utensils with her when they flee. A heavy glass, a *lassi* tumbler, a *large flat dish* and a *katora* are some among them. They used the largest *kadhahi* as a makeshift carrier and filled it with other smaller items such as plates, smaller

kadhai, saucepans, *pateela*- a blackened tava and the long unshaped spoons. His father called the lassi tumbler as kade-wala glass but in india it is known as Patiala glass. The Patiala glass had a matching bowl to which look somewhat similar to a *thali* for serving. His father used to ate in these large plate. They still use the katora- a bowl and handle-less saucepan to warm milk and soup. The bottom of the saucepan had blackened due to the continuous usage and its silvering was gone completely and turned into a brass colour. Compared to the utensils available in today's market the old utensils are much heavier and larger in their size. Those were the only things she take across the border because she knew that the journey they were going to take was very difficult. They need food to survive so she carried the utensils so that if they get ration they can prepare food in it. These containers were still in the house, they were kept at the back of a cupboard in the kitchen. His mother used to cook in this utensils when they were on the refugee camp. They spent ten days in the camp but eventually they had to leave the camp because the camp was located on Pakistan soil. With hearts full of grief and sorrow they decided to move across the border. Under the cover of darkness they reached Malakwal railway station. There are thousands of people like them impatiently awaiting the train to come. They somehow managed to get on the train and they all stood together because the train was crowded with the people and it would be hard to find anyone who gets into that rush. The people became breathless with fear and anxiety and when the train began to move a sense relief ran all over their body. When they reached Amritsar there was nobody to welcome them in fact the tag of refugee fell on them. They found shelter in a refugee camp and spend several months there doing menial jobs to make money until he finds his uncle. His uncle took them home and when his father and elder brother who were stuck in Malakwal due to some issues in their job finally reached Amritsar, they decided to move to Delhi. After reaching Delhi they made their way to Kingsway Camp where he met his lady love for the

first time and gradually they fell in love with each other. With the help of his former employee he acquired a shop in the refugee market and build up their family business – book selling.

The utensils also reminded him of the patriarch system that prevailed in those days. It was his father who ate first then the children and then his mother. The patriarch would always eat on a larges plate that came from his wife’s house as part of the dowry. It is true that they suffered a lot due to the partition, it made them refugees and penniless but in a sense it taught them to stand on their own feet. They learned the importance of hardwork and the challenges they had faced made them responsible. Now he believes that if they were still in Pakistan or the other side of the border they never would never get the comfort life they are enjoying now.

Her grandmother Bhag Malhotra was also from Pakistan, she was born in Muryali in the North-West Frontier Provinces. Her father died when she was very young and her mother raised all the children of her own. Her father’s death turned things upside down. All of a sudden they became an outsider and isolated from the rest of the family members. Her uncle took custody of her father’s property because in those days only son has the right to inherit the family property. According to her the crisis began in 1942 onwards and it continued until 1947. The Muslims unleashed violence everywhere but not every Muslim take part of these violence there were some Muslims who always lifted their hands to help the Hindus without any hesistation. They guarded the Hindu houses at nights and helped them to make their way to the refugee camp set up for the Hindus.

They were told to keep a small knife and chilly powder with them to protect themselves from the attackers. Women were the most miserable in those days. “many jumped

into wells, many were killed or wounded, their breast were cut off and they were left to bleed to death, some were dragged away and abducted, forced to marry or convert... too many act of savage violence against women... always protect your honour, no matter what. That is what we're taught"(Malhotra, 104). With each passing day, the mood of violence is changed and it became inhuman and barbaric. They fled to Delhi because they knew that one day or another they have to leave. They have two choices : either stay in Pakistan or migrate and they chose the second one because remaining in Pakistan is like calling death. Though they reached safely in delhi the problems did not end there. They spent two days in her elder sister's home but soon they realised that her sister in-laws regarded them as a pain in the neck and then they thought nothing, took what they had and went out onto the street. They had nowhere else to go nor they had the money and were more like beggers in a foreign land hence her mother took that drastic step, she decided to go back to the Frontier. She believed that it is better to die on one's own soil than in a strange land that only gives them bitter experience but the macabre tragedy they witnessed at the railway station compelled her to rethink her decision. Bhag Malhotra still remembers that terrible event

That was the first time we saw a train full of dead bodies arriving at the platform. We were told it wasn't the first such train to have come from across the border, and that train from this side too that had gone across had met the same fate. I was sixteen years old and I remember distinctly that I had never been gripped with as much fear as I was that day. The grotesque sight was far worse than the riot we had witnessed (Malhotra, 106).

Her mother takes with herself two objects when she migrates across the border: one was her ancestral knife that was used to protect themselves from the assailants and the other

was a *Maang-Tikka*, an ornament which she hopes to sell and get some money once they reach in Delhi. “It was a large pendant with a ruby flower at its centre. Leaves and branches set in gold formed a web around it, with a round border enclosing the ornament. It was a spectacle of specks of blue stone, red ruby, dull garnet, dusty gold, pearl and diamond. It was handmade, one could tell that from its imperfections” (Malhotra 108). But she couldn’t sell it because it was the only thing that connects her to the land where she was born and spent half of her life. She got this from her mother-in-law as a wedding gift and later she gave it to Bhag as a present on her wedding day. And for Bhag Malhotra it was a symbol of her mother’s bravery and courage. More over this object reminded her of all those grotesque sights and the terrible events they had to face along their way to Delhi.

Hansla Chowdhary has a *Bagh*, a garment which was made by her maternal great grandmother and passed to her grandmother who brought it with her when she migrated across the border during the time of partition. It is a kind long shawl made with raw cotton and was woven on a homemade wooden loom. “The outside of the bagh was red fabric, with the threads and seams clearly visible. It has two kinds of stiches – a wide tack made with several threads, which bound sections of the base fabric together, and a finer, more delicate stich stippling the entire surface in angular diamond shapes. The thread of both stiches were yellow – the dull yellow of winter sunshine, the muted yellow of desert sand” (Malhotra p.113). It was made for special occasions like weddings or the birth of a child. During this time all the women would gather around and they make this wonderful piece of art together. However, this one was made single-handed by her great grandmother and it took her almost three years to complete it. Hansla considered it as a precious gift and kept it an antique.

The *bagh* was the only thing she carried across the border because they had left in a hurry and were unable to take her other possessions. Rawalpindi witnessed brutal acts of violence during the days of partition. Her grandmother's brother was already in Delhi so they decided to migrate there at least they would have someone to lend a hand in a foreign land. But the journey would be long and hazardous and they have to face danger in every step despite the fact that they migrate across the border. Though they left in haste they had to leave behind many things but she did not forget to take her *Bagh*, not only it was close to her heart but it protected her from the chillness of the night and no one would steal it from her. Luckily her grandfather used to have a Muslim friend in Delhi and they devise a plan to exchange their property so that even if they had to migrate they would not be homeless in an unfamiliar city. The *Bagh* did not only represent the time of Partition and the journey that her grandparents had made but also it was assimilate the memory of her grandmother as well as great grandmother and was also a sign of the special bonding between a mother and daughter. The *Bagh* contains itself with blessings of her predecessors and it also acts as a symbol of a mother's caring and compassion. Hansla was born on this side of the border or in other words the Republic India but her family hails from the soil of Pakistan a place that was unknown for her but the *bagh* that came from the other side always connects her with that place. Through the *Bagh* the women convey their secret message to the next generation, it teaches them the importance of patience and compassion and gives them strength to face the challenges in their life.

Pro.Sat Pal Kholi seemed very enthusiastic when he was asked about the partition. He was sixteen years old when the freedom struggle reached its peak yet he remembered the exact words of the slogan they had sung decades ago. He was born in Lahore, though the city was predominantly Muslim area the people had mutual respect for each other. His mother

was from a wealthy family and so she inherited the family property and when his father died she started a small money-lending business. Everything was normal until the proclamation of the partition. When they heard the news of partition they did not think that they had to leave their city because Lahore was one of the oldest and greatest cities of undivided India. They could not have imagined India without Lahore. When the riot broke out in Lahore it destroyed the kinship between the Muslims and the Hindus. The Muslims in the neighbourhood started to loot their Hindu brothers. Almost all the non-Muslim families were left their homes in fear of being persecuted. His family too left their home and moved to Delhi. His mother takes valuable things such as her jewellery and the items that had been mortgaged with them. She takes the silver cigarette case, silver soap dish and the patiala glasses with her when she moves to Delhi but ironically none of these belong to her. She only had a pair of scissors on her own, though it has not any monetary value she never forgot to take it because it was an inevitable part of her everyday life. The blade of the scissors was still sharp. “The entire surface had scummed to the air and moisture of years, and was now coated in a thick layer of dark brown oxidation. The handles were darker than the rest of the body, almost blackened” (Malhotra p.295) .Whenever he looks at these scissors it reminds him of his mother, her hardwork and dedication. It takes him back to the past, his birth place and all those beautiful moments he had in Lahore but at the same time these scissors also reflect the struggles they had to endure during the time of partition.

In a sense all these objects represent a time, a period that was unforgettable for some people. Hence these objects can be regarded as signs of migration that followed the Partition. According to Pierce theory of semiotics the process involves a triadic relation between a sign, its object and interpretant. A sign is something that only represent the object and the object is what the sign represents, it can be a quality, event, facts or value. The interpretant can be

considered as the effect of sign on the mind. Here all of these pictures represent the sign of partition and the migration followed it. And the real objects can be interpreted as the semiotic object of the sign because migration was the byproduct of the partition. The trauma of the people who witnessed the violence and killings can be considered as its interpretant. The people were forced to leave their home and had to become refugees in a foreign land. Each individual experience of the partition reveals how painful is to be uprooting. The partition affects even the fourth generation of the family. The trauma they experienced during the time of partition haunts them throughout their life that is why some people refuse to talk about the partition. Now all they have are these objects; though they were mere mundane objects. They enable them to revisit their past. The objects have no monetary value but even then they keep it like treasure. These objects evoke nostalgic feelings and they remain as symbols of a generation's struggles and sacrifices.

Chapter Four

Unraveling the Graphics: Refugee Trauma in *Sea Prayer*

It is said that “a picture is worth a thousand words”. Sometimes words are not enough to express the reality. The incapability of words demands a new medium to communicate, something new and effective. Graphics is one of the best ways to accomplish this demand. The words only provide one or two meanings whereas a picture invite multiple interpretations. Whatever the subject, be it serious or not it can be presented through the pictures. Can pictures deal with issues like the refugee crisis? Khaled Hosseini, an American novelist took this as a challenge by using watercolour pictures to narrate his fourth book *Sea Prayer*. This illustrated work highlights the plight of refugees by shedding light on the risks they must take at every step of their journey while crossing the border. The story progresses through the psyche of a father who is very much concerned about the perilous sea crossing they had to undertake and through his worries the author draws the struggles of the refugees especially the children who is much younger to endure all these predicaments.

Though it takes only few minutes to complete the book, the message it conveys makes the readers think deeply. The book shows a transition, shifting of time and place. The first section of the book portrays the life in Homs whereas the second section is all about the destruction. Though the book tells the story of a father and son, their individual experience of Syrian civil war and the hardship they had to endure, the story is not different from that of other refugees who also had to go through the similar situations in their life. Each picture in this book absorbs the emotions of the refugees, their memories and hope and at the same time it makes the reader to think beyond the limitations of words through which the author controls the reader. It is said that every artist be it a writer or painter hide something in his/her work, a kind of Da Vinci code. Perhaps it may be some truth or the untold history of a past. Hosseini here use his work to reveal something that happened in the past and still

Continuing in the present. He only gives some crucial reference in the book and left the reader to decode the picture and let them to assume their own versions of the story. With the help of semiotics it is possible to decode the meaning from the pictures and find out the hidden message of the story.

The lifeless body of Alan Kurdi forced him to think the risk taken by the refugees while they crossing the Mediterranean Sea and he imagines what would be their lives be like before the war, how they resolves to migrate. All these questions paved the way for the magnificent work *Sea Prayer*. In a sense the father and son in the story symbolically represent Alan Kurdi and his father. When the story begins, Hosseini takes the readers to the most crucial moment in the life of the protagonist – the night before the perilous sea crossing. He was not alone, the beach was crowded with the people who left behind everything to save their lives. His son Marwan was sleeping perhaps, the next morning when he wakes up they might be in the middle of the vast sea. When he look at the innocent face of his sleeping son, it takes him back to his past and slowly the veil of his memory began to crumbled away. There is a warm, infectious wave of nostalgia runs throughout his memory. He described his son about the golden age of Homs, their hometown. Everything was normal in Homs when he was a child, his grandfather used to have a farmhouse outside the city of Homs. In his childhood he used to play with his brother and they spent their nights in the farmhouse, laying mattress on the roof and laying down by looking at the stars. In the morning the enjoyed “the stirring of olive trees in the breeze, the bleating of his mother’s goat, the clanking of her cooking pots, the cooling air and the sun which look like a pale rim of persimmon to the east”(Hosseini p.5). In visual arts watercolours are used as a device to indicate something that connected to memory and here, as the story goes through the memory of the protagonist Hosseini uses watercolours to narrate the story. In the few pictures

Hosseini not only depict the childhood memory of the protagonist but also the natural beauty of the Homs. Those images are exactly the same as those described by Marwan's father – there is shown a number of trees, a goat eating grass and the time is indicated through the yellowish colour on the horizon. The trees here symbolically stand for the nature as the life giver. The close up images of the trees shows how rich was the city before war and the dark green colour of the leaves reinforce the fact that the Syrians may have led a peaceful life. The green colour usually considered as a symbol of nature, life, harmony, freshness and peace, sometimes it also used to indicate safety. The yellow colour is often associated with happiness and intellect. Hence by using the combination of yellow and green colour the author wants to show that how happy the life was, they had everything and they were satisfied with what they had.

He described every minute thing to his son perhaps his son may not have get the chance to experience them. He gets disturbed by the fact that his son cannot remember the Homs as he do. "I wish you hadn't been so young. You wouldn't have forgotten the farmhouse, the soot of its stone walls, the creek where your uncle and I built a thousand boyhood dams" (Hosseini p.9). In Homs, they had Mosque for Muslims and church for the Christians and a grand souk for shopping. He still remembers that trip when he and his wife took Marwan to the farmhouse. His wife took Marwan to the field showing him herd of cows grazing in the field. One thing to note that when the narration begins there is no reference about his wife, she is completely absent from the scene and it is possible that perhaps, her absence indicate her premature death. She was only present in his memory that reinforces the fact she is far away from them. By showing her in a red salwar Hosseini hints at her death.

Red, the colour of blood and fire is associated with passion, love, desire, heat, longing, lust, sexuality, sensitivity, romance, joy, strength, leadership, courage, anger, danger and determination. In different cultures, red carries different meanings. In some cultures, red represent purity, joy, and celebration and is a traditional colour worn by brides. In china, red is used for good luck and represents happiness and prosperity. In South Africa, red is the colour of mourning, and in Russia red is associated with communism ... in the United States, red, when combined with white and blue represent patriotism and pride of country (Bourn).

The red colour can be considered as a warning that something bad awaiting her. But here it can be read that the red colour shows the passionate love of a mother toward her son as well as her husband. The way she hold Marwan shows that how protective she was and the holding hands indicate their closeness and affection. But the fact that she was not given a face making her a symbol of universal mother figure: kind and gentle. The background was filled with bushes and wild flowers indicating the presence of nature. Even though he does not provide much details about her personality it is obvious that she is strong woman who loves her son unconditionally.

The book then shifted its focus to its main theme the mutiny and the worsening humanitarian crisis. From here Hosseini adopted a more realistic way of narration to express how terrible the situation is. He devoted the rest of the pages depicting the crisis in Syria particularly in Homs. Hosseini does not render the cause of the uprisings and nor does he gives any hint about the people who precipitate the violence. Marwan's father only says "First came the Protests. Then the siege" (Hosseini p.17). But the image of the protest gives

more clarification to his statement. The image can be seen as a replication of the protest held in Syria against the violent government for arresting a group of teenagers for anti-government graffiti. Thousands of people participate in this protest and to suppress the protest the government imposed siege but it only made the situation worse. The graphic weight and the contrast of lights and darkness symbolises seriousness of the issue. The colour used in this picture is neither black nor blue it is somewhat a grey colour that represents unhappiness. The dim lighting and the heavy shadows on the people represent the hardship they suffer. To enhance the effect it is portrayed in splash (a panel that takes up two whole page) in fact from this picture the rest of the story is portrayed in splash. The image of the protest is drawn from one angle to the opposite corner of the next page indicating countless people took part in this protest. One reason why Marwan's father omit the background of the crisis may be Marwan is too young to comprehend this political issues.

However, the intervention of the military turned things upside down. . It was after the military involvement the uprisings spread like a wildfire. Peaceful protest turned into violence and bloodshed. The government has taken draconian measures to repress the protest, the sky started spitting bombs, and soon Homs has grown into a burial ground. By using black and white tone Hosseini creates a contrast that symbolise the horrors of the civil war. He does not use any objects to convey the aftermath of the war except the colour tone but it has a breath taking effects on the readers. In literature sky is always associates with peace and heaven but here dark sky stand for the symbol of destruction. The gory civil war destroyed everything in Homs, its peace, beauty and serenity. No words need to explain the brutality of the war, the darkness is enough to understand how much the war affected the city.

The novel then sheds light on the after effect of war; Buildings are crumbled down, dead bodies are scattered everywhere and it is hard to believe that there existed a city because the war had changed the image of the city itself. Hosseini provides a picture of the civil war that shows how gruesome the war was. The black smoke erupts from many places can be considered as an indices or index sign of fire. Generally smoke is considered as a sign of fire because both of them cannot exist without the presence of other. The broken buildings act as an iconic signifier (sign) and its grey colour act as the semiotic object and together they form the idea that there is nothing left in Syria. The shattered buildings represent the disintegration of a culture as well as the hope of Syrians who may not have get their old life back.

Marwan's father also share his concern about the younger generation who have deprived of their right to live and grow up in their own country. Instead of seeing the goodness these children have seen the evil and bloodshed of the war and the result is they have becomes the victim of trauma and depression. They faced the horrors of war at a time when they needed cared and protected.

As violence increased they took whatever they could and flee from their land to a safe place so that at least they could save their lives. Most of the refugees live within the narrow confines of their host country without any basic necessities. Refugee camp like turkey are overcrowded with the people from war affected area. The book is pregnant with these problems of refugee life. When the violence in Homs reached its peak, they decided to move to a safer place but it was not as easy as it sounds. They spent several days in narrow gaps between concrete bricks without food or water. There are neighbours, classmates and strangers equally tired and vulnerable. They knew very well that as long as they remain in Syria their lives would be in danger so they took their possessions and set out for the dangerous sea crossing. In the shore, while waiting for the boat to arrive, Marwan's father felt

The presence of his deceased wife. The anxieties and fears of the refugees regarding the sea crossing is depicted through the image of mothers and children which can be considered as an icon signifier. The dull and gloomy faces of the mothers and children act as a semiotic object that indicates their lack of hopes. The image of mothers with their heads bowed indicates their helplessness. They do not have any proper planning in fact their decisions to leave their country was taken into all of a sudden and that's why they didn't get enough time to prepare for it. There are Afghans, Somalis, Iraqis and Syrians and they are equally impatient for sunrise. When the sun rises they all embark on a perilous sea journey in search of a new home.

Marwan's father is concerned about their illegal migration because he knew that they are uninvited and it will create several problems. When he began to lose hope he suddenly felt the presence of his wife and she assured him that nothing will happen. From his anxieties it is clear that the refugees are not always welcomed when they migrate. Marwan's father is not sure that their hosting country will be as kind and generous as they expect. He heard his wife's voice from the sea "oh, but if they saw, my darling, even half of what you have, if only they saw. They would say kinder things surely" (Hosseini p.31). In order to show his fears and anxieties Hosseini provides a picture of a father holding his son. The image is a symbolic sign that represents Marwan and his father. They are portrayed in a grey colour which indicates their lack of hope and depression. The blue colour on the background can be interpreted as the presence of his wife since the blue colour represents sky, heaven and God.

The narrator was not sure about whether they could survive or not but he assures Marwan that "Hold my hand nothing bad will happen" (Hosseini p.33). But it was a lie because the narrator knows how dangerous the journey is. When the boat arrived everyone eagerly jumped into it. The boat was already filled but the people continued to grab a space

On it because they were fed up with these killings and violence. Their action shows how difficult is to remain in Syria. The picture is shown in contrast indicating the dangers of their journey. The boat, people, clouds even water is shown in black colour. The dark clouds can be considered as an index signifier. The dark clouds are an index of rain. The boat may even sink at the times of heavy rain fall and cyclones. The dark clouds can be considered as a symbol of death. The second last page of the book shows how vast and vulnerable the sea is. It is said that God controls the steering of a boat and the narrator wishes it had been so. The fear of losing his son is expressed here. Hosseini shows some black birds flying towards the passengers. The birds can be considered as the black crows that brings bad luck. The crows can be interpreted as a symbolic signifier because it is widely believes that crows are bad omen. So the presence of crows symbolises that something bad will happen. However, Hosseini ends the book with a happy climax, perhaps, he may not want to end the story in a tragedy. He uses multi-colours to hints that they might have reached shore safely and are awaiting for a new beginning. The combination of red, green, and yellow colour may indicate the land they reached

In order to show the changing milieu and to emphasize the refugee trauma Hosseini uses the interplay of light and shade throughout the book. He used warm colours such as red. Green yellow to show the pre-war situation in Syria while he chose shades of grey to highlight the effect of civil war and the refugee crisis. In painting, to give a realistic approach to their work artists usually rely on light and shade effect similarly Hosseini uses these technique in *Sea Prayer* to provide a realistic way of narration. The scene where he depicts the violence, war field and the lives of refugees under the concrete bricks he has used light and shade effects. According to Charles Sanders Peirce a sign consist of three inter related elements one is the sign itself and the other part is the object and the Interpretant respectively.

In this light the book *Sea Prayer* can be considered as a sign of the contemporary refugee crisis that happened all over the world. In this book each image acts as an icon for it imitates the real life situations of Alan Kurdi. The colours used in these images act as semiotic objects since their symbolic meaning offers multiple interpretations. Together this image and the colours used in it provide a more clarified meaning to the sign (interpretant). Pierce states that a sign could take the form of a signifier as icon, index and symbol. Most of the second part of the book acts as an icon for example the image of the perilous sea journey has a resemblance to the journey taken by Alan's family. The crowded boat and the green colour act as an object of the signifier icon. By analysing the signifier and its object it is clear that through this picture Hosseini wants to show the dangers of crossing the sea. The image also invites other interpretations. The openness of the boat indicates the vulnerability of the sea as well as nature's indifference to man. The green colour is often associated with life and nature, here the colour green symbolically represents their hopes and survival. So the author gives the hint that they may survive in their new world.

Hosseini dedicates this book to the thousands of refugees who have perished at the sea while fleeing war and persecution. He depicts the reality of refugees through several watercolour paintings in this work and evokes a kind of melancholy in the mind of those who have seen such things only in newspapers or television.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The Novels *Sea Prayer* and *Remnants of a Separation* can be considered as milestones in the refugee narratives. As the refugee narratives are involved with politics and history usually they fail to grab the interest of the common people. Most often people neglect the refugee narratives in favor of fiction or other literary narratives. In this project entitled “Tracing Elements of Ethnic Conflict and Refugee Trauma in *Sea Prayer* and *Remnants of a Separation*” an attempt is made to prove that by using different narrative styles in refugee narratives, it is possible to seize the interest of the people without losing the essence of the refugee trauma. In *Sea Prayer* Khaled Hosseini portrays the contemporary Syrian refugee crisis more realistically. Instead of turning it into a long fiction Hosseini portrays the story through several watercolour images. In *Sea Prayer* Hosseini shows the peaceful life of the narrator which ultimately loses with the outbreak of the civil war as it necessary to know what they had in order to understand what they had lost

Since the book depicts the story through the pictures, Hosseini uses the techniques of light and shade in order to make the stark difference between the pre and post war situation in Syria. In order to highlight the pain suffered by the refugees he made use of features unique to visual text such as composition, contrast, facial expressions, gaze, hues, and gestures. The book has symbolic meaning rather than literal meaning. He brilliantly uses the colour symbolism that is helpful to understand the mood of the scenes as well as the psychological trauma of the refugees. Hosseini was influenced by the death of Alan Kurdi and therefore majority of the events in the book have a close resemblance to the life of Alan Kurdi. The story is told in pictures so it can be read by any age group. Hosseini conveys the inner conflict of the refugees through the anxieties of a father who is concerned over the safety of

His son. The pictures of sea crossing, the crowded open boat and the vast sea show how difficult and dangerous is the sea crossing. These images are helpful to understand the situation of the refugees before they undertake the perilous sea journey. Usually people have no idea about how refugees migrate and what risk they have to encounter along their way but the realistic portrayal of Hosseini enables the readers to understand the risk undertaken by the refugees.

In *Remnants of a separation* Aanchal Malhotra vividly describes how the partition of India had affected the psychological makeup of the Indians. The Radcliffe line not only divided Indian territories but also divided the people as Hindu and Muslim. *Remnants of a Separation* investigates and records the real life incidents of the victims of the partition. Through the experience of the author, Aanchal Malhotra, the book exemplifies that how the partition was affected the third generations of a migrated family. Malhotra's grandparents are migrated from Pakistan during the time of partition but they still has the memories of their life in Pakistan. Malhotra tells the story of migration through several objects that the refugees have taken with them across the border; but now these objects have become their heirloom, most valuable things in their life. Unlike other literary works, *Remnants of a Separation* has multiple authors and each of them tells a different stories of partition. The narrative does not follow any definite order; some stories start in Medias res, but some start with the childhood onward. Though the story details the partition, violence and the personal experience it does not take more pages. One thing common among them is that their memories are connected with the object they carried with them when they moved across the border.

Though Malhotra knew that her grandparents were originally from Pakistan but she did not think much about it. But after hearing their story of survival she realized that "these

Were the details that needed to be archived, these were the gems, the gifts, the lingering nuances” (Malhotra, 47). In *Remnants of a Separation*, before each chapter Malhotra provides the pictures of objects which help the readers to understand the memories which are associated with these objects. These objects have significant place in their life for instance, in chapter two *Gift from a Maharaja: The Pearls of Azra Haq*, Azra says “*Isme bachpan hai*. In this lies my childhood from across the border” (Malhotra, 59). If the pearls represent childhood for Azra, the Maang-Tikka reminds Bhag Malhotra of her mother, and the Bagh of Hansla represents those intimate moments she shared with her mother. No one expected the partition to actually take place. When the violence spread throughout India the people fled across the border under the cover of darkness but there were many difficulties at every step of their way. Even though they survived the journey they had to spend several months in refugee camps and the label of refugee was imposed on them which kept on questioning their identity as well as their credibility.

For many, the experience of partition was different. Balraj Bahri believes that if he stays in Pakistan he will not be able to enjoy the comfortable life he is enjoying now. Azra had a pompous life in India but the partition put her into unimaginable struggles. They have seen many hardships, violence and upheaval which still lingers on their minds. Malhotra’s grandparents would say “we have paid our dues, we have paid the price” (Malhotra p.120) and the price they paid was the partition. At first they all hesitate to think about the partition because it reminds them those killings and violence but it will remain till their last breath. Apart from a physical displacement there was a traumatic mental displacement and a feeling of uprootedness. Though they are displaced they still has an emotional attachment to their birth place, this could be seen in Bhag Malhotra’s words “the place you come from moulds

You into the person you become. Remember that. You must never forget where you came from, because a part of that soil stays with you forever” (Malhotra p.107).

Both the books *Sea Prayer* and *Remnants of a Separation* explicitly exhibit the dilemma of the refugee and highlight the importance of being in one’s own place. “The role of place in the construction of identity and sense of belonging is of great significance. Therefore, individuals who have lost their sense of place feel as if a very vital part of them is missing and that they never belong anywhere” (Morgan 106). In *Sea Prayer* Marwan’s father describes even minute thing to Marwan because he believes that it is necessary for him to know about his place and culture. As Aanchal Malhotra says traditional means of narration have failed to do justice to the depth of historical trauma and therefore it is necessary to have a different method to deal with historical matters. As *Sea Prayer* and *Remnants of a Separation* used unique narrative style it was able to do justice towards the refugee crisis depicted in these works. Usually graphic novel are usually used for comic content and Hosseini uses it to depict a serious matter like refugee crisis. It has a great impact on the reader because as it was depicted in pictures even an illiterate can understand what is depicted in this book. Another specialty of this work is that it was not limited to the constraints of language. In the case of *Remnants of a Separation* the pictures of the various objects magnify the pain of the people who had lost everything in the partition. Through the individual story it also unravels many things, such as facts, history that the people of today don’t know. This project emphasizes that the unique narrative techniques used in *Sea Prayer* and *Remnants of a Separation* provides a truthful representation of the refugee crisis and thus helps to create a kind of sympathy and empathy in the minds of the reader. In refugee narratives, the use of these visual narrative strategies can be considered as an effective way of

Expressing the refugee trauma. It is also compels the other authors to use different narrative style in their works.

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