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Mestiza Consciousness Unveiled: An Exploration of Postmemory as 'Secondary Witnessing' in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron*

**** Farrah Ansari***

Dr. Zainab Younus

ABSTRACT: *This paper explores various ways in which memories from the past cause the present to resurface, and enable different characters of the novel Salt and Saffron by Kamila Shamsie to bear witness to these memories as "secondary witnesses" of post-memory. By using the lens of 'memory turn' this study sheds light on the repercussions of different historical events delineated in the novel like the decline of the Mughal rule (1526-1707 CE), the revolt (1857), colonial rule (1858- 1947) and Partition (1947) at a national, familial and individual level by using tropes such as old family narratives, subplots, epistolary mode, flashbacks, and family tree. The article's premise revolves around exploring how the second generation, grapples with the intricate dynamics of memory, identity, and history as they seek "mestiza consciousness" by acting as both inheritors and interpreters of the past. The theoretical framework for this study will draw upon a complex interplay of memory theories, incorporating Marianna Hirsch's concept of postmemory, Michael Rothberg's exploration of "noeuds de memoir" (knots of memory), and Dora Apel's concept of "secondary witnessing". Through an examination of these theories, the study aims to illuminate the formation and configuration of Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of "mestiza consciousness". This intersection allows the researcher to show how characters find their "mestiza consciousness" in the context of historical events, sending them into a state of perpetual hysteria as they simultaneously question and interpret their memories as both heirs and interrogators of it.*

Keywords: knots of memories, postmemory, identities, secondary witnessing, Mestiza Consciousness.

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* farrah.ansari@numl.edu.pk

Introduction

Memory studies have emerged as a new interdisciplinary field of cultural inquiry that aims at providing insight into practices of public remembrance and the sociocultural dynamics through which conciliations of the past shape collective and individual identities, as well as inform social action. Historical events like the British colonial invasion of the subcontinent and the partition of India and Pakistan are undoubtedly remarkable events in the history of the world, and Kamila Shamsie in her novel *Salt and Saffron* (2000) has beautifully woven a story of the main characters living in pre-partition India who witness the pain of partition that ultimately becomes aches of the heart (*Dard-e Dil)* due to a bifurcated nation. This in turn also impacts future generations, as we witness the migration of ancestors from one land to another, who faced the hard reality of religious animosity and political grievances which not only dissected the land geographically but breached relationships and family too. Hannah Arent explicates in *On Violence* that the twentieth century was a century of wars and revolutions which seems relevant when one thinks about the repercussions of partition and considers the innumerable people who were displaced, abducted, and murdered. This paper explores the various ways in which memory of the past asserts its presence in the present, leading to a sense of loss, trauma, identity crisis, and dislocation for the postmemory generation as explicated in Kamila Shamsie's novel *Salt and Saffron.*

Literature Review

Pierra Nora's concept of 'lieux de mémoire' links memory to a fixed and specific local space and culture, while Michael Rothberg came up with the idea that this concept of memory is very limited and has a 'site-specific' perspective which rejects its multifaceted function when it comes to national history and collective memory. He proposed an alternative new concept of 'noeuds de mémoir' or 'knots of memory', which suggests memory's rhizomatic connections across boundaries and cultures. According to him, memory is 'subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing,' in an increasingly globalized, mediated, and interceded world. This is exactly what happens when Aliya, the protagonist of the novel, comes to know about her

family history from her elders across the borders and attempts to relate its presence to her present reality while revisiting certain parts of her familial history in an attempt to position her identity as an individual.

Witnessing events makes up an integral part of memory studies because once the bearer of primary memory is dead or lost, then the memory gets recognition through 'secondary witnessing.' Marianne Hirsch explains that the particular relation to a parental past has been described, evoked, and analyzed in different works as a "syndrome" of belatedness or "post-ness" and has been recurrently termed as "postmemory". According to this concept, the descendants of the survivors of massive traumatic events connect rigorously to the previous generation's remembrances of the past and in such cases, memory can be transmitted to those who did not live through that event firsthand and consequently affect them very deeply. The memories of the glorified past of ancestors, and the disruption caused by unusual events like partition and family politics continue to haunt the "second witnessing" of postmemory. In light of these debates on postmemory and witnessing memory, this study demonstrates that memory witnessing as "secondary witnessing" can result in making the process of identity construction and reconstruction a precarious one.

According to Lacapra, a 'secondary witness' is an analyst, an observer, or a historian who critically works on primary memory. This witness or analyst has not directly seen any event or has not been there to witness it but comes in direct relation to that event and works hard on primary memory. Contrary to this primary memory is created through direct and unmediated witnessing of the original event so 'primary witnesses' are like informed observers and they don't question the validity of that memory because they believe in what they see.

Discussion

In *Salt and* Saffron, we have the characters of the first generation who witnessed the partition of the subcontinent like Akbar, Usman, Taimur, Meher Dadi, and Abida Dadi who act as 'primary witnesses' of the Partition, but their generation becomes 'secondary witnesses' who bear witness to the decline of Dar-e-Dil's glorified past. The second generation of the novel includes Aliya,

Mariam Apa, Sameer, and Samia and they function as ‘secondary witness(es)’ for both the event as they listen to the traumatic story of partition and the family’s disruption and the glorified past of Dard-e- Dil from their ancestors. These characters witness ‘lieux de mémoire’ (realm of memory) which eventually connects them with their past through ‘noeuds de mémoir’(knots of memory).

This research delves into a more complex comprehension of how identities are formed among the postmemory generation. Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of “mestiza consciousness” emphasizes the complex interaction between cultural, societal, and personal factors that mold a person's identity. It embraces ambiguity, contradiction, and diversity in recognition of the complexity that is innate to identity. The idea that “mestiza consciousness” empowers people to negotiate and reject oppressive systems and allows for an acknowledgment of their various histories and experiences is central to Anzaldúa's thesis.

Shamsie employs a memorial spectrum to reconstruct historical narratives, a method that encompasses various events distanced across generations, including the Mughal era (1526-1707 CE), The Revolt (1857), colonial rule (1858-1947), and Partition (1947). Through the lens of the Dard-e-Dil family's ancestral memory, the author revisits these events, thus creating an intersection between memory, migration, and history within the novel's structure.

Aliya the main protagonist of the novel while thinking back on her past as a second-generation and a descendant of a family that lived through the horrors of the partition, finds herself entangled in what Rutheberg refers to as the ‘noeuds de mémoir’ or knots of memory. These knots stand for the many ways in which these second-generation like Aliya experience family history, and the larger sociopolitical backdrop of the partition. The events, history, and cultural legacy that have shaped Aliya's personality and perspective are the threads that bind her to a past she hasn't personally experienced. Speaking with her cousin Samia, she describes how these inherited memories, which have been passed down through the centuries, can be a burden or a source of strength for her, she says “… our lives don’t await memories, I decided; they are crippled by memories” (Shamsie 32). Aliya takes these memories as a burden because they bear the suffering and trauma from the past, which sometimes has an unclear effect on her relationships and

perspectives. However, they also give her a feeling of resiliency and connection, tying her to a common history and survival tradition. In the framework of the postmemory generation, this research looks at reinterpreting who they are by challenging their ancestors' history and the painful experiences that they have inherited through a variety of different sources. The postmemory generation serves as a ‘second witness’ to these recollections, they wrestle with the intricacies of their ancestry, endeavoring to comprehend how it influences their self of belonging. Through an exploration of how these generations navigate to the past and attain their ‘mestiza consciousness’, this study aims to shed light on the adaptive and transformative processes through which individuals navigate their identities in the face of intergenerational trauma and memory.

Aliya as a “secondary witness” wrestles with the difficulties of inherited memory and the lingering effects of past events on her current life via her musings. She wants to untangle these strands of the life of her elders in pre-partition India, comprehend their meaning, and make sense of the past while also bringing her own goals for the future together. This further conforms to what Rutherford stated about migration that it disorientates and ruptures identities. Throughout the novel, Aliya as a ‘secondary witness’ tries to make a connection with ‘knots of memory(ies)’ because all her family and ancestors are settled and dispersed in different parts of the world like Greece, Iran, Turkey, India, Pakistan, and the US encapsulating diversified past which comes to her in the form of stories narrated by her ancestors. This article looks at how several memory theory strands intersect in this novel to pinpoint various dynamics of familial conflicts, historical and geographic partition, and traumatic experiences that affect second-generation identities. In particular, it emphasizes how the split upended the story of Dar-e Dil had a significant effect on the generations that followed. All of the characters in this book, especially the protagonist Aliya, continuously and fascinatingly recreate their pasts through their memories, which reflects Helen Tiffin's theory that postcolonial narratives recast history as a "redefinable" present rather than an irrevocably interpreted past. To find relevance for the present, to comply, and in certain cases to challenge the authority of the official testimony of history, Kamila Shamsie recasts the intricate history of the family narrative in *Salt and Saffron*. Post-memory of the events that were passed down to Aliya's generation reveals intriguing tensions and facts about the family story. The three brothers who split up before the partition of the subcontinent, Akbar, Sulieman, and Taimur are

the source of the main tensions in the story, as the novel explains. Throughout the novel, Aliya repeatedly asks, "[w]hy did Taimur leave Dard-e-Dil?" (Shamsie 146). However, at one point, she admits that she prefers to narrate to her friends everyone's story from her family other than Taimor's because she wasn't aware of his story in its entirety. Once, she asked herself, "What was the story of Taimur?" (Shamsie 136). Since her ancestor never told her Taimur's story, it remains a secret initially, although they all remembered him departing from the Dard-e-Dil family.

In the middle of the novel, a kind of enmity develops between Aliya and Dadi as a result of Abida Dadi calling Mariam Apa "that whore" when she elopes with Masood, the house cook, and Aliya slapping Dadi out of rage. Aliya refuses to apologize to Abida Dadi for slapping her despite her cousin's best efforts. Since she wasn't aware of the true story behind Dadi's reaction and her connection with Taimur and Mariam Apa. When Abida Dadi tells the story of her past then things make sense to Aliya. She tells Aliya that she loved Taimur who never liked Abida Dadi, rather loved another woman, and left the Dard-e-Dil family for his love and afterward married her in Turkey. Abida Dadi then gets a proposal from Taimur's brother Akbar, the grandfather of Aliya. Abida Dadi accepts that proposal and marries him. Aliya wasn't aware of the reason for the real separation of these three brothers before but Meher Dadi recounts an event from July 1946, when Akbar and Sulaiman had a significant conversation at the family gathering to celebrate the Nawab's birthday. Despite initial tensions due to political uncertainties, Akbar and Sulaiman retreated to the verandah for a private discussion. Their conversation, initially focused on politics, gradually turned into a heated debate about the idea of Pakistan. Akbar expressed his belief in Pakistan's inevitability and his intention to relocate, while Sulaiman questioned his loyalty to their homeland. The argument escalated, revealing unresolved tensions between the brothers. Meher Dadi, who overheard the conversation, tried to intervene but was unsuccessful. The next day, Akbar with Abida Dadi left for Karachi, never to return to Dard-e-Dil again (Shamsie 125-127). After listening to this story from Mehr Dadi, Aliya became able to understand the reason why Samia in London advised her against mentioning her grandparents to Baji because there was a shared belief among both sides of the family, which she wasn't aware of until Samia told her. This belief was that the ties between the Indian and Pakistani branches of the family could have been repaired if not for the actions of Akbar and Sulaiman. Both brothers had vowed not to hear

each other's names again, constantly reminding the family of the bitter arguments and insults exchanged at the Nawab's table.

She later comprehends that Dadi's animosity towards Mariam Apa stemmed not from her, but from her mother as Abida Dadi loved Mariam Apa's father. The revelation from the 'secondary witnessing' of the post-memory helps her grasp her true 'mestiza consciousness', prompting her to apologize to Dadi.

> I saw now that Dadi's reaction to Mariam's elopement was directed not at Mariam, but at her mother – that near-mythical woman who had known what it was to be loved by Taimur. Dadi's reaction had arisen from love, but I had wanted so desperately to be the self-righteous one that I forgot everything Mariam Apa ever taught me about listening to the silences that bracket every utterance (Shamsie 155).

There were speculations surrounding the three brothers Taimur, Akbar, and Sulaiman that they were what the text calls "not quite twins", a belief upheld by the first generation. However, the 'second witness' of the postmemory of the next generation prompts them to question this historical narrative.

During a conversation between Rehana Apa, Samia, and Aliya, they explore the possibility of the brothers being the "not quite twins" in the family. Rather than simply accepting the handed-down story, they engage in a discussion to uncover the potential truths behind these tales.

> Maybe Taj saw triplets and wondered if they qualified as not-quite-twins. And then maybe she saw the clock and thought, Why not. Let me make them believe it's so. Let this be my revenge for their treatment of my mother and me (Shamsie 41).

Aliya also reflects on the past and reads again the narrative passed down through the generations regarding the Mughal court's affiliation with Dard-e-Dil. As Aliya recounts the tale of Zain and Ibrahim, one of the "not quite twins," the connection between the Mughals and Dard e Dil is established. The illustrious history of the family reveals the wonderful kingdom of Dard-e Dil as a collaborator with the Mughal Kingdom; yet, Aliya believes, with suspicion, that this kingdom never existed, as her ancestor has taught her. She said that the ruler of Dard-e-Dil had asserted his

right to a little land plot that was unmixable with a kingdom. Albeit like Mughals, the descendants of Dard-e-Dil followed their ancestry back to the Timurid line and in no ways, they were able enough to set up a kingdom like Timur or Babar" (Shamsie 139-141).

The idea of the "secondary witness" usually portrays people who show up after an event or experience as more knowledgeable interpreters and memorists. It suggests that subsequent generations who were not present at the time might be more adept at unraveling and deciphering memories. In one of the incidents Aliya as the second witness of the memory explains with skepticism that the Kingdom of Dard-e-Dil was a non-existent entity, in contrast to the family's manufactured narrative that it was a major ally of the Mughal kingdom. Rather, the head of the Darde-Dil line was merely a landlord, and his territory did not extend to the level of a state or kingdom. Although they were not strong enough to create a kingdom like Timurlane (1336–1405) or Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur (1483–1530), the successors of the Dard-e-Dil family claimed, like the Mughals, that they descended from the Turco–Mongolian Timurid dynasty and heritage. Consequently, the myths and tales that served as the foundation for the flimsy assertions of dominance which were transmitted and validated through family tales were all that were left. She as the interpreter of the memory revisits the story of the historical meeting between Zain, the leader of the Dard-e-Dil and also the favorite child of Nawab Asadullah with the creator of the Mughal Empire in India, Zahir uddin Babur,to highlight the dynamics of ambition and pride within her own family. In narrating Zain's proposal to Babur, Aliya draws attention to Zain's conceit and lack of political intelligence. Zain exhibits a severe misapprehension of Babur's authority and goals when he proposes to be Babur's vicegerent and says the emperor could go back to Bukhara if he was homesick in India. This incompetent deed reveals Zain's exaggerated perception of his power and highlights a larger trend of excessive pride and careless behavior among the Dard-e-Dil family. The offer ignited the Mughal emperor's wrath and resulted in Zain's assassination. His brother Ibrahim replaced him as the head of Dard-e-Dil.

These subplots lead us to the accounts of the past, its genuineness that reaches new inferences and reinterpretation by the transmitters in the form of crippling memories that are passed on to the new generation in a post-memorial way. In addition, Aliya's recital of this tale helps to

put her own family's struggles in perspective. She encourages contemplation on the recurrent themes of ambition, pride, and heritage within the Dard-e-Dil lineage by making comparisons between the past and the present. By doing this, Aliya illuminates the intricacies of family dynamics and the ways those historical narratives still influence the identities of his family even after the partition.

In *Salt and Saffron*, Kamila Shamsie uses a nonlinear narrative technique to retell historical events that are drawn from a variety of sources of communal memory, including family lore and history. For the characters from various generations, these atypical forms of memory weave a rich tapestry of complications that enable them to position and manifest their identities within the framework of their family history. To piece together the complex history of the Dar-e-Dil family over numerous generations, Shamsie employs a variety of narrative approaches. Character conversations, subplots delving into particular family relationships or events, and the epistolary mode in which letters divulge personal information and feelings all add to the complex depiction of the family's past. Furthermore, flashbacks offer a window into significant historical events like the pre and post-partition condition of the family and sheds light on the attitudes and deeds of earlier generations. A family tree and its depiction in the initial pages of the novel reflect a visual depiction of the complex ties and relationships that exist between different family members across time and serves as “knots of memory” for the second generation’s second witnessing of the memory. Moreover, letters exchanged between family members, as well as genealogies that trace the lineage of the Dar-e-Dil family, serve as tangible artifacts that anchor the characters to their past. By incorporating these diverse forms of memory and storytelling, Shamsie creates a rich and nuanced portrayal of how the past continues to influence and shape the present lives of her characters who witness the event as first generation too and even the proceeding generation like Aliya, Saiyma and Mariam Apa who listen about those letters.

The focus of this article is on how re-visiting the past establishes the relationship between ‘lieux de mémoire’ and secondary witnessing that enables individuals to construct and reconstruct their identities as secondary witnesses which demands more courage, reflection, and consciousness to position oneself in the milieu of ‘knots of memory’. Shamsie treated the partition of India as a

trauma that invited two different reactions from two generations. The status of Partition is problematized in the plot. Aliya profoundly focuses on 'moving on', where Partition is synonymous with 'Fruition, Revision, Condition' (Shamsie 37). However, her Indian relatives (such as Baji) had witnessed Partition, so she understood it as a 'division' (Shamsie 37). To understand the relation between the experiences of these two generations, there is a need to understand the notion of 'postmemory'. Marianne Hirsch explains post memory helps in understanding the structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. 'It is an attempt of traumatic recall but at a generational remove' (3). Hirsch further makes it clear by articulating the idea that when an individual grows up with 'overwhelming inherited memories' he is at risk of being dominated by narratives he listens to throughout his life. In such situations, his experiences are at risk of being displaced or even erased by those of the previous generation. In *Salt and Saffron*, Aliya has this sort of troubled relationship with her parental past. She is confused by the deeply internalized yet strangely unknown past of the Dard-e-Dil family. Therefore, to connect with her parental past, but also to make things clearer for her, Aliya meets Baji and her relatives from the Indian side, to understand their stance towards Partition.

The juxtaposition of the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial enterprise in this piece of fiction provided an insight into how Kamila Shamsie vocalizes the gaps or a void left around these important historical phases and presents a better picture with aid of reflective and critically aware secondary witnesses. It is nearly impossible to access the past completely and therefore novelist sees it from the lens of experiences of different characters from different generations and then attempt to explore it further. Partition has left unerasable marks on individuals, families, and communities in South Asia. Iftikhar Dadi shares that the experience of partition then, is not only individual, or belonging only to those who witnessed it directly, but extends its effects collectively to the society…across generations (19). He opines that in this manner, memories of partition transcend generations after generations and make up a collective memory but the notion of self remains heavily contested terrain in the backdrop of collective memory (17).

James Young states that the sites of memory do not exist by themselves rather they require the active agency of individuals in the production of memory. Aliya's reflexive gaze at this evocative site establishes an intimate connection between the past and the present. For this critical inquiry, she uses 'postmemory' to connect with her parental past and uses her discretion to resolve her dilemma as a 'secondary witness' which relates us to the idea of Gloria Anzaldua's concept of 'mestiza consciousness'. Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera* says that post-generations embark on the process of healing internal wounds when they give meanings to their previous experiences which ultimately gives ways to develop new selfhood (qtd. in Khan and Aslam 1-2). Anzadula opines the idea of a new consciousness in post generation and that is 'mestiza consciousness' which comes from continual creative motion which defines future and reality in which one can better position one's self (80-81). The novel ends with Aliya's marriage to a not-all-that-imperial and financially compatible Khaleel, subsequently breaking the self-important and broken suppositions of family predominance. Similarly, Mariam gains her 'mestiza consciousness' as a secondary witness of partition by the courageous act of rebelling against her royal lineage and she elopes with the cook Masood.

Taimur comes in the category of 'primary witness' in the milieu of the partition of India but becomes a 'secondary witness' for the events of Mughal rule and colonial rule. Taimur appears as one of the three sons of Aliya's great-grandfather who challenged the aristocratic tradition of Dar-e-Dil. He disappears from the family scenes to realize his nationalist dreams and is later labeled as a rebel. His 'mestiza consciousness' as a secondary witness of Dard-e Dil's decline gives him direction to stand on his revolutionary and nationalistic verdict. Readers find the story of Taimur and his nationalist stance in his letter. He writes;

> My brothers, we were born the year after the Jallianwallah massacre. Think of this when you are strolling down paths in Oxford, studying how to be Englishmen and do well in the world. I lack your gift of erasing, nay! evading history … those years of English schooling have robbed me of the ability to write Urdu …I am not an Englishman nor are you. … No more the Anglicized Percy. I am now Taimur Hind (Shamsie 24).

He moves to Turkey where he lives his life independently. Bhabha calls such an act of carving new spaces 'regenerative interstices' which ultimately carves 'mestiza identity' in the 'secondary witness' that emerges out of the strategies of resistance and consciousness. Taimur's "primary witnessing" as a member of the first generation helps Aliya in her emancipation as a "secondary witness" from the next generation. But this mestiza's identity blooms only in case of Aliya and Taimur as a secondary witness of partition and other family stories and history subsequently. Abida Dadi's collection of family photographs and frames decorated in drawing rooms show her connection and esteem for the ancestral homeland, relatives, and family ties. Meher Dadi says"…. [w]hy does my sister persist in cluttering her walls with these mementos of bygone decadence? What do you think she'd say if we took all the paintings down while she was away?" (Shamsie 161). Meher Dadi notices Abida Dadi's drawing room wall is cluttered with the paintings of Dard-e-Dil palace grounds which reveals that Abida Dadi as a 'secondary witness' of Dard-e Dil decline prefers to believe, endure, and cherish the past as it is.

One can say that the novel successfully juxtaposes vastly disparate experiences of traumatic pasts across racial, cultural, and temporal divides by employing a syncretic approach to memory studies. *Salt and Saffron* portrays an unspeakable as well as indescribable traumatic past as a 'lieux de mémoire' and as the living ghost that affects the present of the characters in the novel and fashions their personal and collective memory.

> That whole generation of my relatives mystified me. How had they sustained, for so long, the bitterness brought on by the events of 1947? I could believe it of one person or two, but good God! Our family was huge and yet there was never any word of reconciliation across the borders of India and Pakistan... How do you stop missing the people you loved before you could say love? (Shamsie 33)

The act of revisiting history becomes a site of bearing witness to trauma where characters gain importance as secondary witnesses in the process of restitution of forgotten stories that have been lost due to lack of knowledge, as well as the distances of space and time. The role of intersectional memory in the case of Aliya, Taimur, and Mariam Apa as 'secondary witnesses' enables them to construct their different and audacious identities which they gain after enduring long and

continuous hysteria of positioning them as individuals between their perplexed past and present. These ‘secondary witnesses’ of ‘knots of memory achieve their acclaimed selfhood after continuous labor of reflection and realization.

Another character from the post-memory generation is the character of Mariam Apa. As a "secondary witness" to the history of division, Mariam Apa questions the family's aristocratic background and puts her sentiments ahead of upholding family honor. Her decision to elope with the cook Masood brings shame to the family. As the "not quite twin" of Mariam Apa, Aliya struggles with her feelings for Khaleel from Liaquatabad. Based on her position as a "secondary witness" to memory, she can relate to Mariam Apa's boldness. She concludes that the generational notion of "What we are, we are" is out of date through the jumbled memories she possesses (Shamsie 43). As a post-memory inheritor, she feels that "what we were, we no longer are" (Shamsie 129). From the interaction of these “knots of memories”, Aliya eventually decides and becomes courageous enough to present Khaleel by the hand before the entire family and say, “Just because a thing has always been so, it does not always have to be so” (Shamsie 193).

Despite being an educated girl from a conservative family that criticizes and never accepts Mariam Apa’s elopement with the cook, which according to them brought disgrace to the family, Aliya discovers her ‘mestiza consciousness’ through her ability to live through the postmemory of his family tales and traumatic past as ‘second witness’. She embraces what she p perceives as right, choosing to follow love as the right decision and rejecting class discrimination as wrong. Aliya yearns to live a life filled with h love, finding meaning in it inspired by the Urdu phrase "*Naz*" from Abida dadi, which conveys the pride of being loved by someone. She prefers that Naz on class differences. Through delving into the past of her family's narratives and tracing the ‘knots of memory’ as the ‘second witness’ of traumatic events, she veers away from the attitudes of her ancestors, who resisted love and abandoned those who chose it. In this journey of postmemory ‘second witnessing”, Aliya discovers her ‘mestiza consciousness’.

Conclusion

This article has investigated memory witnessing from the perspective of a postgeneration, focusing on how this generation navigates the obscured narratives by encountering fragmented

memories of mass atrocities and familial histories like of partition and migration. Central to this exploration, the concept of "noeuds de memoir" (knots of memory), helped in understanding the fact that memory is not singular but rather comprises a cluster of memories and events stemming from various sources that make identity formation of postmemory generation a bit precarious one

The notion of the "secondary witness" within the postmemory generation helped to elucidate how subsequent cohorts, though physically absent during historical events, possess a distinct acumen to untangle and interpret these knots of memories. Furthermore, it underscores their role as inheritors and interrogators of the past. Through this process of critical examination, the postmemory generation cultivates a "mestiza consciousness," positioned at the intersection of past and present, thereby they reconfigure that past and their identities in the process.

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