

The Trauma Aesthetics: Symptomatology of Intrusive Past and Traumatic Memory in Agha Shahid Ali's Poetry

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the relationship between trauma and narrative. It asserts that to preserve one's culture, identity, and tradition in an alien world, the traumatic memory of the past should be transmuted into narrative memory. This qualitative research studies trauma aesthetics as a form of utilitarian movement to creatively represent what is unspoken and unrepresentable generally. This research will incorporate Agha Shahid Ali's selected poems to exemplify the articulation of disrupted memory and nostalgia in a poetic narrative. It is significant to include a poetic narrative because it can be a primary tool available to enunciate trauma as it can maintain a specific aesthetic and cerebral distance from the actual event and re-inscribe the traumatic experience. This paper aims to foreground the distressed reminiscences in the poetic narrative of Agha Shahid Ali to demonstrate the collective trauma of diasporic people at national and international levels. Keeping an eye focused on trauma aesthetics, the research will analyze Agha Shahid Ali's selected poems in the light of Cathy Caruth's interpretive framework of Trauma. It is important to know about trauma aesthetics and incorporate this psychological framework because they consider it important to listen to or read the traumatized other for each survivor brings a new understanding and information about the pathology of human history. Hence, the paper crystallizes an argument about the narrativization of traumatic memory that pays certain attention to the symbolized referentiality of the matter.

Key Words: Identity crisis, traumatic memory, poetic narrativization, diaspora, psychological development, Caruth

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INTRODUCTION

Psychic trauma takes place when an unexpected, sudden, devastating extreme emotional shock or a series of blows attacks the person outwardly. Albeit, traumatic incidents are external, they quickly become fused into the mind. Traumatization occurs when both external and internal means are scarce to cope with exterior hazards. This means that it is not the trauma itself that brings the damage, it is how one's body and mind tackle and react to this disturbing experience in its distinctive way. We are born with several innate sentiments that are part of our mammalian heritage and that generate determined and predictable reactions in all of our organs involving the brain. For instance, for all human beings, a traumatic experience does impact the entire persona, including the way they think, the way they learn and remember, the way they feel about their selves and other people, and the way they make sense of the happenings. All are deeply transformed by traumatic experiences.

These powerful traumatic images, sentiments, and sensations profoundly imprint in our memory and become the emotional memory (Joseph Ledoux,1992) that is problematic or impossible to eliminate, though we can learn to supersede some of our reactions. The trauma engraves in the mind and the individual is victimized under severe stress which is called 'memories frozen in time' (Van der Kolk, 1996). A person sees flashbacks, hallucinations, and dreams, and also feels alienated, depressed, empty, and even deadened. For the healing process, one needs to put the upsetting experience into the narrative by giving it words either spoken or written and share it with others. The spoken or written narratives allow the traumatized to put things in a proper sequence and help them to step out of the suffocating repressed memories. Without narrativization, the intrusive past remains in one's present and haunts him forever and narrativization allows us to

keep the past safely in the past and doesn't allow it to ruin the present and the future. This creative and artistic narrativization of agonizing remembrances is considered trauma aesthetics.

Trauma aesthetics facilitates suffering people with an abundance of opportunities, i.e. to express their selves, their experiences, past lives, conflicts, and apprehensions through verbal and non-verbal narratives. This research paper focuses on nonverbal expression- including poetry, art, music, sports, etc. It signifies that artistic movements can play a vital role in the healing process. Art serves itself as a 'bridge across the black hole of trauma' (Bloom, 1996). As emotions are built-in and they are part of one's biological, evolutionary inheritance, an individual cannot abolish them. The thing one can do is transform these emotions into a narrative because if they remain unexpressed, they will harm one's psychological and physical health. Trauma aesthetics is considered as 'a survivor mission' that assures the recovery of psychologically tortured people, especially diasporic beings. For people who are dissociated from their motherlands, cultures, traditions, social environment, ethical norms and values, traumatic aesthetics becomes a resource to confront all cultural, philosophical, religious, spiritual, social, and political memories. Also, it helps them to mutate the conflicts, violence, and hurtful memories into linear, peaceful narratives so they can retain their original identities in an unfamiliar and strange world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

Besides, this research paper focuses on the non-verbal poetic narrativization of Agha Shahid Ali's traumatic and obtrusive memory. Ali is a diasporic (Kashmiri-American) writer who scuffles to encapsulate, synchronize, and vivify the nuisance, and trauma as an outcome of enforced displacement and the situation of postcolonial migrants. In his poetic narrativization, he exhibits nostalgia, the memory of home, a sense of loss, immense love for the inescapable exuberant past,

sorrow for the current present of his homeland Kashmir, and the agony of being isolated in an alien land. His socio-cultural traditions haunt him because he has lost his ethnic identity in a newly relocated society. By aesthetically writing about his homeland, he brings his traumatic state through a metamorphosis that serves as a catharsis for his profound repressed emotions. By artistically creating poetry that displays the trauma of rootlessness, Ali creates a national consciousness on an international platform. On the one hand, if his traumatic memory portrays the sense of loss and unhomeliness, then on the other, his creative poetic imagination can transcend his grief of uprootedness and can assist him in cherishing his multicultural viewpoint. The chief concern of all diasporic writings, especially poetry, is to invent, investigate, and modify the self with all its fractured bits. As Ali's poems chronicle the epic of the mourning, yearning, and agony of a powerless spectator who observes his esteemed Kashmir from thousands of miles away, Kashmir is the paradise of earth that is on fire, perpetually plagued, and Ali becomes a naïve scapegoat of dirty politics played on its geographical settings, citizens, aspirations, and dreams (Majumdar, 175). I argue, that there is a symptomatology of euphoric past and traumatic memory in Ali's poetry to heal his disturbed psychological state as well as to fulfill his double duty as a diasporic citizen, first to represent his homeland (Kashmir, India) to natives and second to represent it to foreign country (United States) as honestly as he can.

The purpose of this study is to present Ali as an expatriate Indian writer who can endure, accommodate, and capture other cultures without losing consciousness of being an Indian. This research paper aims to depict the trauma aesthetics; the narrativization of past and traumatic memories in Agha Shahid Ali's poetry for representing the pull of his motherland that haunts his heart and encourages him to speak what is unspoken by traumatized. There is a need to give words to your innate emotions because one cannot live in the past for entire life neither past can be

eliminated. Diasporic writing makes the bridge between past and present because the past never passes. It resides with diasporic writers and gives them the richness of understanding and the affluence of expression. Thus, for those who experience and tolerate trauma, it is not only the moment of the incident, but the passing of it that is stressful; survival can be the most difficult period for the traumatized. With this insight trauma aesthetics is not simply a statement about trauma but it is a complete movement or an act of survival for the survivors.

This qualitative research addresses two key questions. Firstly, how does the author remake himself from the disintegrated shards of dislocated memory? And secondly, how does narrativized disrupted memory serve itself as a therapeutic force? As Cathy Caruth considers that traumatic happenings leave indelible and painful memories to which the sufferer continually returns, and by which he is tortured every day and night. For healing to occur, speech is a must, either it is verbal or non-verbal. This paper focuses on the non-verbal expression of traumatic memory into an artistic poetic narration because this creative narrativization moves terrorized beings from the experience of shock by reincorporating it into a new and firm understanding of it. This research is significant because it stresses the importance of trauma and its poetic narration to assert one's displaced identity and culture in an uncanny world. It is substantial because it develops a form of raising consciousness and it highlights, that to speak appropriately about trauma is impossible, but not to speak at all is impossible.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trauma aesthetics facilitates a realm to represent what cannot be illustrated through traditional historical, cultural, and autobiographical narratives. The way it expresses the pain is called imitating the 'symptomatology' of trauma', through recurrent literary devices and techniques i.e.

metaphors, ellipses, fragmentations, motifs, tropes, imagery, etc. These literary techniques and devices can be used in poetry in the best manner because of its nature of creativity and innovation (Whitehead, 2004, p.85). Hence, this trauma aesthetics interacts with trauma theory by discovering new modes of indirection and figuration for traumatic incidents. Also, for the generation who prefers ethical reading practice, trauma aesthetics provides a mode of witnessing the suffering in the arts.

This idea is useful for the traumatized as there is going an irresolvable tension between the trauma and the individual. The historical and cultural memory can be recounted through the works of productive imagination to provide a critical perspective on the relationship of knowledge and experience by interrelated acts of memory. This correlation of knowledge and experience can be portrayed in the study of literature, employing poetry, plays, novels, etc. The foremost element is the ‘metaphorical imagination’ which allows transformation to be done. The focal point is, rather than simply describing different histories that are rigid in their narrations, the traumatic experience can be narrated productively for more insight, lucidity and understanding (Silverman, 2008, 426). Likewise, Agha Shahid Ali’s poetry is considered the poetry of witness because it echoes the traumatic conflicts and sufferings. It is an alternative history described by the poets as the sufferer of brutality, or at least the observer of it. Ali portrays his disrupted memory in the poetic narrative so he can improve psychological development, attain his original identity, and validate the cruciality of his multicultural traditions being a Muslim in an Indian region. Wislawa Szymborska stresses the narrativization of traumatic memory into narrative memory and says, one should write it what is going on with your physical and psychological situation. One must write about the atrocities, the sense of loss, the nostalgia, one must write it with ordinary ink on ordinary paper (‘The Hunger Camp at Jalso’).

The narrativization of traumatic happening is the healing of trauma. It leads the traumatized towards self-fulfillment and self-realization. It takes out the self from fear and fragility and puts things to manage the continuous involvement of life with new meaning schemes. It is therapeutic expertise because its preeminent concern is to remake the traumatized self from depression and anxiety. This verbal or non-verbal narrativization heals the person from an emotional deficit and posits a way to possess a permanent consciousness of stability (Furedi, 2004, p.17). Moreover, trauma aesthetics does not refer to the ordinary physical or psychological trauma to be recounted in artistic narrative but it refers to the suffering of immense emotional torment by an individual. It refers to the collective or cultural trauma that includes the dramatic loss of identity, a breakdown of the social connection, and the collapse of the nation that has achieved some degree of coherence. It must have some established substantial cause to be accepted and requires time for mediation and demonstration (Eyerman, 2004, p.61).

A traumatized person portrays a comprehensible depiction of catastrophic experiences and inserts them into human cultural history. Trauma aesthetics modifies the visions of cataclysmic experience into organized feelings with literary devices and techniques. It offers the survivor a powerful, liberating position and does not follow any chronology. It reorganizes the repressed and deferred fragments of the traumatic plot into an inventive narrative (Bataille, 1995, p.226). Similarly, Agha Shahid Ali's poetic narrative consists of the language and incidents that serve as testimony of the cultural wounds and trauma, the reader becomes a witness of the poetry. They can observe the trauma incised in the pages and feel the presence of affliction while reading. Shahid's creative poetic narrative is a reflecting mirror; it terrifies and frightens the readers as they visualize the mayhem. It invites the readers to feel the perils of being geographically displaced,

culturally and socially alienated, and psychologically shattered. Thus, the text readers observe becomes a living archive (Forche, 2011).

Additionally, when internal psychological pain takes the form of verbal or non-verbal imaginative narrative, it diminishes the melancholic sensations and reacts to transhistorical trauma. It reduces anxiety and places traumatized persons in an empowering situation. Hence, it is proved that nostalgic grief can thus be creative while recording the harrowing experience (LaCapra, 2000, p.183). The written narrative that typifies the humongous cultural trauma does not simply report facts but it confronts peculiarity, eccentricity, strangeness, and effects of the event. It is the movement of trauma aesthetics and support of trauma theory by which especially diasporic writers express all the murky events of loss to produce fictional, and poetic substitutes for them. Trauma theory assists diasporic traumatized persons to encode particular events present in the cognitive environment. After that, the personal emotions and feelings are contextualized in entirely new personal and political situations. Trauma aesthetics focuses on the associative memory of the loss of the victim and encourages him to prove it as collective trauma and a global war (Nalbantian, 2008, p.81). In addition, the essay 'Home and Memory' asserts Shahid Ali's poetry as an act of remembering, a continuous act of recollecting, elucidating, and recreating the past in terms of the present and expected future (Stock). Also, recalling the past is never considered an act of retrospection or introspection. Rather it is a distressing remembering that put together the disarticulated to deal with the present traumatic state (Bhaba, 63).

The strong point of this above discussion is, that they all have mentioned the importance of trauma aesthetics which help the traumatized especially diasporic victims to regain their identities and improve their psychological development. Yet the gap of this research is to explore the

narrativization of trauma in non-verbal poetic narratives. However, I debate that Agha Shahid Ali's poetry exemplifies his stressful condition of being diasporic, alienated, and displaced. He chronicles his love for old prosperous Kashmir and laments on the current condition of his adored motherland.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The discussion builds on three major focuses in the paper. Firstly, it will discuss a detailed theoretical approach; trauma theory by Cathy Caruth to showcase the effects of past and traumatic memories on the body and mind of the traumatized and to reveal that the traumatized achieves his loss of identity through trauma aesthetics. Secondly, it will refer to previous readings (literature review) on trauma and Agha Shahid Ali's traumatic sentiments. Thirdly, it will discuss the remaking of Ali's lost self, his traumatic state, nostalgia for his happy past, love for the multicultural ethnic values, and extreme grief for not being able to return to his homeland. This is displayed through the artistic narrativization of his disrupted memory in his poetry. To conclude, the study will state trauma aesthetics can serve as a vehicle for traumatized Shahid Ali to do catharsis, heal from an unpleasant psychological state, and maintain genuine identity.

Emphasis of this qualitative analysis is on the Trauma theory by Cathy Caruth which is mentioned in the book "*Trauma: Explorations in Memory*" (1995). She asserts that trauma theory is psychoanalytical and its radical potential is to reiterate the lost truths of pain among traumatized. Trauma is not something that one experiences barely as suppression or defense, rather it is the temporal delay that an individual carries away with him. Trauma is considered a continual affliction of the event and this reexperiencing of the event is passed with the 'collapse of witnessing' (Caruth, 1995, p.18). She is of the view; that it is generally accepted by people that

traumatic experience forces itself upon victims and it is how it builds its power, but it is the victim who is fixated to respective trauma. While suffering from traumatic neurosis, victims are overwhelmed by the repetition of hallucinations, past thoughts, numbing and augmented arousal of the memories of their calamity.

This post-traumatic stress disorder can be understood as a pathological indication because it is not the expression of the unconscious but the manifestation of history. The maltreated, conceal this history within them or become themselves the testimony of history. This history is difficult to articulate, the victim does not address it to anybody, even if he/she does not respond to anybody. The suffering becomes a solitary action. Yet, for the trauma to be cured, the victim should integrate trauma with the narrative. The transformation of traumatic memory into narrative memory allows the memory to be expressed and communicated for the sake of preserving identity, and self, and to cure highly disturbed psychological conditions (Caruth, 1995, p.159). This verbal or nonverbal narrativization becomes a cause of healthy psychological functioning and it properly operates the memory system that includes a unified memory of all the psychological aspects related to certain experiences: sentiments, emotions, perceptions, and actions.

Besides, Cathy Caruth highlights the importance of memories by claiming that memory is an action: basically, it is the action of narrating a story. Memories are the entities that influence the mind to cope with new conditions in old recalled ways. This means that they are the entities that reset the parts of the nervous system. Then they are the reason that inclines the nervous system to act as though it remembers. So, the traumatized persons, though, experience living in two diverse worlds: the world of trauma, and the world of current, present, and ordinary life. It becomes difficult or impossible for victims to bridge these two worlds. Trauma and traumatic memories

cease the chronological clock and fix the moment of agony in the psychological frame. The only relief is the unfolding of the story means the narrativization of the plot either verbal or non-verbal.

Furthermore, she argues, that when a person suffers from the extreme condition, when he confronts trauma, he becomes unable to accommodate with existing meaning schemes and is overcome by memories. He is in the repeated process of storing memories differently and his normal psychological state can't be retrieved under ordinary situations. His memory becomes dissociated from sensible awareness and permissive control. Here traumatic memory is engraved in the victim's mind which necessarily needs a narrative of any kind. If narrativization is ignored or repressed, then the victim can't play a satisfactory role in his life and his efforts to adapt to a completely new environment fail. These traumatic memories are stored in three kinds of memory, firstly, as selective visual and clear imagery, secondly, as entirely pessimistic in implicit memory, and thirdly, as explicitly in narrative verbal or non-verbal memory. The third, narrative memory is useful for psychological construction and traumatized can make sense of their grim experiences by narrating them artistically (Caruth, 1995, p.166). This artistic activity of narrativization can be a dynamic process to cope with traumatic memory and loss. It creates a balance between obsessive melancholy and ordinary mourning. Trauma aesthetics can transmute bitter feelings into an object of conscious awareness by producing narrative and symbolic works of art.

Moreover, Caruth distinguishes between traumatic memory and narrative memory. Traumatic memory is unadaptable in its nature and has no social element. It is produced by the mechanism called 'restitution ad integrum' which means if one component of a painful experience is evoked, all other components follow mechanically. These traumatic memories are also called subconscious memories that control one's ongoing actions. Victims who allow stress to overcome their

behaviors become emotionally confined and cannot feel the colors of their remaining lives. They are stuck in what Caruth calls 'same ego state' (1995, p.170). People who are stuck in a certain ego state, their personality development stops at a specific point and they become incapable of expanding anymore by adapting new components. In contrast to traumatic memory, narrative memory is a social act, it is flexible and variable. It allows traumatized to articulate or address their inner afflictions so their personality development won't stop and they can improve their psychological state by assimilating to new elements.

The next section will mention existing readings and knowledge of different intellects on trauma and Agha Shahid Ali's traumatic sentiments to verify the dynamic roles of trauma aesthetics in his poetry.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Agha Shahid Ali is a Kashmiri-American poet who expresses his haunting memories and traumatic psychological state in the form of nostalgic recollections of poetry. This research paper is an attempt to explore Ali's voice about his exilic sorrow that originates from the shadows of melancholic memories of his motherland. War and violence are synchronic frames in which his poetic verses take place. Kashmir is a place that is overwhelmed by terror and destruction and Ali highlights his psychological agony in poetic narration regarding the before and after the condition of his homeland. Kashmir is centralized in Ali's poetic world. The relentless yearning of the poet to urge for the beauty and identity of his home raises the question of political turbulence between Pakistan and India. His poetic narration is the vehicle to express the sense of loss of his homeland which was once named as paradise on earth. In his poem "Postcard from Kashmir", he illustrates his feeling of nostalgia, loss of identity, and exile. He knows the traumatic reality that he cannot

return to his homeland because there is nothing left except bloodshed and despair. He visits his homeland just through pictures, and memories because he has migrated from Kashmir to America due to severe political unrest between Pakistan and India. “Kashmir shrinks into my mailbox, / my home a neat four by six inches” (Ali, lines 1-2). Besides, in any case, if he returns, he won’t find the colors of freedom and prosperity there. Rather he would find the color of disappointment and devastation. He would witness the shattered hopes, homes set ablaze, lost communication, absence of love and emotions, and utter annihilation. The people over there have lost the hope to live a colorful life. their homes, the physical charm, the harmonious survival, and their identities are demolished by religious intolerance and political indifferences. “When I return, / the colors won't be so brilliant,” (Ali, lines 6-7). According to trauma theory, these traumatic memories reside in the subconscious of the victims and control their ongoing behaviors. Thus, these subconscious memories stop Ali from thinking anything else except lamenting the current situation of Kashmir and reminiscing about the golden past. Ali as a diasporic writer, engraves his psychological disturbance and the reality of broken worlds in his creative poetic narration which strengthens the idea of trauma aesthetics and helps him to heal from the inside. He constantly depicts Kashmir as a scattered place that is carved in his memory and he has the ultimate purpose to articulate it through his poetry. What he observes and articulates in his poetry, there are infinite atrocities done to innocent natives, the continuous repression, rapes, tortures in army camps, curfews, etc. Through imaginative poetic narration, he only reveals the dark pictogram of his homeland which disturbs him by day and night. Ali says: And my memory will be a little/ out of focus, in it/ a giant negative, black/ and white, still undeveloped” (lines 11-14).

Albeit, he reveals the truth regarding the catastrophic condition of Kashmir, the shadow of a felicitous past and images of home haunt his consciousness to the extent as if he is in the spell of

the charm of old Kashmir. In his poem, “A Call”, he says, “I close my eyes It doesn’t leave me, The cold moon of Kashmir which breaks into my house” (lines 1-3). Also, his love for his homeland is so profound that he compares the beauty of Kashmir with heaven. In the poem “The Last Saffron”, it is aesthetically depicted, “If there is paradise on earth/ it is this, it is this, it is this” (Ali, lines 48-49). Even in the conversation with Amitav Ghosh, he unveils his eventual desire which is to die back in Kashmir (Ghosh, 124).

Agha Shahid Ali describes in his poetic verses the butchered and nameless towns, eradicated from the maps of the world without any sign of course. He depicts the people’s ambiguity about their futures, mass rapes, suppressions, curfews, assassination of the unsullied boys in interrogation centers, grief-stricken mothers, impassive execution of women and children, bunkers on the bridges, snow changing into ash, enormous migration of Kashmiri pandits, insurgency, paradise turning into dark abyss, etc. The imagery and the language Ali uses typifies his psychological state which is disturbed because where he currently lives, is not home, it’s just four walls in which he feels suffocated. In contrast to this, his real home is not more like home. He feels as if he is nowhere, has no identity, have no peace and freedom to express his devotion towards his homeland. The only realm that satisfies his traumatic memory, that settles him down and puts things in order, is poetic narration. His poetry is the testimony of collective and cultural trauma which he metafictionally expresses in his poetic verses. For example, the poem: “Some Vision of the World Cashmere”, illustrates the obliteration of the rights of innocent people even a grandmother who falls badly and cannot move because of the curfew everywhere. Just because of the deadly restrictions, the roads are deserted and everyone becomes cold even the neighbors seem to be dead. “She had a terrible fall, there is curfew/ everywhere. We have no way to bring her back/ there is panic on the roads. Our neighbors have died” (Ali, lines 6-8). Similarly, in another poem,

“I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight”, Ali describes the homicide of an innocent boy by the security forces for the information he doesn’t have. Also, the protestants are fired upon by these butchers. Don’t tell my father I have died,” he says, / and I follow him through the blood on the road/and hundreds of pairs of shoes the mourners/ left behind, as they ran from the funeral, / victims of the firing” (lines 31-35). The way Ali narrates his apprehension in his poetry is relatable to Caruth’s definition of Trauma. It is the continuous affliction of the event and the re-experiencing of the event is passed with the witnessing. Similarly, Ali’s poetic narrative is the witness of the destruction in Kashmir and the fear of Ali’s psychological state of losing his homeland. The language and the imagery, he depicts become the evidence of the event on the paper making the non-verbal artistic narrative a cultural and historical truth.

Agha Shahid Ali’s poetry is not limited to his homeland yet he observes the brutalities of the British colonizers to the people of the Indian State of Bengal. In the poem, “Dacca Gauzes” colonizers cut off the hands of Bengali weavers because they protested against to handover of all the cotton produced and preserved by their land. After this incident, nobody dared to speak against colonizers and accepted their peripheral places as others. The xenophobic attitude of the colonizers drags the colonized from every kennel of their society, their homeland. “In history, we learned: the hands of weaves were amputated, / the looms of Bengal silenced, / and the cotton shipped raw/ by the British to England” (Ali, lines 19-21). The despotism of oppressors and colonial power is artistically narrativized with pathos to make it nationally and internationally significant. Additionally, “The Keeper of the Dead Hotel” presents the terrible Bisbee (a town in Arizona) deportation of the illegitimate abduction and trafficking of one thousand three hundred mine workers and enforced exile of women laborers. It chronicles how kidnapped people are deported to New Mexico by a desert, without providing food and water for sixteen hours. Ali says, “Each

night a voice cries out: “Fire!” The copper mountains echo with rifle shots/: men on strike are being killed/ in the mines, the survivors forced/into boxcars and left in the desert/ without water” (lines 21-25). Thus, Ali’s creative poetic narration is not a simple chronicle of the events rather it is a complex journey to speak and write about a land and its people who are detached physically as well as culturally, historically, religiously, and politically. He does not only narrate his psychological turmoil but he collectively expresses the mutual trauma confronted by all exiled and diasporic people for their hegemonized land. On one hand, he talks about the internal colonialism that plays dirty politics and makes natives aliens to their soil. On the other hand, he refers to the colonial power that decentralizes the people having less power.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, Agha Shahid Ali’s poetic attempt is a quest for the nonverbal discourse that can defeat the traumatic chaos that hijacks people’s mental development. Under the burden of intrusive past reminisces, people lose the ability to claim their individuality, their ability to maintain their identities, and the ability to contribute to new meaning-making processes. Hence, trauma aesthetics provides a realm to delineate cultural trauma into verbal or non-verbal narration so that people can place the past in historical narrative, make the present peaceful, and secure their futures.

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