

# Site of Memory and Mourning: Metaphor of War in Atiq Rahimi's Selected Novels

<sup>i</sup>*Zahida Younas*

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study undertaken analyzes three novels named as Earth and Ashes, A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear, and The Patience Stone, written by Atiq Rahimi. These novels tell the stories of families affected by the 1979 war. There is no direct reference to war and violence however, war keeps popping up in the textured background during the narration of the normal experiences of characters in the novels. These novels are enriched with the metaphors embedded in texts that complement the voice which is absent and yet it makes its presence felt throughout the text. The objective of the paper is to bring forth the role of metaphors in war literature. It concludes that metaphors are significant as on the one hand, they create a site for memory for both the part of reader and writer, yet on the other hand, they evoke pathos which invites the reader to mourn the loss of the war-torn community. This study is qualitative in nature and is conducted through the close textual analysis of all the mentioned texts under the lens of theories related to metaphors, war, memory and mourning -*

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<sup>i</sup>. zahidakhattak30@yahoo.com

This paper analyzes three novels of Atiq Rahimi named as *Earth and Ashes*, *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear*, and *The Patience Stone*. The chosen texts are set in the scenario of Soviet-Afghan war which took place in 1979. All these texts speak about the violence and hazardous impacts of war on Afghanistan. Due to its precise depiction of wartime, these novels can be taken as the emblems of war literature. In her article “War Literature” Maja-Isabella rightly states that the portrayal of “destructive and the impactful events” of the war creates war literature in the real sense. These three novels genuinely portray the gruesome reality of war in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has been called a graveyard of empires by many scholars (Dawson, McCarthy, Bearden, Pillalamarri, Neild, Innocent, and Carpenter) due to a long history of imperial intervention that it has been facing for decades. The most notable of these instances are seen in the form of the first Anglo-Afghan war (1839- 1842), the second Anglo-Afghan war (1878-1880), the third Anglo-Afghan war (1919), the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989), and the US and NATO’s Operation Enduring Freedom (2001-2021). These wars were not just limited to the battlefields but the impact of these wars is visible in the form of infrastructural, cultural, physical, and ecological collapse. The long-lasting impacts of war are enshrined in war literature. The trauma and the suffering generated from such experiences of war and genocide are transferred from generation to generation thus, becoming a collective memory of war that is inscribed in the form of metaphors in literature. This collective memory of war plays a therapeutic role and allows the readers to mourn the loss of the war-torn community. For this paper, I have selected three novels, named *Earth and Ashes*, *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear*, and *The Patience Stone*, written by Atiq Rahimi, as an example of war literature that speaks about the violence caused by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In doing so, I highlight the significance of metaphors in all the selected texts and their role in turning war literature into the site of memory and mourning. For this purpose, I, first, try to make a connection between memory and metaphor in bringing out the role of metaphors in the process of commemoration, and after that, I connect it with the process of mourning.

Metaphors generally can be taken as a figurative device, which allows the reader to look beyond the surface of the text. It is a medium of expression, through which the author implicitly expresses what cannot be explicitly expressed. In this way, metaphors become an omnipresent voice in literature. The use of metaphors in war literature is different from its conventional use. Metaphors used in war literature speak about the trauma of war on different levels thus honoring war literature as a piece of commemoration. Aristotle calls metaphor “a riddle is to express true facts under impossible combinations... (that) cannot be done by any

arrangement of ordinary words" (Aristotle 25) and "the mark of genius," (Aristotle 26). Metaphor thus is used to entail certain concepts in the guise of some words. They are a potentially persuasive means of communicating ideas as they evoke a strong emotional reaction. The use of metaphors in literature helps in retaining information and it assists us in the process of recall. In her article "Memory for Metaphors" Allyssa McCabe underscores the fact that the use of metaphors is "more effective in reminding people of things" (McCabe 8). Drawing on McCabe's concept, Sara Cox further observes that narratives are best remembered after connecting them with metaphors. In her dissertation "*Metaphor and Memory: How Metaphors Instantiate Schemas in and Influence Memory of Narrative*", she outlines the fact that metaphors instantiate schemas and through the "connections to these schemas, metaphors can affect how people attend to the information they are processing and how they represent it in memory" (Cox 9). Metaphors, in this way, are being used to make war literature commemorative.

The use of metaphors is very evident in the war literature of Afghanistan. Novels selected for this paper are written against the backdrop of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. These novels tell the stories of families affected by war. *Earth and Ashes* is the story of an old man and his grandson, Yassin, who has become deaf due to the loud explosion of a bomb. An old man is desperately in search of his son and the father of Yassin. The novel is descriptive and depicts the lethal impact of bombs and explosions on land. *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* is the story of a boy, Farhad, who takes refuge and hides from soldiers in the home of a lady, Mehnaz. During his stay at Mehnaz's place, Rahimi explores the psychological impact of the war and violence on Farhad. In the third novel, *The Patient Stone*, Rahimi takes us to the room, where a young woman is confined with her comatose husband and three children. The whole story is a reference to the portrayal of the bleak lives of women, who have gone through layers of oppression and still suffer from violence and political unrest in Afghanistan.

It is observable that metaphors are employed in all three novels; first of all, through the motif of silence and then, through the use of non-verbal discourse. These metaphors are loaded with symbolic meanings and speak about some significant issues on a mega level. Also, some metaphors are employed through imagery that could be easily analyzed. To relate the idea of gestures with metaphor, I am using Kovecses' and David McNeill's insights regarding gestures and metaphors and for the theme of silence, I am investigating Michel Ephratt's notion of "eloquent silence". I am taking Kovecses' concept of image metaphor to analyze the role of imagery in literature.

Zoltan Kovecses has connected gestures with metaphors in his book *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. He uses the term "multimodal metaphors"

(72) for gestures. As metaphor is “primarily a matter of thought and action” (71), similarly, “Other modes (or, modalities) besides speaking or writing that a metaphor can be manifested in are pictures, sound, music, and gestures” (Kovecses 72). These are the ways through which the thoughts are expressed and in this way, they are also multimodal metaphors. Metaphoric gestures are the symbolic representation of thoughts and ideas about which a person chooses to be silent. In his article “Hand and Mind: What Gesture Reveals About Thought”, David McNeill talks about the varieties of gesture and their relation to the cognitive process of a person. According to him, body movements we use in the form of gestures are no longer gestures but become a symbol that speaks our minds. In this way, kinesics are symbols with meanings. This provides us landscape to connect the idea of gestures with metaphors.

In *Thousand Rooms of Dreams and Fear*, the main character in the novel is the young lady ‘Mehnaz’, who provides shelter to the young man Farhad. Farhad, who has been beaten and tortured by soldiers seems to be in a severely agonized state always hallucinating between imagination and reality. Farhad narrates the story of Mehnaz by highlighting the layers of oppression she has been through. Mehnaz’s recurrent action of “tuck(ing) hair lock behind one ear” (Rahimi np) catches the attention of the reader. Whenever she chooses silence over speech, she “tucks her hair behind one ear” (Rahimi np). She expresses her silence through non-verbal discourse. The movement of her hands and feet has been described in great detail. For instance, her hands are “hiding flower in a cushion”, “her hand lifts her hair from one side of her face”, her feet are described as “she rises to her feet”, “Mehnaz’s delicate feet blend into the black patterns on the carpet”. Similarly, there are multiple instances like that in which Mehnaz’s gestures are explained in great detail. Similarly, in the novel *The Patient Stone*, the gestures of the hands are discussed in great detail. The novel starts with a reference to a lady’s hand in which “she holds a long string of black prayer beads. She moves them between her fingers” (Rahimi np). The movements of hands in the mentioned novels are not just random gestures, rather they are symbols as stated by McNeill, “in performing gesture, the speaker’s hands are no longer just hands, but symbols” (McNeill 105), which expresses the untold trauma and suffering of the silent character.

Non-verbal gestures in this regard could be taken as an example of words uttered in silence. Silence is a recurrent motif in the other two novellas by Rahimi. Silence reigns in the novel *Earth and Ashes* in both literal and symbolic senses. The main character in the novel is an old man, Dastaguir, who is silent by choice. His heart longs to see his only son, Murad, who works in a mine to earn a living for the family. During the course of his stay at the mine, the village is bombed by the Russian army. Murad is told that his family is being targeted by the army

to make him stay at mine. On the other hand, Dastaguir, most of the time contemplates the insensitivity of his son; "why didn't he return to the village?" (Rahimi np) "What has become of Murad?" (Rahimi np). He thinks about the "frailty" of Murad but chooses to be silent about it most of the time. Rahimi is using silence in a metaphorical way where the main characters are silent by choice. Michal Ephratt refers to this type of silence as "eloquent silence" in his treatise "The Function of Silence" (1909). Eloquent silence is "an active means chosen by the speaker to communicate his or her message" (Ephratt 1913). Eloquent silence is chosen by Dastaguir and Mehnaz to express their powerful emotions upon the loss of their dear ones. In the case of Dastaguir, he agonizes upon the loss of his only son, Murad. Mehnaz is suffering the agony of her lost husband and mentally and physically crippled brother. Their silences have emerged from the painful experiences. Ephratt has referred to the idea of eloquent silence as a means of enactment. He argues, "In cases of extreme emotional experience and in cases associated with preverbal experience, or in cases of nonverbal experience such as absence and loss (death), silence is to be seen as the preferred mode of expression, but in many such cases also as the most authentic and most adequate, hence the only possible way to communicate the emotional experience" (Ephratt 1918). The silence observed by Rahimi's characters is an instance of eloquent silence.

After examining the role of silence and non-verbal discourse, I shall now explore the role of imagery. Continuous use of imagery in the texts could be regarded as what Kovecses says "Image metaphors". Image metaphors are "image-based" metaphors through which certain ideas are conveyed. Image metaphors are scattered in all three novels in the form of war imagery in *Earth and Ashes*, floral imagery on the carpet in *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear*, and stone in beads imagery in the novel *The Patient Stone*. These metaphors are not merely signs rather, these metaphors are loaded with symbolic meanings<sup>ii</sup> which makes the texts memorable for the readers.

I begin by outlining the use of metaphors in war literature in order to suggest that these metaphors are significant in turning war literature into the site of memory and mourning. The process of memory and mourning in the chosen texts go together. The trauma and the suffering of war, which are exposed through the use of metaphors is adding into the collective memory of war. Here, it is worth noting that the theme of the collective memory is established through the personal memories of the characters. It is the instances of personal memories that invoke pathos in the audience or the readers.

Memory, in general, is referred to as the process of remembrance and recall. Oxford English Dictionary defines memory as "something remembered from the

<sup>ii</sup> These are discussed later in the paper. See page no. 10-11

past". Its etymology can be traced in Anglo-French *memorie*, which means "remembrance and record" and the old English *murnan*, meaning "mourn, remember sorrowfully" (Roy 21). The role of memory is very much visible in all three texts of Atiq Rahimi and is established through the use of metaphors. In forming the connection between metaphor and memory, I will first outline the personal memories of the characters in the novel, and then I will connect them with the larger theme of collective memory.

In the chosen texts, silent sufferers of the war are seen to be preoccupied with thoughts of the past. Most of the time, they think about the traumas and horror of the war and they recite those memories. The aspect that is worth noticing in this regard is the constant use of metaphors along with the act of narration of personal memories. Whenever a character is going to talk about his or her past, the author foreshadows it through the use of metaphors in order to make it memorable. There are numerous such incidents mentioned in the novel, but I will highlight only a few for this paper.

The memory of the unnamed narrator of the novel, *The Patient Stone*, revolves around the psychological, emotional, and sexual abuses that she has gone through in her life, firstly, at the hands of her father, then her mother-in-law and finally at the hands of her mentally crippled husband. It is seen that the whole novel is full of her act of reciting personal memories. Whenever she decides to verbally express her personal memories, her non-verbal discourse already foreshadows that. For instance, somewhere in the novel, it is mentioned that "she stands up and goes to the window, crushing shards of glass beneath her feet" (Rahimi np). Her action of "crushing shards glass" is interpreted as breaking the silence about most of the things, she has been bearing, and after that "she allows herself to visit the intimate corner of her memory" (Rahimi np). Here, the personal narration is already foreshadowed through the metaphorical representation of her body's movements. Similarly in the novel, *Earth and Ashes*, Dastaguir seems to be gripped by the reality of the Russian invasion. He keeps on reminiscing about the destruction of the village. The author provides us with glimpses of his personal memory through the metaphors of "fire or ashes...images, dirt, fire, scream and tears" (Rahimi np). Dastaguir's personal memory is dominated by the grotesque portrayal of the Afghan village, which has been destroyed due to bombs and explosions. These images are the sorts of image metaphors working throughout the text to convey the image of how "Russians destroyed the village" (Rahimi np). In the same way, the personal memory of Farhad, in *Thousand Rooms of Dreams and Fear*, is associated with the advice of his grandfather, his love for his mother, and the good time, he spends with his friends. During the time, he is hiding at Mehnaz's place, he longs to see his mother, as a result, he thinks about the smallest gestures of his mother like "she wrings her hands. She recites verses

from the Koran under her breath. She frowns. She bites her lip". (Rahimi np). His situation is narrated through the image of pattern designs on carpets. He seems to be obsessed with "patterns on the carpet. The patterns have neither an ending nor a beginning. These elaborate octagonal designs are infinitely intertwined and interwoven with endless other octagons. The octagons give birth to rectangles, the rectangles give birth to tiny dots" (Rahimi np). His obsession with the endless patterns and "flower pattern cushion" is the metaphorical representation of his own situation. Whenever he chooses to escape into his personal memories, he becomes lost in the "endless designs" of either the carpet or the cushions.

The memories described in these novels stem from the series of events that the characters have lived through. All three novels are set against the backdrop of the 1979 war in Afghanistan, which brings all these different characters on a common platform. Their experiences are alike since they share a common cultural background. In his book *The Nation as Local Metaphor*, Alon Confino observes, "One's memory, like one's most intimate dreams, originates from the symbols, landscape, and past that are shared by a given society. Since the making and the reception of memories, personal and collective, are embedded in a specific cultural, social, and political context, we can explore how people construct a past in which they did not take part individually, but which they share with other members of their group as a formative sense of cultural knowledge, tradition, and singularity" (Confino 8). Taking this lead into concentration, I am arguing that the aforementioned metaphorical representation of characters' personal memories of war and violence plays a crucial role in the creation of the collective memory of war in the community.

In this regard, it is important to consider the metaphor of silence in the first place. The metaphor of silence, which is predominantly expressed through non-verbal discourse is crucial in exploring the myriad injustices done to Afghanistan and the Afghani people. In many places in the texts, silence foreshadows the silence of the global world regarding the plight of the Afghani people. When Dastaguir said in *Earth and Ashes* that "the world is silent... so then, why are people moving their mouth" (Rahimi np), and when an unnamed character in the novel, *The Patient Stone* is narrating the story of her plight and suffering in front of mentally paralyzed husband, she admits that "her man (is) her sang-e-saboor" (Rahimi np), "you talk to it, and talk to it. And the stone listens, absorbing all your words, all your secrets, until one day it explodes. Shatters into tiny pieces" (Rahimi np), Rahimi wants to bring our attention to the silence of the world. He is protesting against the constant use of bombs in the land of Afghanistan and believes in sharing his story through the medium of literature. According to Elena Lamberti, different mediators of memory, either in the form of literature or film

contribute “to mould a shared understanding of the historical event, therefore encouraging the making of a collective and unified memory” (Lamberti 13). Here, Rahimi is building a collective memory of war through the medium of literature.

Maurice Halbwachs has described collective memory as a socially framed phenomenon where “each object appropriately placed in the whole recalls a way of life common to many men” (Halbwach 1). Rahimi’s act of collecting memories is seen in the description of the physical locality of war-torn Afghanistan. The name of the novel *Earth and Ashes* signifies the very fact of how war has turned the earth of Afghanistan into ashes. Nothing remains the same as it used to be. He quotes one of the incidents where “Yassin mixes the naswar, the earth, and the ant together with the jujube stone” (Rahimi np). The fact is Yassin is a war victim, who becomes deaf due to the loud bomb explosion. His act of mixing naswar, earth, and ant signifies the total annihilation of war. Rahimi chooses metaphors to elaborate on this idea. “The naswar” is used as a representative of the cultural system of Afghanistan, “the earth” is representative of Afghan territory, and “the ant” stands to represent the wildlife; all these are destroyed through the jujube stone. The jujube stone is associated with the “footprints left by (Russian) soldier”. After the soldier left, “the ant is no longer there. Ant, mud and naswar are stuck to the boot of the departing soldier” (Rahimi np). Rahimi’s use of metaphors allows him to uncover the horror-stricken face of war. It gives him more space to talk about the overall destruction caused by the war through the means of a few words. In her account, *War Beyond Words*, Jay winters supports the idea of using metaphor in portraying war. She has used the term “war cinema realism” (Winter 75) to show that the use of metaphors makes war accounts realist. It is this very realistic metaphorical portrayal through which Atiq Rahimi is consciously constructing collective memory.

So far I have explored the connection between memory and metaphor and how the use of metaphor is significant in making war literature a site for memory. It is done by mentioning examples of personal or private memories, which further give birth to collective memory. By doing so, I aim to show that the events described in the novels are not just random historical incidents rather they provide a platform to the reader whereby the war in Afghanistan is commemorated and remembered through the medium of literature. However, my argument is not limited to memory only rather, I am interested in exploring how literature also becomes a medium for mourning as well. By the medium of mourning, I mean to refer to the process of bereavement on the part of the readers and audiences.



Jay Winter has linked the process of memory and the process of mourning in her book *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*. She outlines that different facets of memories, may it be written memories or oral narratives, are foci of bereavement. So, as the process of memory is collective, the process of mourning is also collective. She notes, "War memorials (are) places where people grieved, both individually and collectively" (Winter 79). The war memories recorded by Atiq Rahimi are an expression of great loss. We can learn about the destruction and violence of war through the personal memories of the characters. It provides us a chance to empathize with the loss of the war-torn community. There is an enduring appeal of these motifs; especially the portrayal of children, portrayal of an elderly person, war imagery and religious expressions are related to the universal language of bereavement. It speaks about war and its aftermath.

While exploring the theme of mourning, the portrayal of children in war literature is worth mentioning. In "Earth and Ashes", Yassin is a young boy, who has gone deaf due to the bomb explosion and is unable to understand his situation. He thinks that the world around him has become silent and he is perfectly all right. He imagines, "the bomb was huge. It brought silence. The tanks took away people's voices and left. They even took grandfather's voice away. Grandfather can't talk anymore, he can't tell me off..." (Rahimi np). Referring back to my previous argument about collective memory, it is safe to argue that Yassin's disabled situation is not only adding to the theme of collective memory but rather, it invites readers to mourn the loss of such victims who become disabled due to the constant bombing and military interventions.

Moreover, a reference to hunger is evident in many places. The motif of hunger can be analyzed in both literal and metaphorical senses. On a literal level, hunger can be seen first of all in *Earth and Ashes*, where Yassin sheds "whimpering tears" for food while saying "I am hungry" but grandfather has nothing to offer than a "dirtier" apple and then he starts "sobbing" for "water" (Rahimi np). Also in *The Patient Stone*, the children of the comatose freedom fighter suffer for food now, as their father is not in a situation to win bread for the family. Rahimi takes us to the only room, they were confined in, where "one is crying, 'I am hungry mummy.'" The other complains, "why didn't you get any bananas?" (Rahimi np). These are the images of literal hunger that make the readers understand the theme of metaphorical hunger, as these instances are essential in exposing the hunger-stricken face of Afghanistan to the world. The portrayal of hungry and disabled children elicits pathos in readers. In his article, "Children as war victims in postwar European cinema" Pierre Sorlin noted that "children were fit to illustrate the ghastliness of a total war" (Sorlin 109). The ghastliness of war can be best analyzed while considering the psychological impact of war on children.

In *The Patient Stone* and *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear*, suffering children play a central role in divulging the ugly face of war and violence. In *The Patient Stone*, Rahimi has selected a few children and captured them closely while underlining the impact of destruction on the minds of young children. These children are busy playing some game and shouting, “Who wants the foot? Who wants the head?” (Rahimi np) and the other child replies, “I want the foot” (Rahimi np). It is a well-known psychological fact that children learn through observation and the model for their learning is not necessarily people rather “Children learn from models all around them, on television, in the grocery store, at school, and at home” (Rymanowicz). Children in Rahimi’s debut demonstrate that they have absorbed whatever has been witnessed by them. However, the very facts about what these children witness and learn while living in a war-torn society as the next generation of Afghanistan is the question left unanswered for the global world.

Similarly, *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* also highlights the same phenomenon related to the psychological impact of war on children. A young child, Yahya keeps on calling Farhad his father and refuses to believe that his father will not come back. Somewhere in the novel, it is mentioned that Yahya draws a moth on a dark paper for a supposed “imaginary father” (Rahimi np) and shows it to him, upon asking “where is it” he replies, “you can’t see it because it’s too dark” (Rahimi np). Yahya’s affectionate gesture of drawing something, especially for Farhad is a metaphorical representation of his longing for his father. He clearly wants attention from Farhad. In turn, Farhad’s inability to appreciate his little deed of love is tantamount to his inability to understand the pathetic condition of Yahya. It is now possible to engage with the ideas of mourning, pathos, or vulnerability in depth. Pierre Sorlin has expanded upon the idea of the portrayal of children as war victims. He notes that “the fate of children without parents was surely a serious concern in the postwar period” (Sorlin 100). The fate of those who have suffered and are still suffering from the war and violence in Afghanistan is also a matter of concern here. Rahimi invites his readers to share the pain of those who have witnessed decades of violence. A lot of questions need answers, what will become of those children who have become orphaned? What will be the fate of those who witness arms and ammunition on a daily basis? Who should be blamed for the children who have become disabled?

The depiction of the suffering children is significant in creating war literature as a site of mourning as it leaves thousands of people in shock. Emma M. Griffiths notes in her book *Children in Greek Tragedy*, that “the strongest element creating pathos for child figures was the contemplation of their lost future” (199). Although many mediators can be used to evoke pity, the way the children of

these societies incite the emotional response; no other modes could be used to do the same.

The portrayal of the elderly person, Dastaguir, in *Earth and Ashes* is also very significant for emotional appeal. Rahimi is cautious in weaving a tale of three generations in *Earth and Ashes* to inspect the long-lasting ramifications of war. The projection of the "sobbing" old man throughout the novel leaves a schmaltsy impact on the readers. While narrating the story of destruction caused by a bomb to the shopkeeper, Dastaguir speaks with tears in his eyes, "there was nothing left... the house had become a grave. A grave for my wife, a grave for my other son, his wife and their children...". Richard A. Kalish claims that the "death of the loved one is the most common source of grief for the older persons" (Kalish 33). However, grieving is not only limited to death there could be other losses such as the loss of "something owned that is very important", the loss of "income and financial well-being" or the loss of "the dream of things getting better in future" (Kalish 33). Dastaguir's grief is rooted in these losses as he becomes a victim of continuous violence that results in total annihilation.

Another metaphor utilized by Atiq Rahimi for evoking pity is the religious expression of mourning. In all three novels, there is a continuous reference to religion and faith through which the suffering people find their hopes. Religious expressions play a very important role in making the work of literature commemorative as a whole. In *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear*, the young protagonist, Farhad recalls the religious advice of his grandfather "my grandfather used to say that... evil deeds of the sinners and infidels turn into blind and starving wolves that come to visit them in the grave" (Rahimi np). Sometimes he reminisces about his reckless time, drinking wine, and reciting poetry in the company of his friends. He thinks that his present situation is the punishment for all the reckless deeds he has done in the past. It is mentioned that Farhad used to wear the ring "engraved with one of the sacred names of Allah, "Al-Jabbar". In *The Patient Stone*, an unnamed narrator keeps on reciting the name of Allah "Al-Qahar" (Rahimi np) on prayer beads, and she believes that this will help her in coping with her present situation. Also in *Earth and Ashes*, Dastaguir finds console in remembering and thanking God. Jay Winter has formed a connection between war memories and the use of religious expression. According to her, the accommodation of religious expressions turns war memories into commemorative art. The use of religious expressions is a work of great genius as it helps in building the pathos formula throughout the text while simultaneously adding to the collective memory of the war in Afghanistan. As put by Jay Winter "the rudiments of hope, of aesthetic redemption of the suffering of the war, of resurrection, of transcendence, are never far from commemorative art of religious inspiration" (Winter 93). Farhad's use of al-

Jabbar and the lady's recitation of "Al-Qahar, Al-Qahar, Al-Qahar" (Rahimi np) are noticeable incidents in the novels. In Islamic tradition, the repetitive pattern is used to signify "the principle of the constant change over the permanence" (Erzen 70). In his article "Islamic Aesthetics: An Alternative Way to Knowledge", Jale Nejdert Erzen has called the repetitive Islamic expressions symbols. She states that "the entire journey to God is the journey in symbol" (Erzen 71). Sometimes symbols are worked through a rhythmic structure within any text which could possibly be a reference to "love or separation or death" (Erzen 71). Here, I am referring to Al-Jabbar and Al-Qahar as the rhythmic religious expressions that certainly speak about Farhad's "separation" from his mother and lady's "separation" from her husband in the novels. While on a mega level, we can see these instances speak about the death and separation caused by the ceaseless war in Afghanistan. Whereas, Rahimi's composition about death and separation is again an act of establishing a collective memory of war, which is done through religious expressions. Maurice Halbwachs has spoken about the significance of religious expressions in making the text a medium of collective memory (Halbwach 6). Religious expressions which are the lexes for invoking pathos are concomitantly imperative for adding to collective memory.

The case of the Afghanistan war is discombobulating for its expression of mourning while simultaneously preserving collective memory for the postwar period. Such expressions are articulated through the recurrent use of metaphors. I argued that the use of metaphors in war literature turns literature into a memorial zone. In the case of the mentioned novels, metaphors are employed through motifs of silence, non-verbal communication, and imagery. These metaphors are significant in exploring the theme of collective memory of the war, which serves as a powerful reminder of the horror of war. While on one hand, the use of metaphors establishes the theme of collective memory, it also provides a zone of purgation to the readers. It is seen that some specific metaphors make these texts a site of mourning. It can be seen in the form of the portrayal of children, the portrayal of an elderly man, war imagery scattered in all the novels, and religious expression. In this way, this research opens the gate for critical questions regarding the fate of war in Afghanistan in the global world. A lot of research has been conducted to calculate the loss of lives in Afghanistan. This research interrogates the political leader of the global world and its silence over the plight of the suffering community and at the same time, it is uncovering the silence of many people generated by the trauma of the war. It claims that the war literature through which the bereaved experiences of thousands of people are calculated has not only become a Pandora of memories but has become a tool for inciting mourning. By doing so, it invites the readers to mourn the loss of the suffering community of Afghanistan.

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