PERSISTING PARTITION:
GENDER, MEMORY AND TRAUMA IN WOMEN’S NARRATIVES OF PAKISTAN

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(Figure 0.1: Map showing borders drawn at the Partition of India)
## Contents

List of Figures 4  
Abstract 5  
Declaration 6  
Copyright Statement 6  
Acknowledgements 7  
The Author 8  
Dedication 8  
Timeline 9

### Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narratives and Processes of Partition and Pakistan</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma and Affect</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma and Representation</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Affecting Phantasm: *The Heart Divided* and the Genesis of Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotive Enfranchisement</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Affective Turn to Pakistan</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity and the Consolidation of Difference</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Towards Pakistan!’</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stories of the Broken Self: Affective Narratives of Nation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forming Representation</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives, History, and Fiction</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testimony</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self that Was, Self that Became</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Narratives</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memories of Violence</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Voices</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Gender and the Repeat of National Trauma in *Khamosh Pani*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situating Trauma</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mourning and Melancholia, Acting Out and Working Through</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrating Silence</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Repetition Compulsion</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembering Partition</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective mourning</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Map showing borders drawn at the Partition of India. <em>Times Concise Atlas</em> (105).</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>Maps showing colonial India and the Indian subcontinent in 2007. “After Partition”, <em>BBC News</em>.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Title screen. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Opening credits 1. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Opening credits 2. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Hamid Jehan introduction frame. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Aasia Begum introduction frame. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Extract from <em>Earth</em> reflecting pre-Partition amity. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Extract from <em>Pinjar</em> showing massacres. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Uncredited extract showing demonstration for Indian independence. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Khadiija at the start of the documentary, crying. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Nusrat crying. <em>Stories of the Broken Self</em>.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>The village well obscured by dust. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>The well’s interior. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Ayesha at the well just before jumping. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>The well’s interior in the present. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Ayesha and Jeswant with the well between them. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Ayesha and Zubeida pray at the Sufi shrine. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Men gather for a speech by Rashid at the mosque. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Shot of Zubeida... . <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>...reverse shot of Salim. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Salim places a brick in his line of sight. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Curtain separating the men’s and women’s areas at the wedding. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Mehboob emerges through the flimsy curtain. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Television at a food stand. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Rashid takes the place of the television. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>Salim entrusts Ayesha’s locket to Zubeida. <em>Khamosh Pani</em>.</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

This project centres on the continuing relevance of the 1947 Partition of India in texts that engage with the national landscape of Pakistan. This approach proposes that Partition cannot be understood outside of a discussion of Pakistan, as Partition emerged through demands for liberty and enfranchisement for India’s Muslims that became articulated through the discourse of the nation-state; my analysis of cultural texts asks what the implications are of this proposal. This study moves beyond looking at Partition as an isolated series of events in 1947 and contextualises its processes, interrogating why Partition and Pakistan became such a persuasive demand, and what the ongoing ramifications are of its happening. This thesis also considers what the 1971 secession of Bangladesh suggests regarding the attempts of the original cartographic articulation of Pakistan to maintain a unified nation.

This project seeks to understand Partition in new ways by utilising a framework that takes into account the broader context of Partition both temporally and spatially. It moves beyond work that solely focusses on texts that discuss the moment of Partition directly, by examining texts that approach the time that preceded Partition, and that which succeeded it. In so doing this thesis charts how texts articulate the arguments for Pakistan’s creation against the events and commemoration of its becoming. I aim to be broad temporally, geographically, and in how I engage with the notion of violence, extending this to include the bureaucratic violence of drawing borders and colonial withdrawal.

This study maintains a focus on women’s narratives, arguing that due to the gendered experience of violence at the time of Partition, such as rape, abduction, and honour killing, women’s stories have a particular intervention to make. As such this thesis proposes that there is a pattern of specifically gendered trauma that emerges which disrupts dominant nationalist remembering of Partition.

This work takes an interdisciplinary focus by analysing fiction, feature film and documentary. Central to the study is the deployment of a number of theoretical methodologies, such as affect, cultural memory and trauma. Engagement with this critical material enables a discussion of the cultural texts that considers the role of affects in generating and maintaining national belonging, the impact of trauma on individuals who lived through Partition and on the nation writ large, and the implications of how trauma and affect are negotiated when texts imagine reparative futures.
Declaration

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Thanks to my cousins Huma and Shazia, for, on my first trip to Pakistan as an adult, introducing me to the novels of Kamila Shamsie, Bapsi Sidhwa, and Uzma Aslam Khan. The excitement of exploring the wealth of women’s cultural production from Pakistan not only motivated my return to higher education, but also sustained the completion of this PhD. Thanks also to Phopogee Mahmooda and Phopogee Bilquis for sharing their stories of working in the Muslim League and migrating at Partition, respectively.

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More thanks and admiration than I could ever express go to my parents Tariq and Pervin Saeed for all their faith in me. Thanks also to Nadia Saeed for her sisterly sense of perspective and regular pep talks as this thesis was completed. Finally thanks to Clare Tebbutt for reading many drafts of sections of this thesis, for discussions on the politics of historiography, and for the endless cups of tea.
The Author

I completed my MA in Postcolonial Literatures and Cultures at the University of Manchester, where I stayed to research my PhD. While writing this PhD I have co-organised several research events at the university, published on transnational feminisms, and Partition and Pakistani film, and taught on several undergraduate modules in literature including ‘Writing Identity and Nation’, and ‘Gender Sexuality and Culture’. Future research plans include analysing tropes of madness and asylum in gendered representations of ongoing conflict in Kashmir and Afghanistan, which will continue my central concerns regarding how texts navigate the ongoing impact of colonialism psychically and socially.

Dedication

This PhD is dedicated to Nani Ami and Dad. I wish you had lived to see me complete it.
Timeline

1905 Partition of Bengal along religious lines by British Raj.
1906 Foundation of the Muslim League.
1911 Bengal reinstated.
1909 Separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims established by the British Raj.
1916 Lucknow Pact between the Muslim League and Congress, focussed on weighting of electorates and allowed for co-operation in the Khalifat and non-cooperation movements.
1929 Jinnah’s fourteen points, or fourteen demands for parity rejected by Congress.
1930 Salt March. Direct action campaign led by Gandhi against taxation on salt by the British Raj. Campaign boycotted by many upper-class Muslims due to the rejection of the fourteen points.
1937 Lucknow Session; League polling poorly in majority Muslim areas.
1939 Viceroy of India Lord Linlithgow entered India into World War II without consulting political leaders.
1940 Lahore Resolution, also known as the Pakistan Resolution. The statement of the Muslim League calling for the creation of independent Muslim states.
1942 Cripps Mission: Stafford Cripps sent to India to secure support from leaders for the war effort, using negotiations over independence as a bargaining tool. Congress was split over its support of the war, and the League was in support of the war effort.
Quit India Movement established by Congress when negotiations with Cripps failed; it demanded immediate withdrawal of the Raj and led to Congress Leaders being jailed. Muslim League did not support the Quit India Movement.
1945 Simla Conference with Viceroy Wavell and political leaders to establish a plan for Indian self-government. Congress and the League failed to agree on an executive assembly.
1946 Muslim League popularity in majority regions; League celebrated victory day. Cabinet Mission proposal for federal India to determine a power-sharing arrangement between Congress and the League. The impasse between parties led to Partition plan being proposed.
Violence and riots broke out from August.
1947 Plan to partition India made public in June and Sir Radcliffe arrived in July.
Transfer of power: 14 August Pakistan independence; 15 August Indian independence.
1948 War over Kashmir; Gandhi assassinated; Jinnah died of tuberculosis.
1949 UN sponsored cease-fire in Kashmir.
Awami League founded in Dhaka East Pakistan as an alternative to the Muslim League.
1958 General Ayub Khan military coup, which deposed Iskander Mirza.
1965 Indo-Pak war over Kashmir.
1969 General Yahya Khan replaced Ayub Khan.

1970 Pakistan’s first national elections in which the Awami League won the majority of seats in the national assembly, but power was not handed over by West Pakistan.

1971 Bangladesh war of liberation.


1979 Execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.


1989 Armed insurgency began in Kashmir.

1992 Destruction of Babri Mosque, Ayodha, Uttar Pradesh.

1999 General Pervez Musharraf military coup, which overthrew Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

2001 General Musharraf began to lend support to U. S. ‘war on terror’.

(Figure 0.2: Maps showing colonial India in 1947 just before Partition, and the Indian subcontinent in 2007)
Introduction

The story of 1947, while one of the attainment of independence, is also a gendered narrative of displacement and dispossession, of large-scale and widespread communal violence, and of the realignment of family, community and national identities.
(Menon and Bhasin “Recovery, Rupture, Resistance” 210)

The partition of India into two countries, India and Pakistan, is an event that is said to have taken place in August 1947, yet its beginnings go much further back into history and its ramifications have not yet ended.
(Butalia “Community, State, and Gender” 178)

What actually happened at Partition, and the logic in which Partition is rhetorically invoked and socially remembered, are tied to each other to produce what could be called Partition effects. [...] Thus in order to understand these Partition effects, we need to know a lot more about Partition itself, and at the same time we need to interrogate and move the very boundaries of how we write these histories.
(Zamindar The Long Partition 238)

The Partition of India in August 1947 heralded the independence of colonial India. Simultaneously two nation-states were formed on the landscape of colonial India: India and Pakistan, with new borders being drawn through the provinces of Punjab in the West and Bengal in the East (see figures 0.1 and 0.2). The formation of Pakistan was thus of two wings separated by the large land mass of India. In the months leading up to Partition, violence had erupted and continued well into 1948 as populations moved between the newly formed nation-states. The violence was largely communal in nature, with Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities turning on each other. The violence also had a considerably gendered dimension, with many forced conversions, rapes and honour killings of women. The scale of the displacement was unprecedented, and Partition remains the largest cross-border mass migration in recorded history, affecting 12-14 million people. It is estimated that one million people died, and 750,000 were women raped and abducted.¹ It has become a truism in Partition studies to refer to Partition as traumatic.

This project seeks to understand Partition in new ways by utilising a framework that takes into account the broader context of Partition both temporally and spatially. I move beyond work that solely focuses on texts that discuss the moment of Partition

¹ Exact numbers tend to vary in records of this, but they are all in the same region.
directly, by examining texts that approach the time that preceded Partition, and that which succeeded it. In so doing I chart the arguments for Pakistan’s creation against the events and commemoration of its becoming. I employ a geographical approach to demonstrate the failure of the original cartographic articulation to maintain a unified nation. The broader contextualization I offer has been urged for by David Gilmartin who argues that Partition needs to be grounded ‘in a longer narrative context’ (“Partition, Pakistan”1092). In agreement with Gilmartin, I maintain an awareness of the bureaucratic processes that led up to Partition, as well as Partition itself. I aim to be broad temporally, geographically, and in how I engage with the notion of violence. Vazira Zamindar asks that we stretch out ‘understanding of “Partition violence” to include the bureaucratic violence of drawing political borders and nationalizing identities’ (The Long Partition 2), which is what I attempt in this thesis, to ensure a consideration of the structural violence that occurred during and through Partition.

Ritu Menon has identified the move towards decentering the nationalist narrative in discussions of Partition, as directing analysis less to ‘why the politics of Partition played itself out in the way it did, but to how its legacy has been dealt with’ (“Cartographies” 159). Narrative is thus an important framework in this thesis, in terms of nationalist narratives, the narratives of the cultural texts under discussion, and the narrative of the nation that emerges within and between such emplotments. My approach is indebted to Homi Bhabha’s essay “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation”, in which he argues that the western nation is constructed through narrative processes, within which there is tension between the desire for a coherent narrative of nation and the presence of those who disrupt this desire for coherence. Bhabha’s focus on the western nation is modernity is of course distinct to my own, but central to his thesis is a consideration of what difference produces within narratives of nation, which is what I take up here. He argues that there is a tension between those who live the nation and those who write it, which he formulates through the performative and the pedagogic. In this formulation Bhabha is pointing to the tension that exists within the nation’s telling, between those who declare what the nation should be, and those who produce the nation through performing a social community; the nation emerges between these competing narratives. This tension remains a theme throughout the thesis and one that I will return to throughout, most explicitly in Chapter Three. I want to consider how
Pakistan is constructed between the performative and pedagogic within the cultural texts that I analyse. As well as considering how this dialectic is represented in the texts, I consider how the texts themselves as cultural products can be understood as interacting with dominant (pedagogic) national narratives in different ways. Through considering narratives then, I aim to explore what tensions emerge within the expression of a nation, especially in relation to how its becoming is commemorated.

Historical scholarship dealing with the time leading up to Partition tends to engage with the administrative and political processes of Louis Mountbatten (Lord and last viceroy of colonial India), Jawaharlal Nehru (leader of Congress) and Mohammed Ali Jinnah (leader of the Muslim League); the grassroots level organising and confusion regarding political processes has generated less attention, largely because the events of Partition itself have overshadowed the years preceding it. As Gyanendra Pandey points out, even the historical studies of Partition itself are not a history of the people who lived through it. Their experiences are not charted and the identities and fears that Partition created and reinforced are not considered (“Prose of Otherness” 194). In response to this Suvir Kaul argues that the political and social causes of Partition have been better engaged with than the human dimension of Partition; which he identifies as the violence and displacement (4). This is largely why memory studies and fictional engagements have become so important to discussions of Partition, as people try to glean and represent quotidian experience retrospectively. In many ways fiction has begun to engage the human dimension while history focuses on the political. Kaul continues:

> an uncritical humanism that concentrates only on the pain and sorrow of the ‘human condition’ that resulted from Partition will limit our understanding of the political and civic fault-lines revealed then, fault-lines of religion, gender, caste and class that still run through our lives. (5)

My thesis aims to look at the two together, insisting that the impact of the literary and the extent of the human dimension of suffering cannot be understood outside of an engagement with the political, and attempts to do so mean our understanding is ultimately limited.

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2 For historiography see A. Ahmed, Jalal, Y. Khan, Talbot and Seervai.
My central questions in this thesis are to ask what are the implications for a nation borne of such violence and displacement? How have narratives of nation both formed the conditions for the emergence of Partition, and engaged in its commemoration? How does Partition continue to reverberate across the landscape of the nation that it created? And, as Menon asks, ‘[w]hen nationalism and partition occur simultaneously, how does one write the history of the nation’ (“Cartographies” 158)? As such, the texts I study in this thesis are concerned with, or construct, narratives of Pakistan to consider how the narratives of Partition and Pakistan might be connected. Ayesha Jalal articulates this specificity:

Pakistan, with its artificially demarcated frontiers and desperate quest for an officially sanctioned Islamic identity, lends itself remarkably well to an examination of the nexus between power and bigotry in creative imaginings of national identity. (“Conjuring Pakistan” 74)

The particular genesis of Pakistan was through the political demand for a homeland for India’s Muslims under colonial conditions, which I will go on to discuss in more detail. As such, a focus on Pakistan enables a discussion of the demands for nationhood and its articulation through the drawing of new national boundaries (Partition), while considering the implications of this articulation on expressions of national subjectivity.

This thesis centres on the continuing relevance of the 1947 Partition of India in texts that engage with the national landscape of Pakistan. Considering the wealth of engagement with Partition as an event, and one that provoked immense literary response, there is surprisingly little engagement with Pakistani literature that deals with Partition, and even more surprising is the lack of analysis of the significance of Partition being a time that produced Pakistan. Although Partition occurred due to the demand for Pakistan, a focus on Pakistan is something that is very much lacking in Partition studies. Existing scholarship on Partition literature tends to engage with texts from both sides of the border,3 and there is limited work that considers the 1971 Bangladesh war within the context of 1947.4 My central premise is that in order to push the boundaries of Partition literary studies, there is a need to engage with texts

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3 See Bhalla; Didur; Kabir “Subjectivities, Memories”, and “Gender, Memory, Trauma”; F. Khan; and Roy.

4 See Cilano for a consideration of 1971 alongside 1947, especially in relation to migration and her concept of ‘muhajir exceptionality’.
that centre on Pakistan, and consider the simultaneity of nation formation with Partition. This approach moves beyond looking at Partition as an isolated series of events in 1947 and contextualises its processes, interrogating both why Partition and Pakistan became such a persuasive demand, and what the ongoing ramifications are of its happening. As Gimartin has pointed out, ‘the genesis of the demand for Pakistan, must be at the heart of the underlying “plot” of the partition narrative’ (1071). By analysing fiction and film that centralise Pakistan, my work unpicks nationalism in terms of what it creates by way of identity, territory, borders, and legacies. My readings of these texts argue for the insistence that the imposition of borders by a colonial power in 1947 has continued to have effects that reverberate across the Indian subcontinent to this day. In this sense I am creating a narrative of Pakistan within the structure of the thesis itself; one that begins in the pre-Partition time in Chapter One through analysis of the novel *The Heart Divided*, and continues to the contemporary to analyse the ongoing effects of violence in the novel *Noor* in the Coda.

I join many other critics in maintaining a focus on women’s narratives, arguing that due to the gendered experience of violence at the time of Partition, such as rape, abduction, and honour killing, women’s stories have a particular intervention to make. I depart from and develop this body of work by framing this intervention as one into the way Pakistan and its becoming are understood. There is a pattern of specifically gendered trauma that emerges in the texts I study that disrupts dominant nationalist remembering of Partition. In this way I consider the narratives of Pakistan that I analyse in relation to their gendered expression.

Central to my work is the deployment of a number of theoretical methodologies, such as those centering on affect and trauma. Rather than applying a particular theoretical doctrine I take a critical approach to the usage of these terms, as I seek to consider what these theoretical frameworks can illuminate in analytical discussion. Furrukh Khan has insisted that an effective theoretical engagement for Partition

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5 Furthermore, there is limited scholarship that engages with Kashmir from a literary studies angle. It has been beyond the scope of this thesis to engage directly Kashmir and the conflict that both surrounds it and exists within it; I point to the potential for an extension of the lines of enquiry in this thesis to Kashmir in the Conclusion.

6 These engagements are interdisciplinary: see Das for an anthropological approach; see Butalia, and Menon and Bhasin for an oral history approach; see Didur and Kabir for a literary studies approach.
literary analysis must engage frameworks that are being used to discuss dislocation violence and collective trauma (6). I propose that the repetitive and incomplete elements of national becoming can be best understood through engaging with trauma theory. I use trauma in my work methodologically to argue for the violence and dislocation felt by individuals during the nation’s becoming, and also as a tool for considering the repetitive cycles of national politics at a collective level.⁷ The interplay and connectivity of several theoretical approaches is what interests me here as this provides a productive space from which to consider what texts can imagine, critique or allow us to envision in relation to discourses of nation. Affect is central to how I conceptualise the traumatic repeat of Partitions tropes: where affects of belonging were central to making a case for the creation of Pakistan, they are also the tool by which traumatic pasts are subsumed into a national narrative. Furthermore, as my Coda on Bangladesh’s secession discusses, the affects of belonging that made a case for Pakistan were not unanimous; these affects could not maintain a national unity across difference. I will expand on my engagement with the methodologies of gender, trauma, and affect further into this Introduction.

There are three main threads that underpin the arguments of this thesis, which I will outline in this Introduction before expanding on my theoretical approaches. Firstly, Partition cannot be understood outside of a discussion of Pakistan, as Partition emerged through demands for liberty and enfranchisement for India’s Muslims that became articulated through the discourse of the nation-state. Secondly, Partition also accompanied British withdrawal from India and as such the actions of the colonial power are implicated in the chaos that erupted during and immediately after its departure. Thirdly, the actual processes of Partition were defined by articulations of violence enacted on communal and bureaucratic levels, and that these articulations had a distinctly gendered dimension.

⁷ See Visser for a consideration of how trauma studies, informed as it is by the eurocentricity of psychoanalysis, might be used appropriately in postcolonial studies. In my work I use trauma theory and Freud’s concepts as analytical tools, to see what a trauma methodology might illuminate in textual analysis. This is in part because this approach is incredibly productive, but also because it avoids applying trauma theory to postcolonial contexts without adequate consideration of what epistemological violence this might engender. Also see Craps and Buelens (eds) for a collection of essay that together discuss of how trauma studies might be “decolonised” through a consideration of the traumatic effects of colonialism within fiction.
Narratives and Processes of Partition and Pakistan

Pakistan is now implicated in the conditions of its becoming. Partition is often understood as the birth pangs of two nations, and Pakistan and India today point towards how the lives of these nations have been ‘shaped by the circumstances of their birth’ (Kaul 6). Although Partition was enacted in order to bring Pakistan into being, the formation of Pakistan as constructed in 1947 had an incredibly complex and convoluted process. The nation building that occurred was generated through the lack of enfranchisement felt by Muslims in colonial India rather than territorial hopes, and the Pakistan movement finds its roots as a campaign for parity for the Muslim League within the governance of a united India. The League’s first concern was the fate of Muslims in a Hindu political order (Cohen 5), and the two-nation discourse (whereby Hindus and Muslims were constructed as entirely distinct peoples who therefore deserved separate nations), began as political rhetoric rather than a campaign for a territorial nation. Indeed, the assertion of India’s Muslims as a nation was a strategy in attempting to gain power within a federal system, rather than a direct move to engender national belonging in relation to defined territorial parameters. Kamala Visweswaran argues that the subsequent demands for a separate state were generated due to the reluctance of Congress to accede to the loss of power a federal system would engender (116). As Khalid Sayeed argues, Pakistan was the end product of Muslim efforts, first to establish political enfranchisement within federal India, and second to establish Muslims as a separate nation that required a separate state (8; also see Timeline in this thesis). This points to the political enfranchisement at the heart of the Pakistan movement – what these accounts suggest fueled the case for Pakistan was the desire for parity for the Muslim League within governmental structures. Parity then becomes articulated within a nationalist framework, shifting the discourse from one of enfranchisement and equality to one of national articulation.

Through the development of the idea of Pakistan we see the construction of nationhood and identity in progress. As Jinnah needed to get support for the ‘two-nation’ theory, the existence of Muslims as a separate entity was insisted upon; we can see in this construction the processes of a nation being imagined into being. As Zamindar points out, the Muslims of South Asia are linguistically and culturally diverse, yet ‘Muslim’ became established as a category through the mobilisation for independence and Pakistan, and emerged specifically under colonial conditions (The
However, the power of the idea of Pakistan to hold together diverse peoples meant that it gathered support and opposition to Hindu domination (Cohen 28). This construction of a united Muslim identity was central to how the demand for Pakistan was generated, the implications of which I will discuss in relation to *The Heart Divided* in Chapter One through an engagement with affect as the tool by which national unity gets established.

That the development of a unified identity masked the complexity of difference between Muslims can be seen in Partition’s afterlife and Pakistan’s early years where the cracks began to show in this constructed coherence; in particular in relation to Bangladesh. Gilmartin identifies this as ‘the critical contradictions within the Pakistan concept’, meaning that the Muslim League based their claims for a Muslim state on an image of community unity, against the much more complex reality of division and local interest (“Partition, Pakistan” 1081). The ongoing impact of Partition can be seen as originating in the discourses that justified it, as well as the actions that consolidated it. In terms of narrative this points to what Homi Bhabha terms the ambivalence lying at the heart of national narratives. Nationalisms depend on difference for their articulation, yet the presence of difference makes a totalised and coherent nation impossible (229). This ambivalence and tension is something I will return to throughout the thesis; in Chapter One to consider how affect is utilised in nationalist discourse to consolidate notions of difference, and in the Coda to address how this ambivalence is implicated in the secession of Bangladesh.

Historiography of Partition, in particular that by Stanley Wolpert and Jalal, shows that the steps that led to the final Partition plan were marked by lack of co-operation between the League and Congress. The refusal of Congress to accept Jinnah’s demands for parity, and Jinnah’s development of the two-nation theory in response are two crucial factors that led to Partition. Partitioning the provinces was identified by Jinnah as a disastrous move, as he considered it a mistake to ‘compare the basic principle of the demand for Pakistan for cutting up the provinces throughout India’ (in Jalal 267-8). In this statement, Jinnah insists that Partition and Pakistan were not necessarily connected. The negotiations leading up to independence did not begin

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8 In relation to this Jalal argues that the ‘dilemmas of imagining a coherent Pakistani nation have been compounded by regional and linguistic diversities that have resisted being melted down to fit the monolithic moulds of the state’s Islamic identity’ (“Conjuring Pakistan” 74).
with a demand for Partition, and early proposals for Pakistan were of it as a federation within India. These negotiations resulted in Bengal and Punjab being divided, and although it is clear that the idea of Pakistan may not have necessitated Partition, in the end Pakistan would not have come about without Partition. The final negotiations meant that Jinnah had to either accept what is commonly referred to as a ‘moth-eaten’ and ‘truncated’ Pakistan, which entailed the partitioning of Punjab and Bengal, or gave up the idea of Pakistan altogether, which Jinnah believed would mean no parity for the Muslim League in Indian central government, as post-independence he expected that the League would be crushed by the Congress majority. Alok Bhalla argues that Nehru deluded himself and Congress into thinking that ‘Pakistan would be compelled by its limitations to return to the greater Indian fold’ (46), and in 1960 Nehru is recorded as saying ‘[w]e expected that partition would be temporary, that Pakistan was bound to come back to us’ (Hasan 28). The political negotiations at the time are thus central to how Partition was carried out in the way it was, and that Congress pushed for Partition in the hope that this would make for a weak Pakistan, which would then return to India. Many who migrated also considered Partition to be a temporary measure, believing that they would return to their homes once the chaos had calmed down. Initial attempts by leaders were to have people stay in their homes, but these plans were offset by the escalating violence and led for official transfer mechanisms to be put in place (Naqvi 69). I address this in Chapter Two, proposing that Partition was consolidated and made permanent as a result of the large-scale violence that accompanied it.

In the context of Partition, Tahir Naqvi points to the ‘[p]rimacy of violence and displacement in producing specific and immediate subjects of territorial belonging and exclusion’ (64). In his analysis an understanding of belonging through violence and displacement emerges. I want to take this suggestion further to consider Partition violence in a broad sense; that is to consider displacement not in addition to violence, but as violence. In addition to considering the communal and gendered violence between the communities in India, I want to consider the imposition of new borders as violence: in the way these borders were decided, the final formation of the borders, and the effects of displacement they engendered. In addition, I view the speed of withdrawal of the British Raj as orchestrated by Lord Mountbatten as bureaucratic violence; the speed of decision making meaning that less care and consideration was put into the processes through which so many lost their lives and
homes. Finally, I want to ground this within the context of two independent nations being created, which raises implications for how we engage with nationalised identities. I take this up in Chapter Two where I consider how, in women’s oral history narratives, Pakistan, Partition, and pre-Partition life become narrated together. This engagement insists that violence has contexts, and that the chaos and violence that erupted across the subcontinent, and in particular in the Punjab, cannot be understood outside of the political run up to the event itself.

The way in which the boundaries of the Partition Award were decided has been widely criticised, with the choice of Sir Cyril Radcliffe to plan the cartographic partition of Punjab and Bengal coming under much scrutiny. Radcliffe was not familiar with the context of India, had never previously been there and arrived only six weeks before the final decisions needed to be confirmed (Ahmed Jinnah, Pakistan 124). This lack of awareness was reflected in many of the decisions Radcliffe made, for example mills falling in India while the materials were in Pakistan, which have gone on to have an economic impact on the two countries (Fraser 4). Niaz Zaman avers that

boundaries were demarcated without paying heed to the logic of demarcation. Not only was this demarcation done in haste, it was also done by a man who did not know India and who had recourse only to a map. (10-11)

The logic of the rules of the Award was as flawed; Radcliffe’s main charge was to use colonial census data to allocate districts as Muslim or Hindu majority. As such, Radcliffe was required to take population information and transfer this into a cartographic articulation. The violence of this move is as much in the process as due to Radcliffe himself; that Radcliffe did not know India would not impede his ability to define the boundaries where the boundaries were simply based on population data from the 1941 census. Notions of belonging to place become dependent on an attributed identity, rather than cultural or regional affiliations. For example, while Delhi can be described as an Indo-Islamic city with historical associations with Mughal rulers, the Muslim population of 33.22% meant that it became part of India rather than Pakistan (Zamindar The Long Partition 5). In this sense, the census definitions took precedence over the cultural identity of place, a tension I return to in Chapter One. As I will propose in Chapter Two, the expectation that the achievement of a new nation would compensate for the loss of home is often frustrated.
Decisions made over the districts of Gurdaspur and Ferozpur also caused contention as both were Muslim majority districts allocated to India. As such, it was presumed that both districts would be awarded to Pakistan, but this was not the case. Zaman argues that the Gurdaspur decision was connected to strategic decisions regarding Kashmir, if Gurdaspur had been awarded to Pakistan, India would have lost the only land route to Kashmir (167). The award of Gurdaspur and Ferozpur to India overruled population data, thereby not abiding by the condition of the boundary award (12, 263). Although there are immense problems with defining the nations in relation to colonial population data, the overruling of this data also had severe consequences. The effect these decisions had on the escalation of violence is discussed in Chapter Two, where women’s narratives of Partition point to the exacerbating effect of uncertainty and feelings of unjustness in relation to the boundary award.

According to Gilmartin, from late 1946 violence was very much about “‘cleansing” the local community to reground it symbolically in the territorial frameworks promised by partition’, and that much of the violence was very organised and conducted like a campaign to take hold of territory (“Partition, Pakistan” 1086). Zamindar points to this as the ‘violence of making modern “ethnically cleansed” national identities’ (The Long Partition 12). Where the demarcation of borders did not adhere to the population majorities of certain districts, ethnic cleansing and ongoing ethnic conflict attempted to force this adherence. This practice meant that particular areas saw much more violence, such as Ferozpur where killings purged the district of Muslims, who had until that point been a majority (Ahmed Jinnah, Pakistan 137). Outlining the problems in these ways reveals how simply the Partition processes attempted to address such complex conditions. Not only were the strategic positioning of places not meant to be taken into account in the award, the areas where the population data was overruled saw greater outbreaks of violence. This framing does raise the question, was there a way to enact Partition that would not

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9 In brief: during British rule Jammu and Kashmir was an autonomous princely state ruled by a Hindu Maharaja with allegiance to the British Empire. When Partition was confirmed, the rulers of the princely states had the option of acceding to either India or Pakistan. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India, however the state had a Muslim majority due to the large number of Muslims in Kashmir. This tension underpins much conflict between India and Pakistan to this day, and the first war between the two nations was over Kashmir. Kashmir itself continues to struggle for national autonomy; in Kabir’s words, ‘for Kashmiris, 1947 signifies the onset of a suspended sovereignty, a state of irresolution’ (“Cartographic” 47).
have engendered such violence?\textsuperscript{10} Zamindar also asks if dispossession and suffering are inevitable in the logic of Partition, or even the very process of making modern nation-states (\textit{The Long Partition} 13).\textsuperscript{11} While Naqvi posits that nationalist leadership saw communal purification as a departure from the objectives of the nationalist struggle (72), clearly one carried the logic of the other to violent ends. The secession of Bangladesh was also marked by ethnic cleansing, the repeat of which I consider in the Coda. Where communal Partition violence can be understood as making ethically cleansed identities, the 1971 war can be seen as a continuation of this aim, again alongside the creation of a new nation state on the subcontinent. There are of course distinctions in the processes of 1947 and 1971, which I return to in the Coda.

Lord Mountbatten was sent to India by the British Government to oversee and facilitate the negotiations between the political leaders within India regarding Britain’s withdrawal from India. The partition of Bengal and Punjab was announced and made public on 3 June 1947, but the exact parameters of the new nation-states were not made public until after independence on August 15.\textsuperscript{12} Rioting had already begun in provinces such as Punjab and this was expected to escalate from June 3 (Jalal \textit{The Sole Spokesman} 282). That the exact composition of Partition was not known at this point did much to exacerbate violence in terms of the uncertainty of communities, which generated suspicion and fear. Governors were also unable to prepare for containing the violence as they did not know which would be the border regions in which they expected to see the most violence and migration. The leadership in India was already aware of the need of armed convoys to protect the

\textsuperscript{10} A further irony regarding the Partition plan is that Pakistan was proposed to protect the interests of Muslims as a political minority in India, yet the territorial allocation via populations meant that the regions where Muslims were actually a minority remained in India, rather than being offered the proposed security of Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{11} See Mann for a discussion of the connection of ethnic cleansing to the rise of the nation and nationalism. Kaul proposes something similar when he considers whether all nations are ‘founded in blood and that porous boundaries are sealed only through violence; sacrificial blood-letting, that is, is necessary for the making of strong nation states’ (7). Sidhwa uses comparable language, arguing that ‘when the world is partitioned anywhere in the world – in Bosnia, Palestine, or Israel. It is as if the earth then demands blood, borders demand blood’ (in Bhalla 233).

\textsuperscript{12} The historiography I have read on the publication of Radcliffe award show difference of opinion on when the award was published, Jalal cites August 18th, A. Ahmed August 16th, and Bruschi August 17th. Although these dates differ, they all concur that the award was published after the independence of the two nations came to pass, and that the nations emerged as two independent units unsure of their exact territorial demarcation.
migration of refugees at this stage. With these facts in mind, there was consensus among the leadership that the sooner the Partition plan was announced, the less the risk of violence would be and the more able Mountbatten would be to use his viceregal powers to contain the violence. Advance publication and awareness of the award would enable more effective deployment of police and troops. This demonstrated a willingness to take responsibility for overseeing the process of Partition, one supported by the British Government (Seervai 159-162).

However, although Radcliffe had completed the boundary decisions on August 9, the publication of the Punjab award was delayed until August 16 1947, one day after independence. This was despite the fact that violence erupting in the Punjab preceding this led to the governor of the Punjab urging Mountbatten to publish the award with haste, as uncertainty around the border was in part held to blame for the violence. This delay was central to why the violence in the Punjab in particular escalated so dramatically, and the partitions of Punjab and Bengal were so unprepared for. Akhbar Ahmed, H. M. Seervai, and Wolpert all argue that a more orderly migration of populations would have been possible, had the Partition plan been released to the governors of Punjab and Bengal. Not only would troops and transport assistance have been dispatched, but governors would have been aware exactly where communities would be moving from or to, something impossible to know without details of the new borders. The Indian Independence Act which came into force on 18 July 1947 stated that from 15 August the British Government would have no responsibility regarding the government of India. For Seervai these facts of who held responsibility over India and Pakistan are crucial for understanding why the publication of the Punjab award was delayed. As Viceroy until midnight on August 14, Mountbatten could exercise emergency powers to contain the violence all in power expected to accelerate on release the award, by publishing it later this meant that he had no responsibility for containing the violence and neither did Britain (149-50). Instead, the overseeing was left to inexperienced political leaders and an army that had recently been divided; the split of the army ruining the best chance of security against the violence (Jalal The Sole Spokesman 249). The new governments met on August 17 to discuss the population exchange and aimed to provide refugees with army escorts. However, the split of the army meant the pull towards communal ties held more sway and at times these escorts joined in with the violence (Bruschi 4).
The initial plans for a population transfer that would be overseen by the British Government were abandoned through Mountbatten’s haste in implementing the Partition plan, and his delay in releasing the award. While the delay exacerbated violence, it also meant that the ability to contain violence by the rule of law was diminished. As expected, the largest scale violence erupted after August 18 when the borders were announced but, as outlined, troops had not been effectively deployed and there was no authority across both India and Pakistan that would oversee the whole process. Wolpert puts it thus:

No viceregal time had been wasted in planning for the feeding and housing and medical needs of ten million refugees. No British officers or troops remained to keep the peace in shattered Punjab, or in Bengal, nor in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, left in deadly limbo. (11)

The five days between the award being finalised and being publicised could have been used for preparation, but it was not. Jalal writes:

While Punjab writhed and turned under the impact of decisions taken in distant places, Mountbatten boldly claimed credit for having accomplished, in less than two and a half months, one of the ‘greatest administrative operations in history’. (Sole Spokesman 293)

In addition King George VI called the transfer of power a ‘peaceful change’, which exemplifies how well Mountbatten’s ‘success’ was claimed (Wolpert 171). Indeed Jalal argues that a central concern of British policy was to ensure that the responsibility for the trouble that would break out landed on ‘the shoulders of Indians’ (The Sole Spokesman 244).

I point to this in some detail in order to emphasise how the violence that accompanied Partition could have been avoided or limited, had the official machinery been more organised. I have outlined the culpability of the colonial administration here to underpin the nationalist narratives within the thesis that seek to claim the violence and deaths at Partition as heroism and sacrifice in the service of the nation. This framing erases the fact that the violence could have been lessened, and ultimately upholds the imperial narrative of a successful transfer of power. Where the narrative of empire must be one of success, and the speed of withdrawal

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13 In addition, Bengal suffered a historical famine post-independence due to British mismanagement of food supplies and transport (Cohen 42).
was connected to a desire to protect the empire from being associated with violence, the violence becomes framed in the imperial narrative as a problem of the volatile native temperament. The tension that emerges is that the new nations established at independence were forged through anti-colonial nationalisms that were, not only defined through colonial population charts, but historicised through colonial epistemologies. Furthermore, the very nationalisms established to resist colonialism come to uphold the imperial agenda through subsuming the violence as a necessary sacrifice to enable the nation’s birth. In so doing, the national narratives of the subcontinent situate the violence as a problem of the subcontinent alongside the imperial telling, albeit in different ways. It is this concern with how the nationalist narrative, through attempting to uphold the postcolonial nation through tales of sacrifice, subsumes the violence of colonial withdrawal and ultimately upholds the imperial narrative.

What these factors point towards is the uncertainty that prevailed across the subcontinent as to people’s fate, and furthermore that this was not a fate of their own making. The political backdrop to Partition shows an incredible disconnect from the violence and chaos being experienced, with the political negotiations of a few dictating the fate of so many. This is central to Yasmin Khan’s analysis of Partition, and she consistently argues for the discrepancy between the population of colonial India and the leaders negotiating the terms of separation. These processes outline the implications of a territorially demarcated nation taking the place of a battle for enfranchisement under colonial conditions. The tension between pedagogic (political negotiations of Partition) and performative (quotidian experiences of Partition) narratives of nation that Bhabha points to is already in place to mark the becoming of the new nations. This tension can be read across each of my chapters; In Chapter

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14 This impression of successful population transfer can also be read in Pathé news reels from the time, which outline the British Raj’s withdrawal and frame riots as celebration from Indian populations at the achievement of independence (see “India’s Great Day”). See Guha for a discussion of how behaviour in the subcontinent was understood as erratic through colonial epistemologies that constructed Indians as prone to random outbursts of violence and riots. Also see Naqvi who argues that colonial representations of native violence utilised tropes of spontaneity and passion, which limited the scope of engaging with the political motivations of rebellious behaviour. In “Partition, Pakistan” Gilmartin also outlines how Partition violence did not emerge from nowhere, and that previous structures of loyalty and tension informed the violence that erupted within locales. What these critics point to is that Partition violence did not emerge from nowhere, the that people were violent in response to a particular moment, and the particular conditions of that moment.

15 See Renan’s important essay for discussion of the pattern in which nations demand sacrifice for their founding.
One, between the investment in a nationalist vision and the premonition of violence; in Chapter Two, between heterogeneous microhistory and homogenous national narratives; in Chapter Three, between stories of sacrifice and stories of gendered violence; and in the Coda the tension forged by the nation’s violent assertion of homogeneity on its own people.

**Gender**

My engagement with gender in this thesis is based on the ways in which Partition violence was inscribed on women’s bodies and subjectivities. The purificatory violence discussed above had a specifically gendered dimension, including wide-scale rape, abduction, and forced conversions and marriage. Notions of community honour were directly implicated in the ethnic cleansing that took place (Gilmartin “Partition, Pakistan” 1086-7, Ahmed Jinnah, Pakistan 161). As Jasodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta argue, ‘the easiest way to assail a community is to defile the sexual purity of its women’ (4). Kabir argues that the ‘wound that was then inflicted on the body of the individual was also a wound inflicted on the body collective, most obviously through the rape, mutilation and abduction of women’ (“Musical Recall” 176). What this suggests is that sexual violence, as well as being a severe material experience of embodiment, has discursive effects on the social collective at large. As such we can understand Partition as a time of particularly gendered embodiment that operates at the intersection of the symbolic and the material. The violence enacted on women exists at the juncture of women as symbols of communities and as sexed individuals. The repeat of patterns of such violence demonstrates how the recurrence of collective trauma is felt on the bodies of sexed individuals. In this sense gendered tropes and sexed bodies must be taken in consideration to one another. A consideration of gender can therefore not be separated from a consideration of women, pointing us to another location of tension that this thesis aims to explore. Where women are treated as symbols of honour in gendered terms that frame and uphold the nation as a masculine realm, women’s stories have a particular intervention to make as they intervene into the masculine realm through speaking rather than existing as simply symbols. The tropes of gendered violence continue to repeat across contemporary South Asia, and according

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16 This construction of women as symbols of nation and community is not new. For further discussion of this trope see Yuval-Davis. Also See N. S. Khan where she outlines the specific aspects of violence against women at Partition through which women came to signify male honour.
to Veena Das were central to how the new nation-states of India and Pakistan established themselves. In her discussion of the state-sponsored recovery of abducted women she outlines how the violence enacted upon women’s bodies became a symbol for the need of the state to respond. This took place rather than an insistence that women’s voices be heard or the gendered violence of Partition be focussed on in an official capacity (37). By establishing themselves through reclaiming women, both new nation-states continued the insistence that women were symbols of communities that did not have their own voices or desires. Women speaking defies the gendered construction that situates them as symbols. If the nation comes to be through violence that insists on women as the embodiment of a symbol, then how does women speaking intervene on the gendered establishment of the nation?

My engagement with gender in the narratives means a consideration of the marginal perspectives of the nation and its becoming. This approach follows that of Ranjana Khanna who, in her work on representations of women in Algerian history, analyses the ways in which ‘figures of woman have critically cut into the construction of [...] nationalist stories of the past [...] [and the] masculinist frames currently dominating world politics’ (xiv-xv). I do not look at women’s narratives simply to centralise their stories, but to consider how they might make comment on the gendered bias of Partition and dominant national historiography through content and form. Jill Didur argues that a gendered understanding of Partition means a shift from the story of high politics to that of the local and everyday (7). This is supported by the oral history work of Urvashi Butalia and Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon, all of whom refer to a frustration in relation to dominant modes of historicising Partition, whereby the high politics of political parties are discussed but the effects of these on people are less recorded. Ananya Kabir argues that a split between public and private subjectivity was established, where the public celebrated independence in the realm of dominant national culture, and the private mourned Partition (“Gender, Memory, Trauma” 184). Kabir frames this splitting as between the public and the private, spheres that are largely understood in gendered terms. Public, national celebration can thus be understood as a masculine act, and private mourning a feminine one. In his discussion of Indian independence Partha Chatterjee concurs with the structure, and

17 See Patel for a first hand account of working as a social worker in this recovery mission. See also Menon and Bhasin “Abducted Women” for a more detailed discussion of the nations’ recovery agendas.
argues that the public realm was masculine and the private realm feminine, suggesting that the space of high politics is framed as masculine whereas the quotidien is feminine. A gendered engagement is thus not simply an engagement with women, but a consideration of how dominant and marginal stories are cast in gendered ways that allow certain narratives to be public, dominant narratives, and others to be private and marginal. By looking at gender and at women my thesis aims to combine the two to analyse what we can glean at the interstices of quotidian narratives of embodied experience. The contribution of the feminist projects outlined cannot be underestimated; they reveal that there need to be multiple ways of engaging with narratives of Partition rather than dominant history, which is a lead that this thesis takes up. However, I maintain that the context of these histories is paramount in order to consider what disruption women are performing on gendered narratives of nation. My additional focus on narratives of Pakistan adds a distinct focus that allows a gendered analysis of Partition alongside and in relation to an interrogation of discourses of nation building and national belonging. This, alongside political contextualisation adds a consideration of what is at stake, politically, in these narratives.

Gender is therefore relevant to the time of Partition in several ways that the following chapters will engage with in more detail. In Chapter One I look at how the political participation of nationalist women is narrated. In Chapters Two and Three I interrogate what it might mean for women’s sense of belonging and citizenship within a nation brought into being through gendered violence. In Chapter Three and the Coda I analyse how these patterns of gendered violence continue to repeat across the socio-political landscape of Pakistan.

**Trauma and Affect**

My consideration of trauma in relation to Partition is not new; several critics have engaged the two as a useful juxtaposition. My usage furthers these engagements, as I also want to consider how trauma might be effectively used as a method to understand the processes of nation-state formation, and indeed the effects on national

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19 See Das, Greenberg, Kabir “Gender, Memory, Trauma”, P. Kumar, and also Saeed.
subjects of these very processes. As Kai Erikson has argued, the fabric of the community can be destroyed or wounded as much as the body, and as such trauma can be relevant to discuss social life as well as individual psychological states (187). Ron Eyerman points to something similar when he argues that cultural trauma can entail the loss of identity and community cohesion (2). As Kabir argues, Partition ‘tore the social fabric’ that had held communities together (“Gender, Memory, Trauma” 180). I consider this tearing alongside engagements with trauma that frame the traumatic event as an overwhelming occurrence that happens too quickly for the psyche to absorb. Cathy Caruth’s analysis of Freud highlights how trauma causes a break in the mind’s experience of time. Freud refers to the lack of preparation of consciousness for this overload of stimuli as ‘fright’, experience happens too quickly or intensely to be engaged with as it happens. As such, the traumatic experience is processed a moment too late and one is not fully conscious during the experience itself. This results in a latency within experience, a time when the effects of the experience are not apparent. In this sense, it is first experienced through a gap, or through forgetting. Before the experience is registered, it is forgotten. The return of experience then, in the form of flashbacks and hallucinations, is the mind’s attempt to grasp what it could not grasp at the actual time of occurrence (Unclaimed Experience 17, 57-63).

I want to apply these ideas of lack of preparedness and the overwhelming character of the traumatic event in relation to Partition. The speed of Partition and lack of administrative organisation for it are thus central to how we can formulate Partition as traumatic. As outlined, the speed and lack of adequate planning through which the Partition happened meant that there was not adequate time to come to agreements to ensure that Partition would be carried out peacefully. The idea of speed is also reflected in the time frames of the transfer of power, reduced by Mountbatten from ten months to ten weeks, meaning that plans were rushed through without much thought about the consequences. Furthermore, as Caruth outlines and Kathryn Robson emphasises, trauma is something that is relived in the present through flashbacks and hallucinations (Robson 11, 39). This formulation of trauma as something that happens too quickly is useful to apply to the political context of Partition; the repetition incurred by this speed can also been recognised across the Indian subcontinent where the patterns of gendered violence and dislocation of Partition can be seen to repeat. Berger argues that the idea of trauma allows us to
analyse the wounds and scars on a social body, alongside its compulsively repeated actions (573). What Berger is pointing to here is the way in which a national body can compulsively return to an event as much as an individual can. As such, we can understand the continuing patterns of ethnic and gendered violence in Pakistan in relation to national trauma, ideas I consider in detail in Chapter Three and the Coda. A gendered ethnic cleansing marked the 1971 Bangladesh war of Independence, widespread rape again became a tool of community violation. In India, when the Babri Masjid was destroyed in 1992, Muslim women were raped and burnt alive (Bahri 229). By considering the notion of the traumatic repeat we can consider how the terms of the nation’s becoming are implicated in the recourse to certain patterns of violence in times of political conflict. Furthering this, Jonathan Greenberg points to a double telling that emerges where August 1947 is the story of national independence and realisation, but also the story of dislocation, abduction, murder and rape (90). Partition is the foundational moment of a nation and my approach is to consider what the implications are when a time of mass migration and loss of life is also the time of the creation of a nation, and in turn identity formation and consolidation.

Many critics point to Partition as a wound, or as a bodily violence, the formulation of which points us to both the individual body harmed, as well as the collective one. This is central to how I distinguish between the borders in Punjab and Bengal. Soon after independence the Indian and Pakistani states agreed to a complete transfer of populations in Punjab (Zamindar The Long Partition 7). Between 1946-51, 12-14 million crossed the borders, and 10-12 million of these were in Punjab. In Bengal this was markedly less and also more gradual, it would seem because the violence here was also less (Bruschi 4). Initially only 340,000 non-Muslims migrated across the Bengal border, clearly hoping to live peacefully as minorities in East Pakistan (Wolpert 179). Since then the refugee influx across the Bengal border has been slow and ongoing (Fraser 5), whereas in Punjab it was more violent and abrupt, and

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20 The Babri Masjid was a mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh that was destroyed in by right-wing Hindu activists in 1992. The mosque was built by Babur, a Mughal ruler on a site regarded as the birthplace of the Hindu deity Ram. The presence of the mosque had been long contested due to uncertainty whether a Hindu temple had been demolished in order to build the mosque.

21 I have argued that it is useful to consider the trauma of Partition through framing the border itself as a wound, see Saeed.
further much more complete in 1947.\textsuperscript{22} The speed and abruptness of the disruption is central to how I am configuring the Partition on Punjab and imposition of borders in the province, especially in relation to trauma. A recognition of the distinctness of the two borders is necessary as this framework is not appropriate for talking about Bengal also as the processes here were so different. I will return to the Bengal border in the Coda in order to discuss the implications of the creation of East Pakistan from East Bengal.

Debates around national responses to traumatic histories and memories have centred on the idea of commemoration and remembrance. Pierre Nora has discussed how monuments and archives have become sites of memory that function by creating a location and tangibility for memory ("The Era of Commemoration"). In terms of grief and traumatic histories, the provision of a location means that histories can be detached from while still being honoured. In this sense commemoration can be seen as a way of remembering or elevating sacrifice without letting the ongoing existence of the sacrifice pervade the contemporary. As Nora has argued, this creates memory as a place that is visited rather than one that is experienced. While commemoration elevates memory, it simultaneously contains it. This move is especially interesting when we incorporate it into debates surrounding trauma. The traumatic, the melancholic, is taken and made material so it can be mourned; what cannot be fully known becomes something that can be contained. Thus the commemoration of trauma could also be the undermining of trauma. In other words, the extra layer that is added to commemorative memory when engaging with trauma is that pain must be let go of. That is to say pain must become something that can be let go of, which is also to say the extent of the pain must be reduced or denied. Through the very commemoration of trauma, trauma is vanquished. Butalia bemoans that those who suffered through Partition ‘have no monuments’ (Other Side of Silence 40). However, in the case of Pakistan, the site of memory is the nation itself, inhabitation of Pakistani national identity is a form of commemorating Partition.

\textsuperscript{22} Kabir outlines how ‘Indian Punjab today [is] nearly [as] devoid of Muslims as Pakistani Punjab is of Hindus and Sikhs’ (176); this highlights the almost complete transfer of populations, but also points to how the experience of being of the other religion (Muslim in Indian Punjab, or Hindu or Sikh in Pakistani Punjab) would be an increasingly embattled minority position as a result.
Considering Partition as dismemberment, Greenberg avers:

Each truncated landscape, abandoned by the exodus of refugees, remains a “phantom limb” in the collective memory of former inhabitants – and the citizens and leaders of each nation, across the border, to which they fled: a limb whole populations can still feel, often with the most excruciating pain, more than five decades after the amputation took place. (91)

In this description the pain of Partition lives on through the memory of the landscape that has been partitioned. In this sense, commemorating Pakistan would be to deny that Pakistan is a ‘phantom limb’ that was amputated. As discussed earlier, Greenberg utilises the image of Partition as a wound on the national body. When Pakistan is felt, or recalled it is with excruciating pain as the recollection brings with it the moment of amputation. This suggests then that Pakistan always holds within it the reminder of Partition, and that its existence precludes any form of healing. On the other hand, the notion of Pakistan as a site of commemoration that could vanquish trauma suggests that effective articulation of Pakistani national identity would let go of the pain of Partition. It is this tension at the heart of Pakistani national identity in relation to traumatic history that I want to examine in this thesis.

**Trauma and Representation**

Theorists such as Caruth have questioned whether the claim to ‘knowledge’ of a traumatic past can act as erasure. Since trauma cannot initially be integrated due to its unintelligibility, to make it intelligible must therefore reduce its traumatic effect (*Unclaimed Experience*). This dichotomy, where the need to acknowledge trauma can simultaneously erase the impact of its effect, generates much debate within trauma studies. Debates within Partition studies can be seen to reflect this concern. Chakrabarty outlines how Partition ‘defies belief’ as people struggle to comprehend how people turned against each other in such a violent fashion (“Remembered Villages” 111). In this sense, Partition violence is unintelligible, and the way in which the fabric of society was ripped apart cannot be comprehended. Although, as I have posited, exploring the conditions in which this violence erupted is important for my engagement with Partition, this does not explain the enormity of the event, it simply contextualises it. In Chapter Three I examine this in more detail to consider how the traumatic past can be incorporated while still be understood as traumatic. What the texts I analyse reveal is that there is much at stake in suggesting that we do not engage with these pasts. We see this in the Coda that attempts to separate the
present from the past are ultimately flawed, as the past needs to be reckoned with. Where this is not done leads to the troubled comment by Bapsi Sidhwa when she wonders why the agenda of Partition is still alive, recognising that the ‘wounds which I thought had healed, haven’t really healed’ (in Bhalla 237-8). The fact that the wounds have not healed stands as testament to the trauma, but this also means that patterns are condemned to repeat, the implications of which I address in Chapter Three and the Coda.

Shoshana Felman, in her important work on Holocaust testimony, argues for the elevated position of literature because it acts as a specific mode of testimony; and that writers often feel compelled to testify through literary or artistic channels precisely when they know, or feel intuitively that, in the court of history (and, I will now add, in a court of law) evidence will fail or will fall short. (“Forms of Judicial Blindness” 779)

This contributes to how we might engage with literature of Partition, as there were never any legal cases in response to the violence carried out at the time. Evidence of Partition has never been invited in official channels, which goes much of the way to explaining the frustration for many who see history only recording the story of high politics (Gilmartin “Partition, Pakistan” 1069). Instead, it has largely been fiction writers who have taken on the task of writing the experiences of Partition into history. Menon and Bhasin add that there is a void in the story from the margins, perhaps because it is too painful to speak of. They suggest that perhaps this is why so far only fiction has attempted to address ‘the enormity of the experience’ (“Recovery, Rupture, Resistance” 209). As Bahri outlines, this also allows for Partition to be represented without fear of personal disclosure from women who suffered due to the nation and the patriarchal family (227). Dasgupta concurs, arguing that

[i]n the absence of an archive which records the experiences of survivors, including survivors of sexual violence, fiction has assigned a

23 Unlike the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Canada and South Africa, for example, set up to address the harms done to Aboriginal people and damage caused by apartheid, respectively.

24 In terms of literary responses to Partition, there have been a great deal, most of which deal with the Punjab. For novels see Desai, Hosain, Sidhwa, Singh, and also Sahni. For short stories see Manto. For anthologies of Partition fiction see Memom (ed), and also Cowasjee and Duggal (ed). For fiction on the Bengal Partition see Hyder, and also Fraser (ed). Also see Talbot Freedom’s Cry for an overview of Partition literature.
compensatory role to itself. Partition fiction also plays a part in the production, consumption and circulation of historical memory[.] (39)

Thus, fiction has come to take the place of a 'history from below', basing stories on quotidian experiences and calling into question the assumptions of politicians (Bhalla 45, 53). In relation to the public private, masculine feminine and so on, this is another way to frame the gendered dimension of Partition and its various representations.

Ian Talbot has referred to Partition literature as filling the gaps of historiography. Didur has criticised Talbot’s assertion here, arguing instead that fictional accounts do not so much fill in the gaps but unsettle dominant records and modes of commemorating Partition. The distinction here is that Talbot primarily takes literary engagements with Partition as tools of representation whereas Didur is concerned with what these engagements might produce regarding how Partition is remembered. Didur’s work insists on the need to study texts away from the pressures and assumptions of representation. As Butalia has argued, we need to pay heed to how narratives create the reality of Partition, and consider what is constructed in stories, be they works of fiction or memory (“Community, State, and Gender” 205). What Butalia is pointing to is that there is much at stake in the telling of these stories, and insofar as analysis of historical processes can be open to bias, so too can telling the story, or stories, of Partition.25 As such their role as simply representation is one that I resist.

As outlined, I am concerned with the ways in which the nation emerges within cultural texts, and with how the texts themselves navigate the complexity of a nation established through violence, by establishing connections between Partition and Pakistan. To this end, my discussion in this thesis appraises the possibilities for cultural texts to offset more dominant historiography or nationalist tellings of the nation and its founding. My aim is to contextualise the texts under discussion within the historiography and political narratives of Partition and nation-building, rather

25 In relation to the limitations of Partition fiction Dasgupta argues against a form of ‘crisis fiction’, and argues that ‘narratives about violent events often “create” a textual space for violence.’ Furthermore, she proposes that this ‘crisis fiction, written as it was “at the cusp of colonial discourses and the revisionist demands of Indian nationalism in the 20th century, “crisis fiction” remains complicit with colonial and neo-colonial systems of knowledge’ (39). Husain on the other hand writes of the reparative potential of fiction as it can imagine idealised pasts, and offer a counter history to the stories of communalism (interviewed in Bhalla).
than the contemporary demands of production, circulation and publication. As a result, I have chosen to examine solely the content and form of the primary texts in this thesis, and do not discuss the contexts of authorship or circulation. My analysis therefore focuses on what the material produces in relation to the interplay between Partition and Pakistan, rather than what facilitates the production of the texts, be that the creator or the conditions of its circulation. I do point to materiality in chapters One and Three, but engaging fully with debates regarding the role of writers and directors in relation to contemporary Pakistani politics is beyond the scope and agenda of this thesis.

**Affect**

My engagement with affect and the emotions follows that of Sianne Ngai who uses affect and emotion interchangeably. Elspeth Probyn discusses how emotions are understood to exist in the cultural and social realm whereas affects are physiological. There is a distinction that emerges between affect and emotion in that affect is not experienced cognitively, it does not require a subject, whereas emotion does. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, Sara Ahmed argues that feelings may circulate in public and accrue meaning in this circulation but they are also experienced through the individual. As such affect and emotion negotiate the distinctions between how feelings negotiate the public and private, the social and the personal, the individual and the collective. As my work is concerned with the way the individual and collective are connected and the relations that are developed between them, my engagement with affect and emotions necessarily utilises both terms and concepts.

My concern with affect in this thesis stems from my engagement with texts that narrativise Pakistan. In thinking through what distinguishes a narrative of Pakistan from one of India in the context of Partition I was drawn to how Pakistan is the establishment of a new nation. Of course the India that emerged in 1947 was also ‘new’ in terms of borders, but nevertheless it has claim to continuity where Pakistan can be understood in some senses as seceding from India. In this sense Pakistan represents the development of new national belonging, or belonging to a new nation. The notion of belonging is of course an affectively charged one and it is the deployment of affects of belonging in Chapters One and Two that I consider in

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26 See Ngai for an evaluation of the various uses of affect and emotion (24-27).
relation to narratives of Pakistan. I am using affect to consider how concepts such as belonging are affectively charged and can have effects upon subjects, and that nations need to be understood as entities that demand attachment and emotional investment. I also consider affect and the emotions as a way to approach notions of the individual and the collective; in Chapter One I propose that affects of belonging become the vehicle through which individuals can attach to a national collective, and that emotions can be productive in terms of establishing nations. Chapter Two interrogates what we can glean from narratives in which affects of belonging to a new nation do not compensate for individual emotions of loss. I consider how gendered considerations of belonging might offset how the women narrating negotiate their feelings towards the nation. As such I consider affect and emotions alongside and against one another; as that which facilitates the attachment of the individual to the collective, but also that which highlights the tension in this attachment. In terms of memory and history I also consider these as concepts that generate attachments, and that promise to provide affectively, arguing that these are investments that we need to take seriously. Finally, the Coda engages with affect more peripherally to consider the realm of the family and the intimacy of calling the past into account through this unit when it contains both survivor and perpetrator subjects.

My proposal at the start of this Introduction was that we consider Partition in a broader contextualisation, both temporally and spatially. I have proposed that we can develop our understanding of the event by thinking through the event’s formation and afterlife. My engagement with the metaphors of Partition - of split land and split selves; the amputation of limbs; the wounded individuals and collectives - aims to question how we might engage with Partition in symbolic terms, in relation to the repetition of its tropes on the landscape of Pakistan. This consideration is alongside a contextualisation of Partition as an event, one that had origins and conditions of emergence. By looking at both together I aim to address how we might understand Partition’s temporality, as it continues into the present as both event and metaphor and what effect this might have on how we engage with Pakistan temporally in terms of past, present and future. All but one of the cultural texts I examine in this thesis do not directly describe Partition, but as Priya Kumar puts it in her discussion of the work of Amitav Ghosh and Qurratulain Hyder, ‘their return to Partition compel us to

27 See S. Ahmed, Cultural Politics for a discussion of how affects ‘stick’ to concepts.
concede the past-in-presentness of Partition as a history that is still developing, a history whose repercussions continue to be felt in our times’; as fiction that offers a ‘meditation on the enduring legacies of the borders and frontiers constituted by the division of the subcontinent’ (203). As Slavoj Žižek has argued regarding the Holocaust; these events are not fully behind us, ‘we, observing subjects, are still involved in it, are still part of the processes which generated it’ (215). As such the contemporary is not as far away from the conditions of emergence that characterised Partition. The implications of this will be explored further within the chapters that follow, alongside a consideration in the Coda and Conclusion of what these suggest regarding the nation’s future.

Chapter Outline

I begin my discussion with an analysis of Mumtaz Shah Nawaz’s novel *The Heart Divided* (1948) that is set in colonial India, 1930-1947. I argue that the novel’s teleological narrative proposes both the inevitability and desirability of Pakistan as it emerged from and through nationalist liberation movements for Indian independence. I utilise theories of affect to illuminate the ways in which affects of belonging powered much of the drive for Partition. In this chapter I consider the plot and characters as they participate in affective national politics alongside and against the novel’s structural narrative. I propose that the tensions between the two are where we can detect the novel’s nationalist ideology. The violence of Partition is not represented in the novel at all, and the characters only allude to it. As such, my analysis engages with the implications of this being a Partition novel that does not address the human cost of Partition. This chapter also considers how affects facilitate and motivate the participation of the individual in the collective, and consider how personal relationships act as rehearsals and templates for national politics. This chapter proposes that the pre-Partition time is crucial to our engagement with narratives of Pakistan and Partition.

Chapter Two analyses Furrukh Khan’s oral history documentary *Stories of the Broken Self* (2007), which presents interviews with Pakistani women regarding their experiences and memories of the Partition. In particular I examine the implications of stories of violence that mark the becoming of the Pakistani nation, especially in relation to the gendered experiences of this time, to consider how these experiences become (or resist becoming) assimilated into affective tropes of belonging. This
discussion situates the women’s narratives as microhistories that have the potential to offer divergent narratives to dominant historiography. My analysis of the film considers the role of testimony in memory narratives and interrogates the heterogeneity of the women’s narratives against the homogeneity of more dominant narratives of the time. By considering the documentary as film, this chapter argues for the affective proximity generated through seeing the women, as well as the film putting the viewer in the role of witness to the women’s stories.

In Chapter Three I utilise the tools of trauma theory in order to analyse how Sabiha Sumar’s film *Khamosh Pani* (Silent Waters, 2003) articulates the trauma of a nation that has not worked through the gendered violence of its formation. Set in 1979 with flashbacks to 1947, I propose that the film’s structure reveals the disruptive potential of individual women’s history upon dominant national narratives, especially at times of increased religious nationalism. My argument engages with gaps in women’s narratives and considers the Freudian concepts of mourning and melancholia alongside acting out and working through to consider how narrative might engage with the trauma of Partition effectively. This chapter also considers trauma structurally, in terms of the film’s visual dimension and as well as the repetitive patterns of the nation’s politics. In terms of narrative this chapter returns to Bhabha’s ideas around performative and pedagogic narratives of nation alongside Michael Billig’s banal nationalism, to consider the role of narrative in the repetitive cycles of national politics. My analysis across these three texts moves through Partition’s time frames – the period leading up to it, its occurrence and its afterlife.

Considering the faultlines of Partition the Coda turns to the secession of Bangladesh. Here I address the failed attempt at a unified Pakistan across two distinct wings and regional identities, and the effects of the 1971 war in which Bangladesh seceded. In this chapter I examine Sorayya Khan’s novel *Noor* (2003) to argue for the ways in which the creation of Bangladesh points to the failure of Partition to create a functional united homeland for Indian Muslims, across regional and language differences. This analysis draws out how the novel makes a case for how histories of perpetration effect the nation, and points to the repetition of the gendered violence and ethnic cleansing that characterised Partition at the 1971 secession. Finally, the Coda considers the function of the disabled child Noor in the novel to engage with how the novel imagines reparative futures for the Pakistani nation.
The following discussions aim to consider how Partition still reverberates across Pakistan and across the cultural production of Pakistan. By contributing an analysis that utilises varied artistic forms and by broadening the temporal and spatial context of this area of study, my work proposes making an intervention into how colonial legacies have lasting ramifications on how nations are imagined in terms of their pasts, presents and futures.
Affecting Phantasm: *The Heart Divided* and the Genesis of Pakistan

*The Heart Divided* is set in 1930s-1940s Lahore in colonial India and follows the lives of the elite Muslim family, the Jamaluddins, as they participate in the Indian independence movement, then the Pakistan movement. The realist form of the novel locates the text in a particular time and in so doing the novel’s setting purports to offer a historical realist account of the pre-Partition time through the novel’s plot. Ranjana Khanna describes the coherence that is characteristic of a nationalist genre as that which ‘tells a collective story of a nation’ (211). I argue that the realist historical structure of the novel constructs a coherent narrative through offering us a series of events that chart the development of a national collective. In so doing, it makes a case for the inevitability of Pakistan as it came to be in 1947. This leads to the novel’s conclusion that ends with the declaration of ‘Towards Pakistan!’, significantly creating the novel as teleological in its move towards Pakistan.

My analysis of *The Heart Divided* engages with the tensions that emerge between the content of the novel (the characters and plot), and the novel’s form (the narrative structure of the text). I argue that the representational occlusions and elisions of the narrative gesture towards the (nationalist) ideology of the text and that this can be accessed through considering how the novel foregrounds the tension between the standpoints of reason and emotion. Don Handelman has persuasively argued for the nation-state’s reliance on bureaucratic logic and national emotion for its existence, although these elements are ‘distant from one another in their epistemic premises, indeed antagonistic’, and as such the nation-state’s dualism of the two is problematic. Handelman posits that the nation-state embodies the Cartesian mind-body split whereby governance and administration (bureaucracy) reflect the reasoned mind, and nationalism the emotions of the body (120-1). My argument considers this separation between bureaucratic logic and national emotion within the novel. I argue that the novel foregrounds the emotions as the things that bring the Pakistani nation into being, and it does this through repressing the role of bureaucratic logic. While the emotional pull of national belonging is productive, through generating demands for Pakistan as a nation, affects of belonging also exist in tension with the rationally articulated project of partitioning land. Since the novel does not represent in narrative form the actual Partition processes, the effects of affective national belonging being subsumed into political expediency are not acknowledged.
The Heart Divided charts how the Muslim League motivated and created an intimate public through emotional attachments to a glorious Muslim past. As such the novel makes a case for the power of the emotions to establish the group identity of nationhood, through developing attachments to history. The realist form uses the drama and romantic investment of a family saga in order to offer satisfaction through the success of particular love plots in lieu of the success of a united India. The success or failure of relationships comes to act as a method by which difference between Hindus and Muslims is naturalised by the novel, and stands in for the national condition. As such the legitimacy of Partition is asserted through the success and failure of romantic relationships, further consolidating affect as the means by which the nation gains legitimacy. However, in so doing, the novel does not explore the tensions that emerge between national emotion and bureaucratic logic when attachments and legacies become territorially articulated through bureaucracy (Partition). Furthermore, this territorial articulation was established through colonial epistemologies such as cartography and population charts, which were constructed without any engagement with affective attachments. As Handelman avers, bureaucratic logic has no obligation to respect affective attachment and creates through division and separation (124). However, the novel maintains a focus on affects and its narrative does not engage with these logistical concerns that underpin the move to Pakistan as a bounded nation, and concludes with the focus still on the emotions. This repression of reason and bureaucratic logics, while making a compelling case for the affective genesis of Pakistan, also has the effect of repressing the human costs of the Partition.

Mumtaz Shah Nawaz completed the novel in 1948, the year of her death. Nawaz was active in Congress and then the Muslim League, her political trajectory mirrored by Zohra in the novel. The novel was first published in 1957 in Lahore, and not published in India until 2004, which is telling in relation to the Pakistani nationalist standpoint that the novel advances. I point to Nawaz’s context in order to highlight that she would have been aware of the human costs of Partition in writing her novel. Indeed, Nawaz volunteered at refugee camps that were set up to house those migrating into Pakistan, so directly participated in post-Partition rehabilitation efforts. The exclusion of the disruption of Partition from the novel’s narrative is therefore not due to a lack of awareness of the disruption. As such I propose the
exclusion is an ideological one, and as I will argue constructs a persuasive nationalist narrative.

Paul Coviello has argued that a ‘citizen’s capacity for affect [...] is nothing less than a capacity for national belonging’ (454), and Jeff Goodwin et al. that nationalist movements embody a libidinal economy (20). Within these engagements we can see that political movements are intertwined with affects of desire and belonging, and it is these I will discuss as the foundation for constructing the new nation as affectively compelling. As Greg Noble and Scott Poynting propose, belonging is not ‘simply cognitive processes of identification, but highly charged, affective relations of attachment to and exclusion from particular places’ (130). I argue that the novel uses affects of belonging and relationships to make a case for nationalism, and in so doing it naturalises difference through its representation of affective attachments to place and between people. I argue that affects are productive and as Sara Ahmed argues, emotions ‘do things, and work to align individuals with collectives – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments’ (“Collective Feelings” 26). Ahmed’s quotation emphasises this productive element of emotions, through identification and attachment, and I argue that the novel’s investment in affects of belonging suggests that affects, as well as providing individuals with emotional sustenance, can have material effects. This has wider implications regarding how we might conceptualise nation spaces. As Sheldon Pollock et al. propose in relation to Pakistan, imaginations of place are not always tied to fixed geographical locations (579); the concept of a nation can be generated without borders in mind, but in the sense of an abstract homeland.

In the novel affect becomes the vehicle by which individuals join a group identity of Muslim that then becomes articulated as a national collective. I propose that this move from individual to collective is dramatised within the novel through the characters investing in affects of belonging. However, the tensions between individual and collective, intrinsic as they are to nationalist discourse, remain unnoticed by the characters. Therefore I propose that the novel puts forward a case for the shift from individual to collective, and the emergence of a national identity through affect and at the expense of material considerations. As well as in relation to the processes of partitioning the land, the limitations can also be understood in terms of class as the bias towards the approach of the elite characters is confirmed through
repressing the material concerns of the poor, who are not given the engagement of characterisation.

Furthermore, I discuss how the novel makes a case for the naturalisation of difference through affective bonds, and proposes that the failure of Hindu-Muslim unity is the consequence of insurmountable difference and historical precedent. The failure of Hindu-Muslim unions acts as evidence of the incompatibility of the two communities, yet I propose that the narrative constructs this incompatibility through nationalist rhetoric that creates the two communities as distinct. There is a naturalisation of difference in the novel, which is proffered through affects. As a final point I will argue that the close of the novel offers resolution for the main characters in terms of romantic relationships; the love plots act as a substitute affective investment in lieu of a united India but also in lieu of attachments to place that are not honoured in the population-based allocation of territory.

I argue that using affect as an analytical tool enables us to see what the emotions can work to conceal, as well as what they can produce. The power of idealism and national belonging means that they take the place of concerns about Partition’s actual processes. Instead of worrying about ‘how’ Pakistan will happen, the characters just worry whether it will indeed happen. The investment of the novel in the emotions means that the narrative ignores the contradictions that emerge within the nationalist project that is nevertheless realised through colonial epistemologies such as population charts. In this sense the novel can be seen to inadvertently uphold the imperial narrative of a successful transfer of power on the subcontinent whereby the violence is repressed in favour of the grand narratives of nation building and independence.

**Emotive Enfranchisement**

Before making claims for Pakistan, the novel makes a case for the Muslim League, rather than ‘India’, becoming a prioritised site of belonging for Muslims. This is done in a series of associated steps that include Congress becoming associated with a frustrated campaign for Muslim enfranchisement. In so doing the novel proposes the logic of the subsequent campaign for Pakistan as one that is justified through political frustrations and experienced through affects of belonging to a glorious history. I propose that, akin to Lauren Berlant’s intimate public, it is an engagement
and association with history that generates this affective affiliation with the Muslim League. The novel suggests that investment in the League is a way for the characters to invest in the return of a glorious Muslim existence. That the League then begins to invest its campaigns in the form of Pakistan means that the attachments to glory that have been established are easily transplanted onto plans for Pakistan.

The identity of ‘Muslim’ takes over as a stronger attachment than that of ‘Indian’ due to the relative disenfranchisement felt by certain Muslims as a minority in India. The novel makes a strong case for Muslims feeling sidelined within Congress, and is clear in demonstrating the Muslim characters’ move away from Congress to the League rather than having an automatic affiliation to the League. As a realist novel, the narrative incorporates the elite characters refusing to participate in several protests initiated by Congress, making a compelling case for the existence of the Muslim League in terms of political enfranchisement. What is interesting is that the novel shows the League appealing to those educated in bureaucratic structures through an awareness of a lack of parity, alongside a sense that they deserve better due to their grand historical legacy as Muslims in India. As I will discuss, for those who cannot access the bureaucratic script an affective attachment is generated between a grand past and hope for a better future, without concrete promises being offered. Instead affect provides something concrete in that it provides hope for a future, even if this is vague and not articulated in material terms. The more bureaucratic realm can thus be seen to operate within structural inequalities; it will benefit those who understand and directly participate in its processes and secure the support of those who do not even though it will not benefit them materially.

The Jamaluddin sisters have varying attitudes regarding how appropriate it is to construct a politics charged by emotions; the tension between emotional engagement with politics and objective detachment emerges repeatedly in the text. One exchange between Sughra and Zohra is especially telling as they argue about their differing approaches to liberation; Sughra, active in the Muslim League and Zohra, a staunch supporter of Congress:

‘Apa,²⁸ you are carried away by your feelings,’ Zohra would tell [Sughra], ‘and sometimes your reason is clouded over. All strong emotions are narrowing, you know, and truth has many facets.’

²⁸ Respectful term for addressing an elder sister or female relation.
‘Zohra, you have no real feelings for your own people,’ her sister would retort, ‘you talk like a cold blooded logician, forgetting that reason is not always right where human beings are concerned, and that it has always been strong feelings that have provided the motivation for the great movements in the history of mankind.’ (305)

The framing here is of nationalist against religious, with Congress nationalism ostensibly appearing ‘reasonable’, while the League is affective and therefore to Zohra, limited. This is an interesting framework considering Alison Jaggar’s discussion that reason is often associated with the dominant group and emotion the subordinates (163). To Zohra, emotional identification with other Muslims means that Sughra’s judgment is clouded, but to Sughra this identification is a necessary and powerful tool for an engaged and productive politics with their ‘own people’.

According to Partha Chatterjee, the investment of anti-colonial nationalisms in ideas of modernity, which stemmed from the logics of colonial domination, produced a contradiction at the heart of nationalist discourse. Furthermore, nationalist thought adopted Western Enlightenment knowledge production, based on notions of reason (Nationalist Thought 30, 38). Hamid Dabashi echoes this, arguing that the construction of nations in the service of anti-colonialism was done ‘[t]hrough the prism of colonialism but in the mirror of European modernity’ (88). It is the mainstream nationalist party (Congress) that is associated with reason in this extract, and the separatist party (Muslim League) conversely associated with affect. This suggests that the nation upholds notions of reason whereas religion is unreasonable through being communal. In relation to Chatterjee’s assertions, Congress embodies the contradictions in nationalist discourse through this investment in reason, whereas the League moves away from this in its focus on emotional connections and responses rather than reasoned or logical ones.29

Zohra subsequently articulates the potential threat posed by Sughra’s emotional approach, by declaring that the Muslim League will ‘sacrifice the nationalist

29 As Jaggar has pointed out, reason is considered to be objective and universal (152). And as D. Scott argues, the Enlightenment was a universalising project predicated on placing notions of rationality and morality in the service of a universal notion of reason, that was also connected to individualism and historicisation (177). The tension that emerges between emotion and reason can also be understood through Chatterjee’s arguments that anti-colonial nationalism resisted colonialism through the very terms it sought to repudiate; terms that were based on Enlightenment understandings of nation (38). In line with this there are many productive links to be made between the Enlightenment project and the emotional resistance to colonialism, as well as notions of individuality and collectivity, but the detail of this debate is beyond the scope of this chapter.
Muslims on the altar of communalism’ (310). By using the language of religion through ‘sacrifice’ and ‘altar’, Zohra accuses the League’s religious associations of being a threat to nationalist Muslims. As a friend of the sisters, Rajindar, says to Zohra when she expresses her support for the League, ‘but surely you are against communal organizations? They are anti-national’ (236). The Muslim League, due to its operating on the grounds of religious identity, is considered communal, and therefore unable to be national.30 Zohra as a Muslim comes round to the League, and the novel therefore proposes that even an approach that foregrounds reason will be convinced of the League’s legitimacy. This suggests that the League does not have to be based on reason in order for it to be legitimate, but also that emotions can produce reason, and as such develop bureaucratic logic. As such, when Pakistan becomes established as an idea, the League becomes national because it is the proponent of this national idea. Although the specific ‘national’ of the League is communally informed due to its separatist origins, the potential challenge of the League to Enlightenment epistemology through the emotions gets collapsed into a nation that will be articulated through reason-informed bureaucracy.31

The establishment of Zohra’s political concerns early in the novel is expressed through her participation in college debates and her belief in gender equality; these are articulated in direct relation to her feelings of experiencing the world as a woman. Her speeches are shown to have the power to affect through being so charged with her desire for personal liberty and enfranchisement:

all the frustrations and longings of a girl behind the purdah, aching to take a citizen’s part in the happenings of the world, were poured forth in a voice so full of feeling that all who heard her were visibly affected. (226)

Here the power of Zohra’s speech is in its connection to her desire to participate – the subject of the debate is ‘women’s place is in the home and she should not take part in politics’ (224). As such her speech is fuelled by her aspirations of taking an active part in civic life, and the desire to ‘take a citizen’s place’ suggests that this active role be realised through individual membership to a political community. Here

30 Following Hayes it is useful to consider the significant overlaps between how nationalism is often articulated through language and tropes that are more commonly associated with religion. See in particular “Nationalism as Religion”.

31 See Cleary for an engaging summary of Chatterjee’s thesis, and a discussion of what is at stake for minorities within nationalist discourse though a consideration of how the majority has a claim on the national (31-32).
the novel shows the connection to activism as directly related to the personal resonances of certain struggles; the ideas of universal ethics or moral codes do not motivate, but personal ambitions and intimacies do. Zohra’s speech as described above is affecting for the audience for the same reasons, they are moved by her expression of personal desire, by the ‘frustrations and longings’ rather than a political point. That Zohra wins the inter-college competition demonstrates how her affective expression becomes an effective tool of debate that has the potential to impact above and beyond a moral message. I will return to this contagious element of affect later in the chapter in relation to the affective power of the Muslim League.\(^{32}\) What I want to focus on here is the way in which Zohra’s personal desires inform her investment in particular models of politics. Jaggar discusses how Plato’s model of the emotions considered them to need direction by reason, suggesting that the ‘split between reason and emotion was not absolute’ (151). What we see with Zohra’s political agenda is that, although expressed as reason, it is informed by her desires as a gendered individual, and the nationalist struggle becomes a way for her to achieve these personal goals. This demonstrates how affects can provide the catalyst for the individual to join the collective, but also suggests that involvement in collectives such as the nation can be motivated by very individualist desires rather than collective goals.

Rajindar, on visiting the slums to offer support to an existing medical project, delivers a passionate speech regarding change and the need to shatter the existing colonial order. Rajindar’s belief in the goals of independence come across in a visionary and idealist way; her affective language clearly charts the links between romantic dreaming and political aspirations yet she is keen to exert her dreams in material terms:

> Sughra’s been a dreamer all her life, and her dreams were of the gossamer thread of romance which, when shattered, left her destitute. I’m a dreamer too: but my dreams are built of cement, of brick and steel, and of the muscle and bone and sinew of living people. (262)

For Rajindar, dreams are necessary for political fervour but they need to remain grounded and focussed on materiality. Rajindar’s speech here insists on the need for dreams and tangible goals that are based on peoples’ needs. This approach would be 

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\(^{32}\) See Gibbs for a discussion of affect as contagion. Also see S. Ahmed who argues that ‘signs increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more signs circulate, the more affective they become’ (*Cultural Politics* 45).
based in the materiality of life while also avoiding being left ‘destitute’. Rajindar’s terms suggest an investment in politics that is so personally realised that the activist subject is putting them self on the line. The connection to materiality here is as much about protecting the self as it is about activist commitment. This approach that centres the self can be understood to be in tension with communal politics, or collective organising as it suggests that personal desires and goals inform collective action, rather than the concerns of the collective being prioritised, and as such betray a bias in approach. Rajindar’s dreams are built of the ‘sinew of living people’ rather than her dreams generating action alongside the living people.

For Purnima Bose, the opposition proposed by Fanon, between colonial individualism and collective nationalism, is far too rigid. Instead she argues for a collective nationalist/activist agency that is haunted by individualism (5-6). Bose’s analysis is concerned with collective agency that produces resistance, through the choice of individuals to ‘affiliate with one another and to organise into collectives to attain specific political ends’ (10). I argue that in this case it is affect that motivates the individual to join the collective, but that the individual must also be aware of the potential costs to their self because of this affective investment in both collective and cause. As such, to use Bose’s formulation, Rajindar’s participation in the collective nationalist movement is haunted by individualism. Her participation in politics is fuelled by affect, but this very fuel creates the conditions whereby she must protect herself through keeping the self central. This fundamentally limits the collective potential of her politics, as she becomes an individual who collaborates within a collective, rather than one who works collectively. There is a tension that emerges here whereby the needs of the one are foregrounded while proposing to take action with and for the many.

Sughra’s entry into political work is also characterised by emotional investments. After her son dies in infancy she deals with her grief by taking on political work, first with children in poor urban areas, and later in the Muslim League. Sughra in

33 See Fanon Wretched of the Earth, where he argues for how the native intellectual becomes empowered to replace bourgeois individualism with a collective. Bose argues that Fanon’s formulation is based on the idea that the native intellectual passes through colonial individualism and matures into a nationalism based on collectivity, and it this proposition that she critiques.

34 By working collectively I mean as a member of a group whereby the goals of the group are determined by all members of the group. Individual collaboration is not strictly group work, as individuals set the agenda to then work with other individuals.
particular is shown working towards the enfranchisement of the urban poor, especially women. The text is clear in positing the Jamaluddin family as allies in class struggle, yet there are many moments that expose the limitations of this approach, which Bose would refer to as individualist. Resultantly Sughra seeks to garner support from lower class women for her own cause, rather than working towards collectively organising alongside these women. When going door-to-door canvassing votes for the Muslim League candidate Mian Aziz from women there is the following exchange:

When it was all explained to her, she promised to vote for Mian Aziz. ‘But there’s one thing I want to know,’ she asked. ‘What will he become?’
‘He will become the member of the council that makes laws.’
‘Will he give my son a job?’
‘Well...not exactly...but...’
‘Ah well,’ interrupted the woman, ‘you needn’t say anything. It’s always the same. You big people always want something of us, but as for our troubles...there’s only God.’
‘Sorry sister,’ said Sughra, ‘I know how it is.’
‘How do you know?’ said the woman, and she looked at the jewelled rings on her delicate hands.
‘Believe me, I sympathize. Better days will come, sister.’
‘When?’
‘Some day when we are free again and when we can build a new world. A world where no one will be poor or hungry.’
‘I think you’re talking nonsense,’ said the woman. (269-70)

This is striking in terms of the disjuncture between the women because of their different social classes. James C. Scott has pointed out within the context of liberation struggles that the poor strive to gain work, land and income and that they are not aiming at ‘large historical abstractions’ such as socialism or independence (348), and this resonates with the extract above. The concerns of the ‘woman’ (who significantly is not given a name) are purely materialist; she is concerned with her subsistence and the direct impact and effect of her vote on her situation. When questioned in these terms Sughra stumbles, the ‘well...not exactly...but...’ highlighting that Sughra is unable to articulate her ideology within a material framework. Her learned politics, however much they may have political relevance and application, remain within the logics of grand narratives of ‘democracy’, ‘nationalism’ and ‘liberation’. Sughra herself can access these narratives due to what Gayatri Spivak calls the ‘epistemic violence’ of negotiating with colonial power structures and therefore being able to speak in the language of colonialism against colonialism (*Postcolonial Critic* 102). This language is one of bureaucratic systems
and political rights, which Bose identifies as the discourse in which feminin-nationalist individualism is located. Bose argues that political rights, such as voting, position the individual in a collective such as national identity (13-14). Votes enable people to engage with the collective as individuals, and entail a belief in the relevance of the voting system. The woman does not know what position she is voting Mian Aziz into nor what function he will then serve, emphasising her separation from the political system that Sughra is invested in reforming.

During Sughra’s canvassing for Mian Aziz, we are shown three households where the women are not engaged with what Sughra has to say regarding her request for their votes. She then visits a house where she makes a connection with a woman there, and Sughra is ‘amazed at her sound common sense’ (270), betraying her assumption that lower class women would not have such ‘common sense’, whatever, indeed, this may be. As a trajectory the novel highlights the failure of approaching poorer communities through a focus on the vote, through Sughra’s realisation that the women are receptive when they are addressed by ‘something that touches their lives’ (271-2). This ‘something’ is religion and women’s rights within an Islamic framework. When asked to do something concrete like vote, the women want concrete promises, which Sughra cannot deliver; when discussing the sense of pride they should feel in being Muslim, this gets applause and commitment. At the same time as the plot offers this realisation, we see the narrative constrained within representational logics. None of the poor women with whom Sughra speaks are named; they are all referred to as ‘the woman’, suggesting that they are all types of one kind of woman: the poor woman. They are not formed characters and only function as a reflection of what Sughra is learning to campaign for.35 At the end of this section, the women’s reflections are not mentioned; instead we are told that Sughra is ‘no longer depressed about the political ignorance of Muslim women’ (272). The focus is on what Sughra has learnt with regards to mobilising poor women, rather than what poor women might feel they need to better their lives. Sughra’s learning is pitched as a success in the novel, but she has not learnt to listen to the women, but how to move them affectively.

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35 See the work of the Subaltern Studies collective for an approach whereby the actions of the subaltern are accessed through analysing absences in dominant (elite and colonial) historiography.
Sughra’s evaluation of whether the women are politically ignorant or not is held within particular assumptions about what counts as knowledge, in particular in relation to the electoral system. In this Sughra invests in her own systems of knowledge as what Berlant terms a woman sentimentalist (*Female Complaint* 3). Having a sentimental outlook, she explains, is to consider there to be ‘an intelligence in what they feel that knows something about the world that, if it were listened to, could make things better’ (*Female Complaint* 2). In campaigning, Sughra is shown to have a belief in the legitimacy and power of her knowledge and the potential for this knowledge to bring in ‘better days’. The limitations of this outlook are not realised by Sughra due to the investment in her own good intentions and modes of analysis.

Although Sughra is canvassing votes and as such encouraging participation, she also has an agenda that is shown to be distinct from the hopes of the woman being canvassed. The insight of this woman is precise in that she articulates the failures of the whole system; she may have been given a vote and be seemingly enfranchised, but the parameters of this are too limited by the confines of the colonial bureaucratic system to actually have an effect on her life. In many ways, this approach predicts the maintenance of a particular state structure that would remain intact if independence is received. Rather than being ruled by a colonial government, the elites such as Mian Aziz would have more power and the poor would simply be part of this newly owned structure. Amilcar Cabral’s warning resonates here as he argues that ‘the moment national liberation comes and the petty bourgeoisie take power we enter, or rather return, to history and the internal contradictions break out again’ (cited in Davidson, 134). For all Sughra’s passion and integrity of belief in her cause, the campaign is seen very much to be her cause for which the working classes can assist. As such the woman critiques the system and its script as well as being disenfranchised by it.

In terms of privilege, Berlant continues that ‘sentimentality from the top down softens risk to the conditions of privilege by making obligations to action merely

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36 See Bose for a discussion of how elite nationalist groups often made moves that had negative effects on lower class women (123). The All India Women’s Conference encouraged social work (which is what we are shown as the entry point of Sughra into activism), and created an extension of the private into the public. This is interesting in relation to Chatterjee’s discussions regarding women and the nationalist movement, and also the idea of individualism; extending the private suggests extending the individual into the collective. See Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments*, in particular “The Nation and its Women” for a discussion of how nationalism subsumed and recast campaigns for women’s rights, or what he terms the ‘women’s question’.
ameliorative, a matter of not changing the fundamental terms that organize power, but of following the elevated claims of vigilant sensitivity, virtue and conscience’ (*Female Complaint* 35). What Sughrā does not seem to realise in her campaigning is that she has more to gain from the system than the women who critique or refuse her political script, because they are differently affected by imperialism and its economic and social impositions. As Berlant proposes, sentimentalists do not talk about the structural benefits of continuity’ (*Female Complaint* 21). In Sughrā’s campaigning we can understand her, as is Rajindar, to be haunted by individualism. Although she is campaigning for what she understands to be a collective cause, her engagement with this is constrained by her own outlook on this collectivity; which can be understood as informed by her role in the Muslim League. As David Willmer outlines, the mobilisation of women was a vital element of the Muslim League’s tactics leading up to Partition. Many Muslim women saw the issue of social modernisation as an important one in its own right, and one that could be discussed rationally in a Muslim nationalist context without nationalist rhetoric taking over (573, 583). This is reflected in Sughrā’s campaigning for the enfranchisement of women within modernising systems such as voting structures. However, this poses a limitation whereby she can only understand women to be enfranchised via the vote for leaders with nationalist aspirations. This has much to do with Radhakrishnan’s arguments that women’s enfranchisement was not awarded on the basis of gender rights (in this case women being educated to understand the bureaucratic system), they were awarded through nationalist goals (here via affect). This resulted in women’s enfranchisement being *spoken for* by nationalism and was thus kept from achieving its own politicisation (78-80). As pointed out, Sughrā does not learn from the critiques of the poor women, she learns what strategies will motivate them. This is reminiscent of Fanon’s arguments in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he posits that nationalist parties use slogans to mobilise but have no solid economic plans in place for the people being mobilised. He argues that ‘[w]hen such parties are questioned on the economic programme of the state that they are clamouring for, or on the nature of the regime which they propose to install, they are incapable of

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37 Fanon also discusses how a ‘government which declares that it wishes to educate the people politically thus expresses its desire to govern with the people and for the people. It ought not to speak a language destined to camouflage a bourgeois administration […] everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you want them to understand ’ (145, 152). Fanon’s framing of ‘with’ and ‘for’ suggests a model of collectivity that is enacted through engaging in full explanations. Sughrā, conversely, does not spend the time explaining the bureaucratic system to the lower class women, and instead she turns to an affective campaigning that can bypass education.
replying’ (121). Sughra’s campaigning can be seen to follow such a model; when she is asked what the election of Mian Aziz will provide in terms of jobs and economics she cannot answer, but the campaign is shown to be successful when grand claims about Muslim legacies are made.

The entry point for the main characters into nationalism, I have argued here, is through individual concerns and desires, so is fuelled by the needs of the individual rather than a sense of the collective. As individuals connected to elite leaders and those in positions of political power, we see how the power and emotional investments of the elite few - here Sughra and Zohra - set the agenda for the many to follow. When Sughra encounters women who do not recognise or connect with her script of liberation she returns to affects as that which can motivate the individual’s move to the collective rather than taking on board the critiques raised in terms of materialism. As such the development of nationalism is not a collective process although it seeks to develop a collective identity. While I am not challenging the intentions of the characters (Sughra expresses belief in the legitimacy of her approach, although I propose this is misguided), I want to emphasise that the novel’s narrative lends credence to Sughra, proposing that because affects seem to motivate the many she is right to solely focus on this as a strategy instead of also addressing the material concerns that have been raised by the urban poor.

**The Affective Turn to Pakistan**

Lawrence Grossberg has proposed that a consideration of affect is required to adequately understand the effectiveness of ideology (82-3). In this section I aim to outline how affect becomes a central mechanism by which the Muslim League, and its developing nationalist ideology, garner support within the novel. Emotions can generate what Berlant has termed ‘intimate publics’, spaces charged by affective investments in ‘better lives’. Berlant argues that a public sphere becomes intimate where its ‘consumers’ share an outlook on the world and have ‘emotional knowledge’ that stems from a common historical experience. In this sharing, participants are understood as ‘marked by a commonly lived history’. The narrative of the intimate public is an expression of this shared history and also constitutive of a belonging forged through this history. Furthermore, belonging to this intimate public promises ‘to provide a better experience of social belonging’ (*Female Complaint* viii). The structure that Berlant advances is in relation to commodity culture in the
U.S., yet the formulation is extremely productive beyond this context. As she outlines, the intimate public draws people together through a sense of commonality that is located in history but generates belonging within the present. The temporal implication of the intimate public also extends into the future through promising an even better social (or collective) belonging through participation in this intimate public. It is my contention that the novel charts Pakistan as an intimate public through its existence first as a phantasmatic nation that exists in the hearts of many before it is articulated as geographical space, and furthermore that this space is generated through its beginnings in the heart. In the novel, affective attachments to a glorious Islamic heritage and ideals of liberty are shown to motivate the characters’ involvement in the Muslim League and generate support for the League from the urban poor, which leads to an investment in the goal of Pakistan. That Pakistan does become a nation delineated by geographical borders suggests that sentimental investments can produce (maintain and alter) bureaucratic articulations of nation. The implications of this sentimentalist mobilisation are that the support of the many is cemented through the hope promised by the Muslim League, garnering support for a nationalist cause through the agenda of a few. Here I return to Grossberg who posits that emotional investment is a method by which people give objects the authority to speak for them (84). This proposition is illuminating in terms of nations, as it suggests that the nation as a singular entity comes to speak for many through the emotional investments of the many that give the nation the authority to do so. Taking Berlant and Grossberg’s analyses together emphasises the power of emotional investment in securing the support of many for them to be subsumed into the singular articulation of the nation.

For Berlant, participants in the intimate public feel that it expresses their commonality, a likeness that stems from their history and ongoing attachments. This public then, becomes a way for them to join together (Female Complaint 5). The Heart Divided shows the emotional appeal of becoming part of the Muslim League, which draws on narratives of a glorious Muslim history. This use of history asks that Indian Muslims both identify with this glorious past and invest in the promise of a return to glory in the future, constructing the idea of the better experience of social, or collective, belonging that can be attained through the League. For Sughra in particular, victories of the Islamic empire provide an integral slant for how she views
her activism and struggle for independence. Her expressions of this are also within the realm of desire and escapism:

Across the sea was far Arabia and further still Syria and Palestine and Turkey. Would [Sughra] never see these lands, whose very history beat in her blood? The glorious past was so different to the drab present. [...] She could see the armies of Salahuddin marching across the desert, drums beating and banners flying, with row upon row of knights and heroes mounted on restless chargers ready to die for the greater glory of Islam. And in front of them, always in front of them, the unknown knight with the crescent banner. (115)

In this moment Sughra is idealising her view of a glorious Islamic past, invoking a sense of nostalgia, while the image of heroes marching with the crescent banner suggests to us the approach of the Muslim homeland of Pakistan. The dreamlike way in which we are shown her investment in this past and future does much to identify the ways in which emotions are inextricably tied up in this symbol. She herself is located at a junction between past and future, a present embodiment that does not represent the glorious past she idealises and the glorious future she hopes for. It is her emotional investment in this image that fuels her participation in the Muslim League as the hope that this is what will take her to the glorious future and remove her from her ‘drab’ present.

Sughra’s participation in politics takes her to New Delhi for a Muslim League conference where, in his speech, a member of the League also utilises images of glorious Muslim history:

[H]ave you forgotten your past? Cannot the walls of the Red Fort and the minarets of the Shahi Mosque remind you of the glory that once was yours? [...] Awake! Arise, unite and break your chains for no Muslim can be a slave and live! For us there are but two ways, to live the lives of free men and heroes or to die the death of martyrs: there is no third! (321-2)

This speech interpellates the listener as one who once had glory and has an entitlement for its return. There is also an urgency in the speech that works as a call to arms to Muslims, and equates Muslim with action, the ‘awake’ and ‘arise’, suggesting that to be Muslim must be to arise. This identification with those feeling powerless provides a sense of possibility, and crucially it is through religion that this possibility is provided. What I am suggesting is that calling people into action as

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38 I take this term from Althusser who proposes that ‘all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects’ (115). Interpellation in this moment of the novel turns the listening individual into a Muslim subject with entitlement to a glorious past.
Muslims set the foundations for the call for Pakistan. Although this is being done in the service of an independent India, the primary affiliation is of being a free Muslim within India. This affinity of free Muslim within India becomes easily transferrable to being a free person of a Muslim state. Declarations such as ‘The foundations of democracy lie in the Islamic way of life’ (275) and ‘for Islam made all men realize they were equal before God’ (327) are made by eminent activists in the novel. By focussing on history and the progressiveness of Islam these declarations give the justification necessary for inspiring numerous Muslims to join the Muslim League’s struggle for independence. Islam becomes the site of investment for ‘better lives’ and more democratic structures. Concrete factors of marginalisation are not discussed in the novel; the central characters do not mention material concerns except in vague contexts, and as pointed out the material concerns of poorer Muslims are bypassed through he development of affective attachments. In this way feelings and attachments to past glory are prioritised over materiality in the development of collective identity.

Not only does the shared religious heritage provoke solidarity, but also the deployment of a certain telling of Islam and history provides a collective identity that can mobilise through pride. Past glory is shown to be an effective tool for delivering the League’s rhetoric. Where the contemporary time can be understood as not offering a sense of pride, stories of a glorious past, or successes of Muslims in other nations does offer this. For Thomas Scheff and Suzanna Retzinger it is the affect of pride that has the capacity to create (and be created by) solidarity, whereas alienation causes shame (21-22). The language in the speech above emphasises the shame that should be felt by Muslims who allow themselves to be subordinate in any way, utilising Islam and by association the Muslim League, as the way to facilitate the shift from shame to pride, from alienation to solidarity. In so doing, it also engenders a sense of collectivity based on a shared pride in a shared history. Rebecca Kingston proposes that it is collective responses to public matters that lead communities to engage collectively through eliciting similar emotional responses (119), and this is what I argue we see in this speech by the League. There is a sense of collectivity and togetherness being generated through the League’s rhetoric. Successful canvassing within poorer urban areas is shown to use Muslim history to good effect; ‘how thrilled the audience was when instances from Islamic history were quoted to show the bravery and sacrifice of Muslims in the past’ (272). Speeches to Muslim women
in the slums also outlined the strength and successes of ‘Muslim women in the old days’ (272) demonstrating the affective power of religion that is effectively utilised in affective speech making and works to generate a communal identity mobilised around religion.39

This collective identity ‘suggests a connection to movement aims that is closer to kinship than to material interest’ (Goodwin et al. 8); the kinship of Islam generates this connection, and the speech thus maximises the potential identification with religion as a basis for mobilisation. The League can be seen to deploy a particular telling of religion in order to elicit these responses: focussing as it does on stories of glory and strength rather than the importance of prayer (namaz) or giving to charity (zakat). As we will see in Chapter Three, religion comes to be used in different ways at different times in order to elicit different responses and behaviours. The stories of glory and strength however, are stories of success that are only associated with the emerging community through feelings and a sense of belonging to this history. While this suggests that the successes of history are beneficial and accessible to all, in terms of legacy and financial gain this is not the case. Crudely put, not all of India’s Muslims were direct descendants of the Mughals, and not all of India’s Muslims therefore had access to the wealth passed down from the Mughal period, unlike the Jamaluddins. The suggestion that the success of a few is your success by association with religion is affectively rather than materially realised, and again points towards an unevenness within the collectivity. Yet as pointed out this affective investment is pitched as the solution to material problems. As Berlant argues, the space of belonging may be virtual, but this does not mean that it is any less affectively sustaining (Female Complaint 37). The affective public spaces provide an avenue through which many can express frustrations with material situations even if they are not being given material and concrete solutions.

39 Grossberg’s consideration of the principle of excessiveness in affective attachments is interesting here. He proposes that powerful affective investments must be ideologically legitimated through an ‘excess which differentiates it from other sites’ (86). In this context, supporters of the Muslim League do so because the League offers something more than Congress. Grossberg continues that [t]his excess, while ideologically constructed is beyond ideological challenge because it is called into existence affectively’ (86). In this way, the investment in the Muslim League is explained and necessitated by a belief in what the League offers. Although this belief is ideologically informed and thus constructed, this is concealed through the power of the affective investment that produced the excess in the first place.
Cabral’s ideas framed emerging postcolonial nations as belonging to a ‘revolutionary collective subjectivity’ that worked through reclaiming the right for people to ‘have their own history’ (cited in San Juan 235). What we see in the novel’s representation of the time leading up to Partition is the establishment of history as a cohesive force for liberty that can be used to generate demand for a nation state. The demand for Pakistan can be seen as the result of a form of revolutionary collective subjectivity. Affective identification with Islamic history generated the affiliation required to demand the right to self-determination as a nation. The Muslim League in this sense can be identified as the founder of a nationality, in this case Pakistani. For in the novel it is the League that actively encourages the process of collective identification through Muslim history that set the foundations for this collectivity to identify itself as a potential nation and thus ‘find itself’ (Davidson 208).

Coviello, in his discussion of affect and U.S. civic life, proposes that for Thomas Jefferson to ‘declare independence on behalf of a nation, when that nation does not properly exist, as a nation, prior to its declared independence’ (449), he needed to ‘ratify] a prior affective collectivity’ (453). In this sense it is the intimate public that enables revolutionary authority by imagining ‘a specifically affective unity for the nation, one which pre-dates and so authorizes its political unity’ (443). In Coviello’s argument, Jefferson established a nation through formally sanctioning what had been an affective collective; the nation does not exist until it finds a way to articulate itself as this collective. Here we see that mobilising around a republic that does not yet exist relies on affective unity and investments in order for it to materialise as an actual nation. In The Heart Divided it is a sense of affective unity that creates the collective that can then lay claim to nationhood. As Ahmed has argued, it is feelings that ‘make ‘the collective’ appear as if it were a body in the first place’ (27), and we see in the novel that demands for nation are framed as natural and in many ways pre-determined (associated as they are with the Islamic invasion).

Zohra finds the appeal of Pakistan confusing as she declares, ‘Pakistan! It doesn’t make sense somehow...And yet, they have awakened the Muslims, and in the Punjab they are becoming anti-imperialist for the first time since 1919’ (397). The novel thus insists on the motivating capabilities of the idea of Pakistan that are created by

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40 See Davidson for a discussion of Cabral as the founder of a nationality that enabled the becoming of Guinea-Bissau.
this sense of religious belonging, and as such have the capacity to mobilise where
other movements and discourses could not. To Zohra’s surprise the Pakistan
movement becomes the catalyst for anti-imperialist sentiment that has an impact
across classes, especially through utilising history to create democratic belonging as
a component of an Islamic state. Zohra becomes persuaded of the validity of the
Pakistan movement due to her realisation that it is being engaged with by so many as
an entity for emotional investment. Zohra’s conversion to the cause of Pakistan adds
to the case being made for the nation as she has refused to advocate the League up to
this point.

Whereas nationalist politics can be understood as informed by reason, the novel
shows us the appeal of the Muslim League as it motivates through affect. A tension
emerges between affect and reason precisely because they cannot be separated. This
emotional reason, or reasoned emotion that is made a case for in the novel is upheld
through Sughra, Rajindar, and Zohra’s sentimental individualism, which means they
enter collective politics with an affectively-informed individualist bias. While
campaigning uses affect to good effect, this bypasses the material concerns of the
poor and less politically enfranchised, meaning that affective investments benefit
disproportionately across lines of privilege - there is less at stake for the rich than the
poor in sidelining material concerns. That the novel does not reflect on the tensions
that emerge between reason and affect means that it puts forward a narrative that
favours the sentimental approach to politics performed by the sisters and Rajindar.
This prioritises an affective investment in the League and Pakistan without engaging
with the material concerns that such investments both ignore and engender.

**Unity and the Consolidation of Difference**

In this section my aim is to draw out the ways in which romantic relationships
become a vehicle for the text to communicate how Hindu-Muslim difference is
understood, and frame intimate politics as expressions and rehearsals for broader
politics. As Ann Cvetkovich has discussed, in terms of relationships forged out of
activism relationships are ‘an extension of activism, a way of negotiating what might
otherwise be difficult socially’ (191). Although the central characters set up a united
India as the ideal political goal, resistances remain towards Hindu-Muslim romantic
unions. The novel compares this resistance to disapproval of resistance to inter-
Muslim relationships across other barriers such as divorce and class, however these
barriers are ultimately surmountable in the novel, suggesting that failure to unite is characteristic of Hindu-Muslim union. Historical precedence is called upon to justify this failure, and in so doing history also becomes the narrative that consolidates the differences between the two communities as insurmountable and natural. The romantic relationships come to stand in for national affiliation: the practicality of affective bonds between individuals acting as metonyms for the plausibility of affect to maintain attachments between collectives. I want to consider how difference is also consolidated through the interpretation of geography in the service of singular identity histories. This precludes any understanding of the influence between distinct communities that have lived in the same terrain. In relation to geography, history is again utilised in the naturalisation of difference.

The moments of tentative intimacy between Habib (brother of Zohra and Sughra) and Mohini (a close Hindu friend) are often expressed in metaphorical terms, with assertions of their respective commitment to Hindu-Muslim unity and Indian independence signaling their romantic feelings for one another. Indeed, the attraction between them is explained as developing from the symbiotic political ideals they hold in relation to each other. After meeting a few times, Habib feels that he ‘wanted to meet the girl, to talk to her and to watch...watch the flames flare up in her eyes as she spoke of the freedom for which she had fought so valiantly’ (104); his desire and her political fervour are thus intertwined within one another. Their political desires also become symbolic as they express to each other their wishes for unity, Mohini saying; ‘You are right. We all long for a Hindu-Muslim settlement’ (81). Through their romantic interests in one another, this longing is structured as both political and personal in the novel. Mohini’s commitment to Habib is expressed through relating her feelings to her political ideals:

I tried to judge whether uniting my life with yours would be harmful or beneficial to the cause to which I have dedicated my life, and I decided that if I were to remain true to my ideals, I should not hesitate. [...] if we are to be a free country, we must break down these walls that divide our people. [...] You are not merely you, and I’m not just I. We represent two parts of a great people. Two parts that must harmonize and pull together if we are to gain freedom. (167)

Habib and Mohini’s refusal to see themselves as separate and distinct is tied into their identification with a united India and associated identity as Indian as opposed to simply Hindu and Muslim. In Mohini’s declaration above she not only places
emphasis on the necessity of unity across difference, but also their symbolic positioning in relation to this goal. In their relationship we not only see the parallels between their interpersonal relations and the larger political framework, but also how their relationship embodies the politics at a national level. They are not only symbols of Hindu-Muslim unity, they are expressions of it. In other words, they do not simply refer to Hindu-Muslim unity as allegory but they actually are Hindu-Muslim unity. In Mohini’s terms they are not two different people but ‘two parts that must harmonize and come together’. Here the two parts are parts of India. Unity of these parts would mean independence and freedom. The novel not only places symbolic weight upon their relationship, suggesting that it is indicative of broader politics, but tests out broader politics through their relationship. Habib and Mohini’s friends and relatives have a less idealised view of the possibilities of their relationship, and ultimately their union does not happen due to the disapproval of their families and Mohini’s subsequent ill-health, which leads to her death. The novel’s trial run of Hindu-Muslim unity through the microcosm of a couple can be seen to fail, not only because their context will not allow it but because, evidenced by Mohini’s death, their union is framed as bad for her, the associated stresses of it making her ill.

Other relationships in the novel that are initially resisted by the Jamaluddin parents are eventually endorsed, generating a stark comparison. Zohra’s good friend Najma goes through a divorce to extricate herself from an abusive marriage, something that is supported by her friends and her brother (241, 253). Although divorce is permitted in Islam, there is much disapproval towards her from the wider Muslim society in Lahore. The novel is very clear in its support of Najma’s decision and her situation is portrayed sympathetically. When, later in the narrative, Habib asks to marry her, his family are resistant although they are mostly shown to support feminist and egalitarian beliefs. Sughra, supporting Habib’s wishes deplores her parents for resisting the marriage in specifically religious terms:

‘No wonder we are so degraded,’ she went on, ‘when we have forgotten the tenets of our faith. And you who are a woman, Mother, you should help an unfortunate woman instead of being a hindrance to her happiness. You think your son too good for her because she is a divorcee...you....why, you forget that our Prophet married a divorcee!’ (375)

After this speech, father Jamaluddin immediately supports Sughra’s stance, and mother Mehr is slowly won round also. Again, when Zohra wishes to marry Ahmad -
Jamaluddin’s former clerk - the class biases of the older generation are exposed. The same characters that are seen earlier in the novel to argue forcefully for socialist ideals are reluctant to see their daughter marry someone of a lower class. It is again Sughra who challenges her parents, and again through religion:

Islam made all men equal, and yet Muslims like you talk of class and caste. Our present degradation is not to be wondered at for we have forgotten the lessons our Prophet taught us [...] Have you forgotten that Islam came to abolish all barriers of tribe, class and caste[?] (438)

Here Sughra again deploys the language of liberty into her plea for a religious egalitarianism. Her impassioned declarations insist that religious and nationalist libertarian ideals are one; unexpectedly perhaps, she utilises a return to the tenets of faith as a way to break with tradition. In response to this, Jamaluddin declares:

[S]peaking on the platform is one thing and dealing with personal problems is quite a different matter. I’m afraid we don’t live in an ideal world, and therefore such considerations as class and caste do matter. (438)

The novel draws out a double standard of the older generation that defies religion in favour of un-Islamic customs, yet as I will go on to discuss, simultaneously claim the successes of Islamic history as justification for independence. Jamaluddin’s matter of fact approach also hints towards the fact that grand dreams of independence and equality are too idealistic to come to fruition. Through his resistance to Zohra and Ahmad’s union we see another example of pragmatism being used as a way to argue against unity across boundaries (436). Jamaluddin does in fact relent, returning possibility to these ideals; ‘he says that the spectacle of disunity in the country has so disgusted him that he is determined to have unity in his own family at least’ (446). Again, particular understandings of religion and custom are framed as resolvable, with Sughra’s insistence on egalitarian approaches to Islam acting as the catalyst for this.

The instinctive reluctance from the parents emphasises how religious doctrine is often taken as the basis of communal identity rather than as a guideline for living. However, their acquiescence to the unions suggests that religion can also provide the rationale for supporting marriage, as long as this is union within a singular religious identity. Jamaluddin and Mehr can be persuaded not to see class and marital history as markers of difference, because they are all united under one religion. Jamaluddin is willing and able to come round the idea of cross-class union when the
justifications for these cross-class and post-divorce marriages are given through Islam. The ideal that is being supported through these unions is an Islamic unity, a unity across Muslims of varying statuses. The one relationship that cannot be realised is that of Habib and Mohini, and the Hindu-Muslim divide is thus proven to be too much to breach. What I propose is emerging instead is a reconfiguration of ideas of national unity through personal relationships. The hope for Hindu-Muslim unity was prominent in national politics until the frustrations of the League’s demands for political parity led to the demand for Pakistan as the only way to realise political power for Muslims in government. As such, Hindu-Muslim unity as a political goal becomes replaced with inter-Muslim campaigning. The notion of unity is something that is repeatedly returned to with Ahmad arguing:

    What would you rather have...a people who have the right to make new frontiers, who may even make these new frontiers, and yet the peace and unity continues, or for the country to remain geographically one by force and the people to continue to fight amongst themselves?’ (398)

In this formulation, unity can continue if people can make new frontiers. Not making these frontiers would be remaining as one by force. That remaining as one would only happen by force suggests that unity is not natural, that the natural drive is towards frontiers (Partition), which would maintain unity and peace. The relationship between Habib and Mohini can be seen as evidence of the failure of this drive to unity across religious difference, and also the damage this drive can cause. Alternatively the success of Habib and Zohra’s relationships with Muslims evidences the peace and unity that can come once the frontiers around religious identity have been accepted.

At the level of these relationships we see Hindus and Muslims being understood differently as though this difference were essential. Responses of family members to Habib and Mohini’s relationship historicise difference, providing historical precedence for their relationship to fail, and in so doing making this difference seem essential. Joan Scott has warned against difference being naturalised and treated as fact rather than addressing how the idea of difference constitutes subjects. Scott’s intervention is regarding the historicisation of difference and experience and is pertinent to consider as resistances to Habib and Mohini’s relationship are often given in terms of historical precedent. History becomes the evidence that ‘proves’ that the difference between Hindus and Muslims is too inherent to overcome.
we see through this process is the construction of their identities as Hindu and Muslim, and furthermore as distinct in these identities. The very move that tries to prove an existing natural difference actually participates in the construction and naturalisation of difference, a naturalisation that is crucial for the moves towards Partition. I will go on to argue that where dominant resistance to Habib and Mohini’s union does this on a personal level, and singular interpretations of place do this on a territorial level.

Ahmed argues that feelings both connect us to, and separate us from others, and that these processes of contact between people are ‘shaped by longer histories of contact’ (“Collective Feelings” 29, 31). This framing suggests that contemporary contact holds within it the historical precedent of contact. In the context of the novel, intimacy becomes something of which to be wary, and this is reflected in the responses and resistances to Habib and Mohini’s union. Zohra cites historical consistency in explanation for the hopelessness of their relationship:

She had noticed the growing attraction between Habib and Mohini, but she realized that a marriage between them was almost an impossibility. She knew that such things never happened, and that neither custom nor society nor the law allowed them. Muslims married Muslims, and Hindus wedded Hindus, so it had been for centuries and so it would always be. (151)

For someone so politically active and committed to ideas of the much-needed change that would come with liberation, Zohra’s opinions here are constrained by an understanding of historical precedent that leads her to view their union as ‘almost an impossibility’. Zohra declares later into the novel, ‘I always think of the tragedy of Habib and Mohini – [...] if only they had been allowed to marry – somehow – it seems that their lives reflected only our national tragedy’ (236). Even though Zohra expresses sadness that Habib and Mohini could not unite, her reflection is still constrained within notions of the impossible. The fact that they were not allowed to marry reflects the national tragedy (failure of Hindu and Muslim political unity), rather than being constitutive of the national tragedy. How Zohra posits this relation suggests that the national tragedy and the terms of the personal tragedy are previously existing dimensions that refer to one another but do not inform one another, as such she appears invested in both as essential elements. The national tragedy of lack of unity may well be a tragedy, but it is an unavoidable one, as is the personal tragedy of the failed relationship. Both are tragic occurrences that prove the
inevitability of separation rather than producing the inevitability of separation. While Zohra may hate the outcome of the consolidation of Hindu-Muslim difference, she ultimately upholds the conditions and logics that generate this inevitability. The word ‘impossible’ is also repeated by Aunt Bilquis to explain the relationship:

Habib may like her and all that, but it’s absolutely impossible. There can be nothing between them. There’s a whole world of religion, custom, tradition and public opinion to keep them apart. (128)

Bilquis continues to refer to the relationship as ‘[Habib’s] impossible dream’ (128). For Bilquis, the ‘world of religion, custom, tradition’ can only work to keep two individuals apart, suggesting that Habib and Mohini are the few against the many, against history and against legacies.

The union between Habib and Mohini becomes a danger and something to be avoided because Hindus and Muslims are considered to be distinct communities. S. Ahmed’s work on the role of affect in consolidating the sense of difference between differently positioned subjects is again useful here:

Affective encounters, insofar as they open up histories of past encounters, do not make something out of nothing: subjects as well as objects ‘accrue’ characteristics over time [...] that makes it possible to speak of them as prior to a specific encounter[...] The subject both materializes as an effect of encounters and has, in some sense, already materialized given such histories. (‘Collective Feelings” 40)

What we see here is the way in which the proximate threat of Hindu-Muslim unity becomes the history of a past encounter; it is a moment when ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ accrue the characteristics of being separate. Ahmed’s analysis goes some way to explain why the union is always-already failed, histories and precedent mean the union of Hindu and Muslim subjects exists as an impossible idea, its failure is embedded in any pursuit of union because Hindu and Muslim are being established as oppositional categories.

When considering the unity of Hindus and Muslims in villages, Rajindar asks Sughra:

‘surely the common people on both sides should be able to come together. They have lived together in the villages for hundreds of years.’ ‘But they have never mixed and mingled,’ said Sughra. ‘In some places they don’t even eat together and there’s no inter-marriage...’ (263)
Here a stark distinction is being made between people who co-habit a space and those who have united. Lack of inter-marriage (union) suggests, or rather proves, that there is not the requisite intermingling required for unity. The framing is that where Muslims and Hindus do mix and mingle, this is the exception and cannot be used as an example of the country. As well as making a generalised reference to the ‘common people’, there is an abstract idea of the ‘many’ who do not mix and mingle. Mohini’s father also outlines the needs of an abstract collective that must be considered, saying to her:

I fear you are an idealist. [...] you see visions of a world that does not exist. [...] not that I don’t believe in these ideas; we all do, and where is the thinking man who does not long for your visionary world? But reality is reality. We live among human beings and we cannot ignore their feelings and prejudices. (187)

In this speech he pits emotions against emotions. The idealistic feelings of Mohini are marginalised against the feelings of ‘human beings’, whose feelings are prioritised. The feelings of this abstract collective of human beings come to stand in for the majority’s feelings, which must be adhered to. Where the idea of the many is being called upon to justify independence and nationalism, it is also called upon to disapprove of the union of Hindu and Muslim communities. What is realistic is brought into play in interesting ways. The resistance to Habib and Mohini is understood to have more general implications, but their desire to unite is not. The passion of Habib and Mohini is furthermore framed as affectively damaging. Mohini asks:

‘Grandfather, is it not true that pioneers always suffer?’
‘It is, and they make others suffer too.’ (203)

For Mohini a union with Habib is pioneering, paving the way for a better future. But for her grandfather this is imposing a suffering on ‘others’. Although the couple see themselves as showing the potential of union for the many, Mohini’s grandfather insists that they are instead pitting themselves against the many. To him their actions would cause others to suffer, suggesting that unity is bad for these abstract ‘others’. As such, feelings are upgraded or downgraded depending on what the outcome of these feelings may be.

The older generation frame Mohini and Habib’s desires as a youthful idealism, as the desires of a small minority against the assumed desires and attitudes of the ‘reality’
or the ‘many’, or even ‘human beings’. Similar to Sughra’s analysis of ‘the common people’, these general terms for the many are utilised alongside vague historical precedent to prove the insurmountable difference between communities. My argument here is that we need to understand this thwarted romance not as the tale of a Hindu and Muslim who are not allowed to unite, but as subjects constituted as Hindu and Muslim through the resistances to their union. Before this, their attraction and involvement in politics meant that their affective sense of belonging was to India and thus their connection to Indian independence. S. Ahmed has also put it in these terms ‘how we feel about others is what aligns us with a collective, which paradoxically ‘takes shape’ only as an effect of such alignments’ (“Collective Feelings” 27). Where their relationship is one of great potential in terms of alignment with India, it is also the vehicle that consolidates their difference. As Eqbal Ahmad has argued, nationalism is an ideology of difference and so the very appropriation of nationalism in the service of anti-imperialism was developing a politics that could divide the two communities (2, quotation citing Tagore).

This insistence on separation and on the distinct nature of Hindus’ and Muslims’ customs and traditions also denies the inevitable exchange of influence that comes from communities living side by side for centuries. Even if inter-marriage has not been common, this does not preclude cultural exchange. Edward Said has posited that one can ‘declare oneself for difference (as opposed to sameness or homogenization) without at the same time being for the rigidly enforced and policed separation of populations into different groups’ (81). What Said suggests is that the heterogeneity of people can be valued, and indeed patterns of distinction between groups be observed, but in ways that do not come to predetermine characteristics of groups in ways that homogenise. Difference can be recognised through our analysis but should not be the foundation upon which all analysis is based. The rigidity that Said refers to is what emerges when difference becomes fetishised within any engagement with distinct groups, as though difference is always inherent and immutable. The proposals of difference between Hindus and Muslims in the novel suggest that the difference is indeed inherent and immutable; the insistence that there is no mixing, mingling, or cultural exchange generates this rigidly enforced separation, and is used in the service of separating populations into distinct groups. This is a separation we see emerge in relation to geography and cultural legacy in the novel.
Yunas Samad has pointed out that the territorialised identity that emerged through the Pakistan movement was one of a specifically Indian Islam; that is, one that had fused with the Indo-Persian culture. However the exclusive focus on Islam as the sole identity works to erase this past (75). Engaging with the complexities of history and cultural exchange poses a challenge to these singular narratives of Islamic history or communities not mingling. However, in the novel separation is used to interpret the past so that the past comes to uphold this story of separation. Before supporting the League becomes a focus of activism for the Jamaluddin family, Jamaluddin asserts:

‘[Y]ou know how we Muslims came here; the first of our ancestors as far back as 712 A.D. you know how we ruled here for nearly eight hundred years, and you know how the country prospered and art culture (sic) flourished in that period.’ (41)

To Jamaluddin, Muslim history is seen as integral to the cultural development of India that spans over eight centuries of influence. His framing is interesting as he posits a history of Muslims bringing art and prosperity to the country, of Muslims in India, rather than Muslims generating an Indian Islam. Jamaluddin’s framing of Muslim history here is one of glory; he associates ruling and empire with prosperity and cultural richness. In Jamaluddin’s framing, Muslims are a distinct community who created prosperity within the country – Muslims brought this prosperity to the territory of India. There is no sense of fusion in his speech, he frames separateness through a ‘we’ that rules and brings art, rather than discussing the art that emerges through cultural exchange. Muslims’ contribution to the country is known, he argues, and this delivery also provides a narrative of Muslim identity of which he and his daughters can be part. This is a religious identity, one that happens to be in a specific location, not a territorial identity. In subtly insisting on this separation, Jamaluddin uses history to propose their distinctness from Hindu Indians, while also offering a history he can feel attached to with pride. Alyssa Ayres argues that in the years leading to Partition, Muslim nationalists drew links between the Arab invasion of Sindh in 712 A.D. and the belief that Muslims were thus a separate entity by birth and belief so deserved their own country (105-6). This link, as well as drawing on discourses of difference, also proposes an identification of Muslims within colonial India with Muslims of the Islamic empire and invasion. As outlined, this belonging to a particular history is clearly established in the novel and, in light of Ayres’
comment, can be understood as contributing to naturalising the case for a separate country.

The novel continues to assert attachment to place when Sughra’s visits to Delhi and Agra have a profound effect on her. She says ‘I had a strange feeling that I had come to my real home. That feeling persisted when this morning I saw the tombs of Humayun and Nizamuddin’ (320). Her cousin Fahmida empathises, responding ‘they are such an essential expression of your history and your culture that you feel as if you were part of them and they of you’ (320). This feeling of home that she expresses is tied into her emotional response to these places and the sense of belonging she attaches to them. Home in this context means identification with Muslim history; that she is moved by these sites that hold such symbolic importance consolidates her identification, this interaction confirms her identity and she associates this with a geographically understood declaration of ‘home’. This identification sets the foundations for such thinking about the Pakistani nation, as we see here the capacity for transference of association with a notion of Islamic history as glorious, and one that is explicitly located and territorialised. In a similar move whereby interpretation of the past is used to prove the national origin story, Nadia Abu El-Haj discusses how Israeli nationalism has utilised archaeological approaches to produce evidence of an ethnic connection to the land. This approach produced archaeological evidence of the nation’s origin myth through producing evidence of a prior (historical) connection to the land (3). This move to identify and prove connection to the land through history, and thus prove belonging of an identity to a territory can be seen in Sughra’s sense of belonging to Delhi through her identification with Muslim and Mughal ancestry. She feels a connection to both a Mughal ruler and a Sufi saint, thus tying two facets of identity together - Muslim and Arab - to Indian soil. The Islamic heritage being claimed is a specifically Arabic one, yet it is also attached to the particular Indian cities of Delhi and Agra. Yet, the attachment Sughra expresses to a Mughal leader and Sufi saint is akin to associating herself with a pure identity. As in Jamaluddin’s speech above, Sughra’s attachment

41 Crucial about El-Haj’s discussion, and what I take up here, is that this discovery/recovery naturalised a territorial claim to land through tracing a national narrative back to ancient times. She refers to this as an act of ‘making place’ (210). However where El-Haj discusses the role of the recovery of an ancient past through archaeology as scientific knowledge, I am discussing the affective meaning placed upon existing monuments that informs and is informed by an understanding of an ancient past.
insists on and creates the singularity of Muslims through history, but ignoring the Indo-Persian element of this history.

The Taj Mahal is an example of an Indo-Persian Islam, yet the romantic identity that generates pride is an Arabic Islam. The belonging and sense of home Sughra expresses is one emerging from multiple locations, demonstrating the multi-faceted character of belonging. The dichotomy then is that this attachment motivates support of the Muslim League and in turn the shift to Pakistan, because it refers to Islamic legacy; however, in this shift the belonging becomes reduced to a colonially defined territory that is not concerned with such affects. Belonging and history may provide an origin myth, but fundamentally they do not control bureaucratic decision-making. This contradiction is not one explored by the novel - Sughra’s delight after her visit to Delhi and her belief in Pakistan are not shown to be in conflict. As such the novel upholds the move from affective attachment to a located Muslim history, to a bureaucratic articulation of Pakistan. As well as proposing a logic in the origin myth of historical territorial identification and the case for Pakistan, it suggests that this logic is upheld through Partition.\(^{42}\) Another contradiction emerges here; this naturalisation and attachment to a territorialised (but singular) identity is used to make a case for Partition, but Partition itself contradicts this naturalisation. Delhi and Agra were awarded to India, repressing the histories of cultural exchange in favour of population data. History, as well as being used to unite an intimate public is used to split the intimate public through the forging of competing publics. Berlant outlines that ‘the offer of the simplicity of the feeling of rich continuity with a vaguely defined set of like others is often the central affective magnet of an intimate public’ (Female Complaint 7). What emerges in the novel is the way an intimate public is forged through likeness with one set of others at the expense of likeness with another group. That is to say, the attachment to Hindu-Muslim unity is challenged through disputing the historical legacy of such unity. Historical continuity and glory is offered to Muslims, but not to Hindus and Muslims as Indians. These singular claims

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\(^{42}\) Dabashi outlines a similar pattern in relation to Iran. He argues that ‘[t]he territorial integrity of a certain cultural identity began to be articulated in very certain terms. [...] [A] national intelligentsia [began] to narrate a national history, a national literature, a national poetry, in short a national claim on time and space (87).
not only erase the cross-fertilisation and influence that made India rich, but in so doing essentialise difference between communities.\(^{43}\)

As we have seen, affective attachments can motivate and articulate the desire for Hindu-Muslim unity in the novel, and the attachment to Muslim history on Indian soil suggests cross-identity attachments and interaction. The insistence on the lack of exchange in history, between individuals of different communities, as well as between Muslims and place, makes the case for a singular Muslim history, which predetermines the failure of Hindu-Muslim unity at both personal and national levels. This insistence on separation denies the cultural exchange that has taken place between communities and naturalises difference, a move that proposes it will be easy to separate communities via partitioning land because communities already exist as immutable and distinct nations. Attachments are thus interpreted through the assumption of singularity, a lens which denies the ways in which affective attachments are actually pointing to a symbiotic existence. This is one that cannot be simply articulated in the bureaucratic separation of land based on population, as the legacy of exchange is deeper than this allows. As argued in relation to the emotive enfranchisement of the characters, affects become subsumed into bureaucratic articulations of nation, even when it is affect that creates the conditions for the bureaucracy to be carried out.

‘Towards Pakistan!’

The realist form of the novel means that we can read an ideological motivation in the text in the exclusion of Partition’s bureaucratic processes. Where the narrative is peppered with contextual references to the political background, such as the Lucknow Pact and Salt March (see Timeline), it does not refer to the rioting that accompanied the run up to Partition. Although the characters themselves vaguely anticipate a concern regarding the violence that is to come, the narrative does not confirm their fears as it neither represents the violence directly nor as a contextual backdrop. In this sense, although fiction, the novel joins much historiography in charting the reasons for Partition while not addressing the human dimension of its processes. This I argue is where we find the ideology of the novel, in that it stops

\(^{43}\) Also see Chatterjee, “Histories and Nations” in *The Nation and its Fragments* where he argues that the notion of singular national histories cannot be upheld, especially across distinct regions of India, and goes on to argue that an insistence on singularity has proven to be divisive. This chapter provides a detailed discussion and analysis of representations of Hindu and Muslim history in India.
short of Partition itself, ending the narrative with a sense of victory and inevitability that Pakistan must be achieved, but without allowing the narrative to chart the violence of its becoming. The text thus acts as a Partition story (because it acts as a rationale for Partition) that does not assess the atrocities of Partition. That the novel ends before Partition means that the narrative cannot bear to commit to text the disjuncture between the goals and aspirations of the political movement and the reality of Partition. Through making a case for Pakistan and then not outlining the violence that accompanied its becoming does two things. Firstly, it keeps an idealistic glow; secondly, it suggests that the violence that we know is to happen is an inevitability of this ideal. This proposes that all ideals require costs and sacrifices and that somehow this violence need not become part of the story of Partition, nor of the version that Pakistan tells itself.

As a realist novel *The Heart Divided* acts as an explanation of what we know occurs after the narrative ends – Partition and the establishment of two territorially bounded nation states, India and Pakistan. I propose that by not discussing the violence that occurs, while ending with the declaration ‘Toward Pakistan!’, the novel offers a justification for the violence that is to come, if we follow the trajectory that the novel’s narrative has set up. What the novel omits, and what national narratives continue to omit, are the unnecessary deaths that accompanied Partition. By repressing warnings of violence in favour of the optimistic ‘Towards Pakistan!’ the novel frames death as life lost in the service of moving towards a national vision.44 Furthermore, by offering the trajectory of the novel and the achievement of Pakistan as inevitable, the novel suggests that the accompanying violence was also inevitable. I am proposing that in not acknowledging that Pakistan could have been made in a less violent fashion, it upholds the narrative that Partition deaths were a required sacrifice to bring the new nation into being. I also want to suggest that the epic/saga form of the novel prioritises the individual romance narratives of the main characters, and by association their nationalist optimism, over the fate of millions of people caught up in the violence. As will be explored in further chapters in more detail, this conviction that sacrifice be given during the formation of the nation must be reified. That deaths are necessary for the nation to be is a particular national(ist)

44 The move of sidelining violence in the service of the nation is not new, evidenced by much of the rhetoric surrounding warfare (see Edkins for further discussion), but what I am pointing to is that there is something subtly but significantly different when this nationalist vision is enabling the material emergence of nation rather than upholding a pre-exiting territorial entity.
narrative that prioritises a certain telling of Partition over others; it is a telling that puts the supposed needs of the nation above those of the individuals who make up the nation. Furthermore it consolidates the support of individuals in this telling through foregrounding affective attachment to the nation as that which provides over and above material concerns. This move is a crucial one. Bose has examined the role of the individual and collective in relation to structures of nation. She poses that individuals come together as a collective, and then this collective of individuals becomes a nation. The nation then is an individual made up of a collective, but acts as a singular entity. *The Heart Divided* foregrounds how individuals can serve this nation but never considers the nation as a collective of them. As the novel progresses the nation becomes a ‘thing’, one that generates attachment and loyalty at the expense of considerations of material effects on those who brought it into being as a ‘thing’.

As outlined, the novel dramatises a series of steps and logics in terms of affects of belonging, unity and history to naturalise the demands for the nation state. The naturalisation thus proposes that whatever costs are incurred in its making are necessary, which is what leads me to call the novel a nationalist novel. As Cara Cilano has pointed out, constructing Pakistan as an inevitable outcome is a particularly nationalist move (10). Berlant argues that ‘all sorts of narratives are read as autobiographies of collective experience. The personal is the general. Publics presume intimacy’ (*Female Complaint* vii). This claim of Berlant’s resonates greatly with my reading of *The Heart Divided*, due to the epic saga form the novel takes. ‘Autobiography of collective experience’ is an apt way of describing the novel rather than simply ‘historical fiction’, as autobiography is one’s story of oneself, a story of the collective experience of which you are part. The novel tells a story of which it is part, dramatising and constructing the development of the case for Pakistan. I do not think that the novel presumes any intimacy; rather it makes a case for intimacy, it insists on how intimacy provides both fuel and rationale for becoming part of the (Indian) nationalist movement that developed into the separatist (Pakistan) movement. In so doing it creates an intimacy through telling this story and, as such, intimacy becomes a rhetorical device to convince us of the necessity of the developments towards a Pakistan that requires some form of partition. There are two strands that make up this idea of Pakistan being inevitable – one that the politics of identity and enfranchisement around Indian Muslims meant that separatism in some
form was inevitable; two that Partition was inevitable. What I argue was not inevitable, as I outline in the thesis Introduction, was the way in which Partition happened. I argue that the novel, through insisting on the logics that led to Partition, leaves no space to critique the processes through which these logics came into fruition, as though to challenge Partition’s processes would be to challenge Pakistan itself. To avoid such challenges, the narrative focuses on dreamy eyed optimism and national intimacy rather than allowing any concern of violence to impede this story. Furthermore, as argued, the departing colonial power is very much implicated in the violence that occurred as it withdrew. In relation to this the novel offers a narrative of Partition that upholds imperialist narratives that propose that the end of British colonialism was effected smoothly and expeditiously dissolved.45

The epic saga form of the novel allows for the central characters to be engaged with individually, especially in terms of their romantic relationships. Berlant posits that the love plot acts as the ‘figure for optimism’, and that being in a couple or family makes one ‘feel safe from the world, in the world, and for the world’ (Female Complaint 171). Though again Berlant is proposing this in relation to a different argument, it is productive here in the service of my own. Indeed the end of the novel provides closure in respect of the love plots of each of the Jamaluddin children, against the premonition of violence from an erstwhile close Hindu friend:

Just then the door opened again and they looked up to see Vijay standing there with dishevelled hair and a wild look in his eyes.

[...]

‘But you want to separate...Ah, can you not look into the future?’ [Vijay] pointed as if into the distance and his eyes were haunted. ‘Look, it comes, nearer and near it comes...the separation and the shadow...the darkest hour...and the rift between us becomes a chasm...and the chasm a sea...a sea of blood and tears...of tears and blood...’ (450)

The novel thus hints towards the violence that is to come through Vijay’s premonition, the ellipsis in this quotation reflecting the absence of representation of violence, and in so doing pointing directly to the violence that the novel itself cannot commit to narrative. The foreboding and the threat of violence is something the characters themselves take seriously and this can be seen to visibly affect the three

45 See Chakrabarty who argues that histories that celebrate the modern nation state tend to play down the violence that is central to the ‘victory of the modern’ (“Postcoloniality” 21).
siblings. Habib and Zohra draw closer to their partners for comfort but Sughra withdraws to her room:

[She] looked out upon the western sky to see high up on the horizon the crescent moon with its accompanying star sailing in a sea of pale green, and she drew a breath of gladness and whispered, ‘The herald of Pakistan?’ But her eyes dropped lower and the sunset surged into them in a flood of crimson and she shuddered and turned to go. (450)

In this passage, Sughra’s vision of the Pakistan flag is flooded out by the premonition of blood, as in Vijay’s speech; her hope for Pakistan challenged by this fear and expectation of violence. Rather than staying in this moment of expectation and considering the implications of her and Vijay’s premonitions, she leaves Lahore for Multan to go to her ex-husband Mansur and they are reunited:

‘You are the most wonderful woman in the world,’ he said.
‘Dear prejudiced eyes.’
‘And you’ll never leave me again,’
‘Never. My place is here. Oh Mansur, I long to share your life and your work.’
He lifted his head proudly and clasped her closer. ‘You shall, beloved.’
Then she looked up at him with radiant eyes, and she said:
‘Henceforth we shall go forward together hand in hand, towards our goal.’
‘Towards Pakistan!’ he said triumphantly. (451)

In these extracts, taken from the last two pages of the novel, the characters are warned of the approaching violence and as readers we are reminded of what it to come in Partition’s wake. While Zohra and Habib take comfort in their partners, we see Sughra break off from the group. Her own heralding of Pakistan is clouded by the blood that comes flooding in over her vision of the flag, adding more weight to the fear of what is to come and the connections Vijay makes between Partition and violence. The novel again gestures very subtly here to the violence that will mar the nationalist vision, represented by the crimson surging over the symbol of the flag. However, as Sughra leaves Lahore to find Mansur and reunites with him, this fear is quelled. The closing passages of the novel provide Sughra with the union that will make her feel safe from the world, or from what is to come. So much so that the ‘flood of crimson’ and downturned eyes are replaced with ‘radiant eyes’ and a commitment to move forward. The security Sughra finds in her relationship with Mansur stands in for security to do with Partition; it is a metonym of that security. If we consider the novel’s overall narrative, this ending provides reassurance regarding the political time in which it ends. Though as readers we might be aware of where
the narrative is heading, and of the human cost of Partition that awaits, the satisfactory romantic conclusion offers both reassurance and optimism about this.

As with Vijay and her siblings, Sughra is affected by the fear and expectation of violence. However, in this the violence is raised and then sidelined, with the siblings choosing instead to invest in their relationships as a method of providing individual optimism for the future. Furthermore, the relationships work to alleviate fear - Sughra goes to Mansur as a direct response to her anticipation of bloodshed, which is then forgotten in the service of working towards Pakistan. This consideration and simultaneous subsuming of violence is different to that of the narrative of the novel, which does not feature violence at all even though riots would have started by the end of the novel. The characters have an awareness of what is to come, but the narrative frames their fears as premonitions that can be countered by optimism and hope for the new nation. This becomes the ideological push of the novel too, because it uses fear of violence to consolidate national belonging as that which will alleviate the fear. However, it does not feature the violence as a material occurrence so the actual human cost of Partition (Pakistan’s becoming) is absent from the novel.

If we as readers identify with the main characters, as the saga form encourages, we can feel the safety they feel that has come from their realisations that Pakistan is the ideal goal and that they are secure in the relationships that will take them forwards towards this goal. Even if, as readers, we understand Vijay’s declarations as accurate, we are offered consolation if we invest in the future promised by these couples, and in particular Sughra and Mansur. The simultaneous investment in both romantic and political futures is emphasised by Mansur who declares ‘Towards Pakistan!’ triumphantly. He is triumphant because his marriage has been restored, and also because the goal of Pakistan is to be realised.

Sughra and Mansur look forward to Pakistan together; this, we are asked to believe, is the hopeful setting through which we disregard the fact that bloodshed is to follow. We are asked to invest everything in them, our own affective investment in their union and national commitment. Berlant argues that the fantasy of a better life has the power to transport people into a situation for a moment, that they are able to ‘experience it affectively without being able to live it objectively’; that although this transportation of belonging may be problematic and virtual, it still has the power to
sustain affectively (Female Complaint 31). The narrative of the novel does this very thing, being a pre-Partition saga that stops short of the violence that accompanied the actual Partition, the novel supports an investment in the idea of Pakistan without having to address the crisis that came from the bureaucratic articulation of affective attachment. The affective power of the fantasy of Pakistan is what is explored at length in the novel. The brutality of the novel’s nationalism then, lies in its refusal to address in the narrative the disproportionate suffering that will occur at Partition. The affective investment of the novel asks us to join the characters in looking past and over the violence of Partition, to the nationalist dream that generated Partition. Engagement with the novel’s form reveals that hope for the new nation is pitched as the overriding impression the narrative leaves us with.

It is useful here to consider Tahir Naqvi’s formulation of ‘unthinkability’. Naqvi argues that the ‘unthinkability’ of Partition’s violence ‘conveys the more systematic disconnect in the final years of colonial rule between elite and popular constructions of territory, nationalism, and nationality’ (61-2). This disconnect is conveyed in the novel in relation to what the elite characters anticipate will accompany Partition. However the violence does not become an unthinkability to them, it is thought of but considered necessary. When Kamal is putting forward the idea of Pakistan he declares that ‘[f]reedom is not attained without sacrifice’ (345), expressing that it is necessary to give things up, even life, in the service of national independence.46 However, his is an individual commitment that is shown to be completely disconnected from the enormity of sacrifice and loss engendered by Partition’s processes. Likewise Sughra, in considering Pakistan, is determined to see it in to being, and ready to assist others in the transition. Sughra’s commitment acknowledges that there will be disruption but again considers this as inevitable, or indeed necessary. While nationalism provides a site of investment for hope for freedom and better futures in the new nation that they move towards, the costs of this movement are unavoidable.

As a realist novel that uses many contextual details especially with regard to cabinet plans and political negotiations, the absence, or repression, of violence is notable in

46 As Renan has pointed out, the demand of sacrifice and need for founding heroes are common characteristics of nations.
reflecting Naqvi’s disconnect through form as well as plot. Indeed the notion of unthinkability is reflected through the novel’s inability to commit violence to narrative. Instead the novel makes a case for the affective investment and hope for the nation’s becoming, but the actual processes of its realisation are not included in the narrative development.\(^{47}\) This framing of the novel means that its narrative closes on optimism, without acknowledging the cruelty of this optimism.\(^{48}\) I propose that we can also understand this disconnect in the novel’s separation of emotion and reason, or bureaucracy, which facilitates the exclusion of bureaucracy from its concerns. The indebtedness of reason and emotion to each other becomes evident through plot but is repressed through form, suggesting the text’s own narrative form is disconnected from its content. This is reflected most strongly through its inability to commit to narrative what is hinted at through the plot. As such it is within the form of the novel that we find its nationalist ideology, and this is directly connected to the novel’s foregrounding of the emotions.

In pointing to the following chapters I want to suggest that this unthinkability creates a lacuna in the text’s narrative. I propose that this lacuna refers to the trauma at the heart of Pakistani national identity (connected as this is to the violence of Partition) through the ellipsis in Vijay’s speech and the imagery of Sughra’s premonitory vision. That the novel cannot represent the violence is indicative of resistance of trauma to narrative integration, and the role of nationalist narratives in repressing the human cost of violence through the claiming of violence as sacrifice. The implications of this lack of narrative engagement by dominant discourses with the violence of Partition are explored in the following chapters.

**Conclusion**

Affect may produce the nation in *The Heart Divided*, but the intelligibility and validity of the nation relies on the reduction of this unity to geographical borders. When Sughra returns from visiting the Taj Mahal and is asked to describe it she says ‘can anyone describe it? Can a dream be put into words? Cold, ordinary, inadequate

\(^{47}\) Within this equation then there is no space for questions raised by those such as Cabral who have warned that ‘the liberation struggle is a revolution that does not finish when at the moment when the national flag is raised and the national anthem played’ (87-88). In the case of Pakistan this is especially true as the confirmation of the nation meant the Partition of India. The raising of the national flag was by no means the conclusion.

\(^{48}\) In “Cruel Optimism”, Berlant identifies cruel optimism as the attachment generated to an object in advance of its loss.
words?’ (319). This idea has wider implications; can a national dream be articulated in geography? The cities of Delhi and Agra that held such emotional value for Sughra as holding sites of her Muslim identity become located in the newly independent India, not Pakistan; Partition’s borders were defined by imperial population charts, not emotional attachments. Although Pakistan was generated in discourse through emotions, it was confirmed in geography through imperial knowledge and the political context at the time. Gilmartin elaborates on this to point to the tension between the ideal of Muslim unity and the world of power relations and difference. For Gilmartin there is an irony as Pakistan was associated with an idealised vision yet, as outlined in the thesis Introduction, its creation was achieved within colonial power politics (“Living the Tensions” 524-5). Furthermore, the idealised vision was asserted through religion, and as Nasr has argued, the concept of the Ummah in Islam is across national boundaries, calling Muslims to ‘place Islam above all other political allegiances in their everyday lives.’ Following this Nasr identifies the suggestion of a territorialised Muslim state as an import (553-5). This returns us to a key tension being expressed within the novel, between the affective and the material, where affective allegiance is generated through appealing to pride in religion, but the territorial articulation of this pride is done through bureaucracy. The novel proposes that affect generates the belonging that can then create the material, that both are working together; through taking us through these steps as logical development, the novel naturalises this process. The novel’s narrative maintains a belief in the power of the emotions, and their legitimacy in campaigns, yet it does not acknowledge the ways in which affect is subordinated to bureaucratic articulations of borders.

I have discussed in this chapter how the novel demonstrates the power of affect to fuel and motivate the shift from the individual to the collective, but also how this shift is limited and haunted by individualism that means that the agenda of an elite few comes to set the agenda for the many. Affect facilitates the joining of the individual to the national collective. The material discrepancies between those joining are erased as affective attachment to a collective suggests a homogenous coherent whole. Material concerns are thus subsumed into affective attachment. As discussed, the needs of the one (the nation) can be seen to take precedence over the needs of the many because nationalism subsumes the needs of the many into the
needs of the one through the homogenising power of the attachment to collective monikers

The plausibility of different collectives is practiced and confirmed through individual relationships. There is a need to uphold that which gains the support of the many. Habib and Mohini are understood to be against the many, as they do not have the public on their side. Instead they have an individuated sentimentality that cannot find a public, and the tools used to forge a public are used against them, such as the insistence that there is no precedent for their relationship. This suggests that if one cannot find a public for the attachment, then the attachment is of no use. Indeed Zohra’s turn to Pakistan comes when she realises how much the League and Pakistan have awakened the Punjab people. That the League and Pakistan have found a public and become the site of investment for better lives is crucial for Zohra in offering her support to Pakistan. The voting system also does not find a public, as Sughra realises. What does find a public are affectively charged speeches about the successes of Muslims in other lands, which can fuel the subsuming of the many into the one (the nation). The various attachments in the novel, to place, to people and to history insist upon the natural unity of Muslims to an Arab legacy rather than unity with India and other religious identities. Affect is used here to naturalise attachments and make a case for the emergence of Pakistan as an idea, regardless of the Partition processes through which it would be realised.

Chatterjee, in discussing Bankim’s nationalist novels, outlines how Bankim’s work has often been interpreted as reflecting a ‘tussle between rationalism and an emotionalism, a conflict of the mind and the heart’ whereby his mind was attracted to the rationality of the European Enlightenment, but his heart remained aligned with a glorious Hindu past. Chatterjee discusses how analysis of Bankim does not consider the ideological strength to be found in (Hindu orthodox) religion, as one suitable for the emerging independent nation (Nationalist Thought 80). What Chatterjee points to here is the potential for a rational concept of the nation to be charged by a more emotive affiliation with religion. Any tensions emerging from this stem from the tensions at the heart of the nationalist project itself. This is a tension we can detect in the novel, as it moves between affective attachments and bureaucratic demands, and between the emotional and rational characters. In the shift from affect to bureaucracy, attachments become territorialised and ultimately uphold
the notions of reason they can initially be seen to critique. The novel navigates these contradictions and tensions but ultimately consolidates them, and in so doing makes a case for the emergence of the nation state, *whatever the cost*.

This emergence ‘whatever the cost’ obfuscates the violence of Partition. Samad has argued that Pakistan emerged due to the exigencies of the transfer of power and the communal violence that was erupting (90) due to uncertainty and anxieties. His proposal is that Partition was more about bureaucracy and political processes than affect. However the novel makes a compelling case for the affective dimension of national belonging and Pakistan’s becoming, without critiquing its indebtedness to these processes. The tension here is that the demands of anti-colonial nationalism become in line with the demands of imperialism, in understanding the violence of Partition as an unavoidable occurrence of independence, and a necessary demand of the new nation states rather than the legacy of a departing colonial power.

The anti-colonial nationalism that the novel supports has been much discussed by postcolonial scholars, with many critiquing its limitations and others appraising its mobilising abilities.49 This chapter has aimed to discuss the limitations of nationalism but through the lens of the emotions to highlight how the emotions are used to make a case for the legitimacy of nationhood, but that the emotions exist in tension with the bureaucratic processes that mark the emergence of a nation. The novel reflects this through individual relationships but also through proposing that the affective attachments to ideas of liberty can be embodied through the production of a nation, where in fact this exists in more tensions than the novel allows. In an explicitly nationalist move the novel represses the violence of Partition in the narrative. This marginalises the human costs of Partition in favour of the needs of the nationalist narrative. In turn this inadvertently enables the upholding of the imperial narrative that seeks to ignore Partition’s human costs in order to promulgate the impression of a peaceful withdrawal of the British Raj.

49 Cabral and Fanon in particular have discussed the limitations of anti-colonial nationalism, arguing that national liberation needs to be the beginning of a struggle for liberty rather than the end. Parry for example has argued in defence of anti-colonial nationalism, as has Chrisman in her evaluation of critical work on anti-colonial nationalism. The Subaltern Studies Collective and Spivak (*In Other Worlds*) have all discussed the limitations of nationalism in representing lower classes, or the subaltern.
Stories of the Broken Self: Affective Narratives of Nation

(Figure 2.1: Title screen)

(Figure 2.2: Opening credits 1)

(Figure 2.3: Opening credits 2)
This chapter will analyse Furrukh Khan’s oral history documentary *Stories of the Broken Self*, which presents interviews with women regarding their experiences and memories of the 1947 Partition of India and creation of Pakistan. My discussion will focus on the impact of these events and how they are expressed within the film; in particular I will be examining the gendered experiences of this time to address how the affective impact of the narratives leads us to consider the price women have to pay in nation building.\(^{50}\) The important memory and testimonial work that Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have undertaken with survivors of Partition has been crucial to engaging with the gendered dimension of Partition’s violence.\(^{51}\) *Stories of the Broken Self*, although a similar project, produces different effects due to its medium and the fact that it focuses on women in Pakistan and not India or Bangladesh. The film takes a testimonial documentary approach to structure – each interview is done individually, isolating each woman’s narrative, and the narratives are interspersed with extracts from films about Partition (*Earth, Pinjar, Gadar* and *Gandhi*).\(^{52}\)

The film opens with an introductory caption declaring that Pakistani women’s narratives of Partition have ‘been silenced for too long’ (see figure 2.3). Immediately the project sets itself up as providing a medium for the expression of women’s stories rather than a document that seeks to uncover past events. Each woman is introduced at the start; there is a still frame for each with a current picture, their name, and their age and location at the time of Partition. It becomes clear from these frames that the women were all based in Punjab during Partition and some were as young as 11 at the time (see figures 2.4-2.5). What this points to in terms of their stories is that as

\(^{50}\) The function and nature of narrative can be understood as a constructed account of a series of events, that establishes connections between them. Narrative and story are often understood as synonymous with one another as methods that deliver coherent sequential accounts.

\(^{51}\) Urvashi Butalia’s *Other Side of Silence*, and Menon and Bhasin’s *Borders and Boundaries* are probably the most well-known oral history projects on Partition. While Butalia’s volume is based on interviews with men and women, Menon and Bhasin focus on women only. Also see Das and N. S. Khan for projects that, while not oral history, do use interviews with women as the main primary research for their arguments.

\(^{52}\) *Earth* (dir. Deepa Mehta, 1998) is based on Bapsi Sidhwa’s novel *Ice-Candy Man* which charts the quotidian experiences of pre-Partition Lahore and ends with the gendered violence experienced by the ayah Shanta; *Pinjar* [*The Skeleton*] (dir. Chandra Prakash Dwivedi, 2003) is based on Amrita Pritam’s novel of the same name and is based on the story of Pooro, a Hindu girl abducted by a Muslim man Rashid around the time of Partition; *Gandhi* (dir. Richard Attenborough, 1982) charts the pre-Partition years and Gandhi’s non-violent resistance. *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* [Revolt: A Love Story] (dir. Anil Sharma, 2001) is a Bollywood film; the story centres on a Sikh-Muslim relationship that developed during Partition. See George for a discussion of the significance of the changes between novel and film in relation to gender, in the cases of *Earth* and *Pinjar*. 

83
well as them recalling events from sixty years previously, for some they are also recalling events from when they were very young. As accounts we have to wonder how their narratives of Partition have developed into the form they are in now, and indeed how pertinent that is to our analysis. As narratives of memory they raise the additional concern of unreliability; the women discuss and analyse events with a maturity they may not have had at such a young age. However, I raise this in order to move away from it, as my concern is less about what happened at Partition but how Partition is remembered and recalled by these women. Some of the women discuss events from a young age, which suggests that in their narratives they are expressing the logic and explanations they have developed in order to make sense of the past. As such what interests me is the analysis of their modes of remembering and their modes of remembrance. In part this is evidenced through how they remember, but as I will discuss in this chapter, experience is also constructed through these narratives of memory, and how this is mediated by the film. The documentary also incorporates extracts from well-known fictional films that deal with Partition. The use of these extracts in between the women’s narratives contributes to how the film engages with the ways in which Partition as an event is remembered and understood, while also creating its own model of commemoration. Taken together, the narratives and extracts contribute to the film’s construction of a particular historical moment. The film therefore centralises the women’s stories, but must also be considered as offering its own story through the composition of the women’s stories with fictional extracts. In this sense, narrative is to be engaged in this chapter in several ways: the content of the film (the use of women’s memory narratives and narratives of film extracts), the structure of the film (how the film is edited to construct its own narrative), and the ideology/politics of the film (how the film engages with gender and the affective narratives of nation and belonging). This approach will enable an interrogation of the intervention this film poses into how the becoming of Pakistan is engaged with and understood.

As well as the women’s ages ranging from 11 to 26, differences between the narrators are also shown in terms of class, evidenced through their households and the language being spoken. Some of the women speak only Punjabi, whereas others slip between Urdu and English, or speak mostly English, suggesting they are of a
higher class. Some of the women are in very smart houses and some sit outside on charpais, suggesting difference in class status and financial standing. References to the schools that were attended at the time of Partition and the practice of purdah, as well as forms of involvement in demonstrations for Indian independence, are all markers of class. I do not point to these differences to make assertions about how women from different backgrounds might remember 1947 in distinct ways, as this would be a reductive suggestion. Rather I point to it to frame how the film itself has incorporated interviews with women from different backgrounds, areas, and ages, and that this is interesting to note when discussing the ways in which their narratives converge.

(Figure 2.4: Hamid Jehan introduction frame)

(Figure 2.5: Aasia Begum introduction frame)

53 All quotations from the film have been taken from the English subtitles.

54 Low beds with a woven rope top; usually slept on in rural areas.
As a final point in introducing the film I want to outline the temporal parameters of the women’s narratives – where they begin and where they end. The women discuss their memories of life before Partition, largely in the context of Hindu-Muslim relations, then their experiences of Partition itself and life afterwards. It is beyond the scope of the film to attempt to chart the ways in which animosity developed between communities, how this animosity was nurtured by various political leaders, and also developed over decades. This is not a criticism of the film, nor is it a demand for a mythical ‘full picture’ - to fully contextualise Partition the film would require a much larger temporal scope than would be possible, and would indeed be impossible for the women to recall. However, I do want to consider what this absence creates and how the women seek to explain what happened without recourse to decades’ worth of political relations. The gap the film generates between Partition and time that preceded it upholds the impression of Partition’s violence as something that came out of nowhere – the detail of this I will go on to discuss later in the chapter.

This chapter will argue for what can be gained by approaching the film through the lens of affect, proposing that this approach brings us closer to the impact of Partition, focussing the conversation on considering how women’s experiences continue to have effects. My concern here is to take the narratives as containing value that exists outside of a desire to know. The women are not simply vehicles of information, and as such, rather than adopting a hermeneutic approach, my argument interrogates what affective narratives might suggest regarding the wider themes of gendered violence and nation creation. Along with several feminist critics, I consider emotions to exist in the public and social realm, which is where responses take on affective meaning. This highlights how emotions can be read in diverse ways, and also challenges the idea that there is a true meaning lying behind them. As Catherine Lutz avers, emotions serve ‘complex communicative, moral, and cultural purposes rather than simply as labels for internal states whose nature or essence is presumed to be universal’, and talk about emotions is always talk about power and politics (Unnatural Emotions 5-6). Following this, my discussion is not concerned with what

55 See Berlant The Female Complaint; Jaggar; and Lutz. Insisting that the emotions cannot be separated from the social world, Abu-Lughod and Lutz argue that emotions must be interpreted as ‘in and about social life rather than as veridically referential to some internal state’ (11), and Nancy Scheper-Hughes proposes that emotions are so embedded within culture that ‘without our cultures, we simply would not know how to feel’ (431). Campbell outlines the danger of what she calls ‘uptake’, whereby affective response to a situation is not attended to but rather used to make a statement about the character of the person responding (47-8). In this way emotions become reduced to being a problem of the individual rather than a way that individuals respond to a problem in the world.
the women may really be feeling; I am not looking at affect, but through affect. That is to say, I am considering the emotions discursively in order to think about, and interrogate, how histories and stories are narrated in the film. I am not attempting to access emotions, but to consider how affective registers suggest new ways of understanding and engaging with women’s narratives of Partition. In particular I wish to use affect to access a discussion of national belonging, framing this discourse as an affective one. Furthermore, my analysis aims to consider the effects of these women’s expression within larger systems of power, especially gendered national discourse. Through also considering how narratives of memory are constitutive of collective and individual identities, I want to unpick how Partition and Pakistan become connected through discourses of memory, suggesting that Pakistan as a nation acts as the commemoration of Partition as an event. Two key question in this line of enquiry are, how might the specific moment of India’s Partition and Pakistan’s creation be inextricably (and unexpectedly) implicated in what might be uncovered? What does the presence and indeed absence of certain affective registers and concepts (concepts that are invested in affectively) in the medium of documentary film suggest about the negotiation of subjectivity within the context of nations and national histories? I argue that gendered dimensions consistently permeate these discussions, emphasising their crucial place within feminist concerns. Emotions then, become a method for bringing these approaches together in the framing of new questions.

Forming Representation

That the women’s oral history memory narratives discuss a time when a new nation came into being and national identities became fixed is significant. The relationship between memory and collective identity has been much theorised and I want to consider this with regard to national identity in particular. If, as argued by Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, nations need to construct or discover a past in order to constitute themselves (xxi), then a collective national identity is reliant on a constructed past on which it can base itself. (This connects to the discussion in Chapter One where The Heart Divided shows the Pakistani independence movement to be fuelled by the affective appeal of the idea of a collective and glorious Muslim past). It follows that those national subjectivities that rely on Partition for their formation cannot exist outside of the representations or memories of Partition. If memory can be formulated as produced out of experience, as the recollection of a
trajectory of the past that has produced the present, then it can be seen as what we rely on for our present. The function of memory in this trajectory sets it up as a narrative, the medium through which Pierre Janet has discussed different forms of memory. For Janet, narrative memory is specifically human and consists of mental constructs to make sense out of experience. This process also has a social function: memory can be communicated to people through being structured as a narrative that can be relayed (cited in Kolk and Hart 160). As Peter Burke puts it, ‘people tell stories to themselves and others all the time in order to make sense of their experience’ (285). In this way memory becomes a cohesive story of personal histories, and as argued by Duncan Bell, stable identities depend on the coherence of this memory narrative as their foundation (7-19). The challenge that a film such as Stories of the Broken Self raises is that it offers variation within this national story. This collective memory of the nation’s past suggests that the members of this nation have a shared history. The implication of a shared history is that individuals are connected to the same experiences, or legacy of these experiences. More suggestive still is that for this identity to cohere, individuals not only need to be connected to the same experiences, but they need to be connected in the same way. Stories that engage with the history of the nation in ways that diverge from dominant national histories can thus be seen to pose a challenge to the nation’s cohesion. I will return to these ideas again in Chapter Three.

For this chapter I want to consider how Stories of the Broken Self presents a series of narratives that discuss the time that Pakistan was being consolidated through the territorial demarcation of borders, alongside which associated identities were also being established. As such, the women’s narratives offer an impression of identity in the making. That this is done through oral history and in terms of a memory project means that the women are both reflecting on a time of identity formation, but also contributing to identity formation in the present through their memories of the nation’s past. This suggests the mutability of identity, in part because it is contingent upon memories that can be fallible, but also because it is constantly being recreated in the present through the act of memory itself. According to Antze and Lambek, ‘memory is widely called upon today to legitimate identity, indeed to construct or reconstruct it’ (xiv-xv). In this sense, the identity of Pakistan is dependent both on Partition as an event, but more pertinently on how that event is framed and understood. Furthermore, the demands of the present require certain things from
stories of the past – if the past can be called upon to legitimate identity, it must be
used in particular ways. Veena Das argues that in the case of Partition and
subsequent recovery missions for lost and abducted women, women’s reflections on
their experiences of 1947 were often ignored, subsumed within the needs of the
development of the new masculinist nation-states of India and Pakistan (21, 37). In
this case the needs of the new nations in the present come to dictate how past
experiences of women are framed, and in what limited ways they are listened to. In
this example the demands of the new nations immediately after Partition contributed
to how the women’s narratives were engaged with and constructed in order to uphold
the nation as masculinist and paternalistic. In this sense, how the past is taken up and
responded to says much about the context in which the past is being engaged with. It
is against these more mainstream nationalist demands that I approach the
documentary, proposing that instead of dictating how the past is represented in the
service of ideological goals, the documentary focuses on what the women remember
of a particular time, thus foregrounding their memory processes. It is the role of
affective registers in my analysis of the women’s memory narratives that enables a
consideration of how violence is understood or recast as either supporting or
critiquing national narratives. As Shoshana Felman avers, the past can create a
‘disorienting vision of the present’ (“The Return” 205) and in so doing emphasise
how women’s experiences of Partition continue to have effects.

Pierre Nora, in his important work on cultural memory, discusses the distinctions that
can be made between memory and history:

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains
in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and
forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to
manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and
periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction,
always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. (“Between
Memory and History” 8)

For Nora, memory is something that is constantly evolving, always contingent and
never static. He identifies memory as key to how societies found themselves. This
foundational ‘truth’ is constantly changing. History on the other hand is an
incomplete reconstruction, a claim to be something it cannot be, to create something
that cannot be recreated – that is, the past. This documentary is a visual account of
memory work with women being asked to recount their memories of experiences;
although mediated by the film’s structure, they still serve as examples of memories in process. *Stories* thus focuses itself away from the medium of history that in Nora’s formulation lays false claims to truth; instead the film participates in the permanent evolution of memory and as in Nora’s argument, remains contextual in how it is formed and how it is received. Andrew Whitehead has pointed out that histories of Partition tend to focus on high politics ‘because there is little conventional source material capturing the human dimension of that turmoil’ (“1947 Earth” 103). In the absence of records or sources that refer to the microhistory of Partition, the quotidian experiences of it can only be accessed through memory. In some ways then, the documentary can be seen to engage with the needs of the present to engage with these quotidian experiences that can otherwise not be accessed, and furthermore to respond to what official historical processes do not cover.

**Narratives, History, and Fiction**

In this chapter I want to be clear that I am engaging with the film as a self-conscious document, that is to say that interviews have been compiled and edited alongside film extracts to produce a text, and it is this text that I wish to analyse. Indeed I wish to propose that the editing in of fictional representation is a foregrounding of the compiled nature of the film, and that this demands attention as we analyse the women’s accounts of their experiences, or more specifically, their memories of their experiences. To that end, before engaging closely with the actual narratives I want to examine the form and structure of the film itself.

The use of fictional representations in between the women’s own stories foregrounds the lack of representational material of Partition, but furthermore highlights the deficiency of an approach that prioritises the ‘objective’ or ‘representational’. Instead the film centralises fictional and memory-based accounts, both of which tend to be considered unreliable if one is searching for ‘facts’. I consider what this foregrounding produces, in the sense that the film prioritises the women’s stories of their experiences and fictional representation, but rarely has recourse to accepted

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56 A. Whitehead goes on to outline how more recently oral history has supplemented fictional accounts to get at these details (“1947 Earth”). Also see LaCapra *History in Transit* where he argues that in recent years oral history has become the way to recapture voices of subordinate groups who have not been adequately documented in official channels (3).

57 Microhistory, according to Burke, is the history of ordinary people. In terms of narrative, micronarrative is opposed to ‘Grand Narratives’, which deal with the rise of nations, growth of liberty, globalisation and so on (292).
facts. Statistics are only referred to in an opening caption; a map is featured once, and even then it is not a very detailed one. Locations are only mentioned through the women’s own stories and to locate them as individuals. The film is not making any claims to history, instead providing space for memories of experience. In this sense *Stories of the Broken Self* decentralises the constructed dominant history in favour of what is usually considered more fallible, and voices of the ‘less reliable’ are prioritised.

Although the documentary format might imply some claim to truth telling, I propose that the structure is self-consciously distancing itself from any such claim. This is not to discard truth claims as irrelevant, but to move analysis beyond that discussion as truth claims of 1947 fix discussions of Partition in the past rather than considering what the ongoing impact or ramifications of the time might be. As argued by Dominick LaCapra, ‘truth claims are necessary but *not sufficient* conditions that must be cogently related to other dimensions of historiography, including empathetic, responsive understanding and performative, dialogical uses of language’ (*Writing History* xii, my emphasis). LaCapra goes on to outline two polar opposites of historiography: positivism that makes truth claims based on evidence, and radical constructivism which is concerned with performative, political and ideological factors that construct stories and plots (*Writing History* 1). It is the latter that I am applying here, analysing how the women remember and attempt to make sense of their pasts, and how these become narrativised through their stories. In other words, how they remember, what they remember, and how they construct logics around this remembrance. I propose that the documentary creates the women as experts in their telling of their experiences and reflections, thus foregrounding marginal voices.

In discussing historical distance, Mark Phillips discusses the affective proximity or distance one can feel to the past, arguing that an affective proximity means that a display, piece of historical writing, or interview, does not just give information about the past, but ‘lend[s] it additional presence’ (99). In this Phillips connects affect and historiography; the proximity one might feel to any representation of the past brings it into the present, and this proximity is achieved through representations of the past that are affectively compelling due to their concern with microhistory. The question that Phillips raises is how this emotional appeal is achieved and what the political implications of this are – to whom do we feel close through particular
contextualisations and what does this closeness engender (94)? He proposes that fictional film is affective as a representation of the past as the medium makes the past ‘a field of experience rather than [...] an object of study’ (93). The films connect us to the past through the ‘immediacy of emotional impact’ (93) that they offer, as well as their concern with microhistory. That *Stories of the Broken Self* is more aligned with such representations than historical detail becomes clear; the past is a site of emotional palpability rather than objective distance. Phillips asks that we pay heed to what proximity generates. In *Stories of the Broken Self*, I argue that being asked to engage with affective proximity to the women also insists that we validate their stories. I consider this to be a feminist move as *Stories of the Broken Self* uses structural devices to shift focus away from a concern with fact telling and as such the women’s narratives are authenticated outside of structures that often seek to undermine or subsume them.

Narratives of memory that are being engaged (and constructed) within the film are not only those of the women. Extracts from the films *Gandhi*, *Pinjar*, *Gadar*, and *Earth* that are interspersed within the film participate in a particular remembering of Partition. Vehicles of public memory, argues Miriam Hansen, are the media of mass consumption (98); they participate in creating narratives of history that are publicly understood or recognised because they operate on a ‘mass cultural register’ (97). It is therefore pertinent that the extracts included are of the ‘canon’ of films on Partition, popular films that are widely distributed and viewed. For the mass cultural register to be effective it needs to deploy particular tropes that will be recognised and understood in the realm of public memory.58 These four films can be seen to act as vehicles of public memory, alongside which we have the women’s recollections which act as private memory. As Phillips outlines, proximity to past events can be generated in many ways, and these film extracts can be seen to operate in this way – using recognisable tropes of public memory to bring the visual dimension of *Stories of the Broken Self* closer to the narratives of the women. Though my main appraisal of the film is of the space created for the women to tell their own stories, I do also want to pay attention to the way this is done, in particular how mainstream

58 See the essays in *Memory and Popular Film* (Ed. Grainge), in particular Landsberg’s chapter “Prosthetic memory”. Landsberg argues that mass culture makes it possible for publics to share in the experience of historical events, and proposes that there is a potential for empathetic politics that can be realised through this sharing. This suggests an overlap with Phillips’ ideas of affective proximity to the past.
representation is used to direct the viewer more intimately to marginal voices. The extracts often act as illustrations of what is being described: when women mention trains being attacked by men with kirpans, there is an image for this. When they talk about pre-Partition amity there is an image of a group socialising around a dinner table. When there is mention of Pakistan day being celebrated a picture of masses gathered around the Pakistan flag features, and so on. The images serve to illustrate the narratives and in so doing work to evidence particular models of telling that can be matched with mass circulation imagery. This move utilises recognisable tropes to makes the stories recognisable, and constructs the stories through recognisable tropes (see figures 2.6-2.8).

(Figure 2.6: Extract from Earth reflecting pre-Partition amity)

(Figure 2.7: Extract from Pinjar showing massacres)
In this sense the incorporation of feature film representation alongside women’s oral history can be understood as foregrounding approaches that are not official historical fact or records. But more than this, the inclusion introduces a different form of commemoration – one that is done through popular culture. Andrew Whitehead has argued that oral history has come to join fictional accounts because it offers insight into the human dimension of Partition, arguing alongside others such as Ian Talbot that these approaches are crucial in the absence of official records and sources that document quotidian experiences (“1947 Earth” 104). Indeed, as historians such as Burke have argued, cinema and fiction may well be the ideal models of narrative whereby everyday life and extraordinary events can be viewed from both above and below (296). In some ways then, the documentary’s inclusion of these intertexts is fitting, as they are all, to some extent, personal narratives and reflections that construct stories of quotidian experience within the context of Partition as an extraordinary event. In addition, placing the oral history alongside this canon can be seen to elevate the film to the level of public memory circulation. This makes women’s voices central within the documentary, but also suggests they should be more central within the broader circulation of discourses around Partition.

*Stories of the Broken Self* makes another move in placing narrative representation alongside historical source material through converting extracts from these films into grainy black and white shots. In this stylistic move the clips have a visual element that is akin to archival sources and it only becomes apparent that they are not as the copyright symbol and title of the film is shown in the top corner. This labelling is not done every time a clip is shown however, and the title is subtly placed, perhaps only
noted by a more critical viewing process (see figures 2.6-2.8). At times the camera pans out on still images that appear to be photographs, but again this is not made explicit and as such not made distinct from the film extracts. The feature film extracts and photographs act as anchors to a particular time, and in the absence of archival footage of Partition these extracts are the most pragmatic way in which to insist on the context of the women’s stories through the film’s visual medium.

Felman, in her analysis of Claud Lanzmann’s film Shoah, discusses how the film medium engages directly with ideas of eyewitness testimony and creates the viewer as a witness through the act of seeing the film (“The Return” 207). With her analysis in mind, it is interesting to think of the use of film extracts as demonstrating that the human cost of Partition can now only be seen through realist fictional representation due to the lack of visual source material of the time. While the women recount stories of what they experienced and what they saw, the viewer becomes implicated in the time they are referring to by witnessing the time through fictional film. In this sense, the extracts add to the affective engagement of viewers by interpolating us as witnesses. Returning to Phillips’ arguments, this increases our affective proximity to the women and the stories they are telling and makes the stories relevant in the viewers’ present. As Phillips discusses, this lends the stories an ‘additional presence’ that could not be achieved through the simple communication of facts.

**Testimony**

In relation to Shoah, Felman, in her leading work on Holocaust testimony and witnessing, has considered the role of testimony as unique to the one testifying; she asks

[w]hat does it mean that the testimony cannot be simply reported, or narrated by another in its role as testimony? [...] What does testimony mean, if it is the uniqueness of the performance of a story which is constituted by the fact that, like the oath, it cannot be carried out by anybody else? (“The Return” 205-206)

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59 Shoah is Lanzmann’s nine-hour oral history documentary with survivors, bystanders and perpetrators of the Holocaust. In many discussions of representations of the Holocaust or traumatic histories more broadly, Shoah and Schindler’s List are compared due to their distinct methods. Kaplan and Wang, for example, discuss Schindler’s List as producing trauma to be consumed, provoking viewers to act as voyeurs. On the other hand Shoah encourages the viewer to act as witnesses to the interviewees’ experiences, thus creating a more ethical engagement. See Hansen for a consideration of the two films in relation to the politics of public memory.
In Felman’s discussion she focuses on the juridical uses of testimony, arguing that eyewitness testimony is the most crucial evidence that can be delivered in a court of law. In this sense, the eyewitness can never be replaced, and the concept of testimony creates the witness as unique (“The Return” 205-6). This idea of the witness being unique places emphasis upon the individual delivering an account, or of them as speaking on behalf of others who cannot speak, and of their accounts being authentic. The importance of *Stories of the Broken Self* comes from the fact that the testimonies cannot be carried out except by narrators such as the ones on the screen. As an ageing generation, the possibility to access these memory narratives is diminishing, placing an urgency upon projects such as this documentary. These stories need to be performed and seen, for as pointed out, access to quotidian experiences of Partition is incredibly limited.  

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For Felman, art has the capacity to not just look, but to testify. It tells a story that cannot be told by anyone else, and the story it tells is crucial evidence. As a product the film takes the witness stand. It tells a story and it is through the telling of this story – made up of women’s stories – that we as viewers engage with the account of a time. Dori Laub consolidates this point by proposing how the ‘process of witnessing is itself being witnessed’, and that the interviewer is part of the testimony process (76). As viewers, not only are we observing this process, but in the absence of a visible interviewer there is no mediation between viewer and narrator. This implicates the viewer still further in the witnessing of the witnessing, and creates this as a critical viewing practice that insists that the testimonies are listened to and circulated. The positioning of the viewer as witness is further insisted upon through the film taking the witness stand. 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60 Linking testimony in to the discussion of facts, LaCapra has argued that testimonies have limited value if taken narrowly to derive facts about past events. They should not be dismissed for this reason, their strength lies in the fact that they provide something other than purely documentary knowledge (*Writing History* 86). LaCapra also posits that testimony ‘does not simply convey information about events but bears witness to experience, notably in the difficult case of extreme occurrences and traumatic experience’ (*History in Transit* 3). Didur also critiques efforts to take testimony as providing ‘direct’ access to the past, arguing that this move uses women’s experiences to maintain seamless records of the past, rather than considering how the testimonies might in fact disrupt these seamless records (130-1).
the absence of any voiceovers; the opening credits are in text that we must read in order to access context, again prioritising the act of seeing (see figures 2.1-2.3).

Although visual documentary can be seen to enable a more intimate engagement, there are also risks in this engagement that it will individualise the women’s stories, especially through the form of the film that interviews the women one at a time. The testimonial approach that this creates does emphasise the singularity of the speaker, especially through offering a visual dimension.61 There is potential for this singularity to individualise stories through the testimonial format, however it is my contention that the film does in fact resist individualisation through the context of the narratives that is insisted on throughout. My argument here is that the film foregrounds the effects on women and emphasising how individual stories have collective ramifications. This is what Giovanni Levi would refer to as a microhistorical approach, whereby analysis begins with the specific and individual to then ‘identify its meaning in the light of its own specific context’ (110). Levi elaborates:

Microhistory tries not to sacrifice knowledge of individual elements to wider generalization, and in fact it accentuates individual lives and events. But, at the same time, it tries not to reject all forms of abstraction since minimal facts and individual cases can serve to reveal more general phenomena. (112-3)

Therefore, the microscopic framework serves to resist reducing individuals to large-scale abstractions, while also making sure to contextualise them within these abstractions for what individuals might reveal about them. So although the format of an oral history documentary creates a more distilled risk of individualising and referring to individual mental states than the wider context (Murphy “Social Bonds” 69), the women’s narratives themselves are heavily contextual.62 This must in part be due to editing, but the juxtaposition of fictional film extracts within the documentary also insists that stories of violence and conflict cannot be viewed as distinct from the specific political turbulence at the time. What we see emerging in this film are the ways in which each story has larger echoes. Stories of the Broken Self presents itself

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61 Elias has pointed to the unique character of the human face as emphasising the singularity of human beings (cited in S. Williams 52).

62 Murphy is specifically discussing how individualising women’s stories of abuse can reduce them to tales of individual mental states rather than a wider story of gendered oppression. This has significant overlaps with Campbell’s consideration of how affective response is reduced to the individual rather than considering the context of the response.
as a collective exploration, some of the women point very specifically to the ways in which gendered violence is systemic of the time but also of culture at large. Nusrat Muqbal says in the film, ‘women have been treated like this through the ages’, firmly positioning the violence enacted upon women at Partition within wider and more historical contexts. The film repeatedly treads this line, between individual and collective and between Partition and patriarchy in general. This tension between individual and collective is clearly raised through the format of the film and will be explored later in this chapter through analysis of the narratives.

While Felman discusses the heterogeneity that can be found between accounts of bystanders, victims and perpetrators, I want to examine in my analysis the heterogeneity between accounts of women survivors. Rather than focussing on the differences between ‘types’ of narrators, the film and my discussion focus on the difference within one ‘type’ of narrator. What this consideration provokes is attention to the moments when the women’s narratives diverge. What is the significance of multiplicity in their recounting of stories, and their divergent takes on why Pakistan came to be, and even on the importance of its becoming? In this context I am pointing to the importance of documenting heterogeneous accounts of women’s experience that are largely subsumed within more dominant (homenous) national narratives. In turn, the points where the narratives converge provoke a discussion of why certain narratives come to be the definitive way to talk about the experience of a certain time and what needs there are for individual voices to adapt to a collective voice, which I will discuss towards the end of the chapter.

Self that Was, Self that Became

The film is split into two parts, ‘Self that Was...’ and ‘Self that Became...’ A still screen introduces each part, with the title in its centre; the first part documents the immediate pre-Partition time and the second post-Partition reflections. It is therefore Partition that exists between the self that was and the self that became; it caused the break of the self as described in the film’s name *Stories of the Broken Self* and is simultaneously the moment that connects the two selves. The two parts of the broken self are split at their division but it is also the division that is the point where they would connect together. Partition is the moment that sutures the past self to the present self, but it is also the moment that sundered these two selves, or indeed destroyed the former in the service of the latter. Partition was thus an experience of
cleaving, of geography and of self. In this experience the newly separate and independent nations had to (re)constitute themselves, and so too did the national gendered subjects. As such it is not only the self that is affected by history and events but also the (national, gendered) self that is created through history and events.

Joan Scott has discussed how:

It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. To think about experience in this way is to historicize it as well as to historicize the identities it produces. (780)

Scott here points to the ways in which experience constitutes the subject: i.e. there is not an ‘I’ that responds to experience, rather an ‘I’ that is formed by this experience. Scott also emphasises one of the key points of my argument in that the search for a supposed truth of experience should not be the priority for enquiry, instead experience is that which we should interrogate in order to engage with its effects.

The experience of Partition that created gendered national subjects was often one of large-scale violence (depending of course on location). My use of Scott in this discussion is to introduce a consideration of how living through a time characterised in this way constituted the subjectivities of the women in Stories of the Broken Self. The film’s structure, through emphasising the divide between the self that existed pre-Partition and the one that emerged post-Partition, implies that Partition was this dividing moment. My approach to this is to consider gendered violence, dislocation and collapse of civil society as characterising Partition. If these created the framework through which subjects were constituted, then what might that mean for women making their home across a newly defined border under new codes of civil law? What logics might these women develop in order to make sense of this process of becoming, and how far are the discourses of nationalism and difference embedded in this sense making?

However the women tell their stories, this structure of the documentary itself proposes that they have a new self that became, that is distinct from the self they

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63 This is an ongoing motif in relation to Partition. The cover image of Kumar and Siddiqui (eds) collection of post-Partition stories in Urdu, uses the terms cleave and cleave to, demonstrating the prominence of considering Partition as two things in one.
were. In this way the structure suggests that the split of Partition was effective in relation to individuals’ understanding of themselves, so not just a change in bureaucracy and/or geography. In this sense one could argue that the structure is a confirmation of the logics of Partition. However, the structure cannot be taken aside from the content, and it is when these two are placed side by side that we can begin to understand the lacuna created between them as trauma. In terms of the impact of trauma on the individual sense of self, Robert Jay Lifton has proposed that extreme trauma creates a second self. As one’s sense of self is radically affected by trauma, a traumatised self is created and there is a form of doubling of the traumatised person (in Caruth “An Interview” 137). This doubling can also be seen as a form of distancing; trauma causes a distancing within the self from the self that engaged with the trauma. The self that has been doubled through this engagement, and distanced from its past and memories, becomes fragmented. In this sense, the self is dramatically changed and no longer linked to its past and its memories in a cohesive form.

In discussing his adult memories of being taken to a concentration camp as a child, Laub discusses how his capacity for remembering this time is of a more heightened capacity than one would expect. He states that his memories ‘feel almost like the remembrances of another child, removed, yet connected to me in a complex way’ (76). This is interesting in light of the women interviewed as several of them were quite young at the time of Partition – Nusrat Maqbool who was fifteen in 1947 talks with clarity about when her ‘breaking point’ came. She discusses images and smells she cannot erase from her memory and connects these experiences to herself intimately. Nusrat refers to experiences from when she was relatively young, yet despite this distance in terms of time, her memories come across as very precise and visceral. Through Laub’s discussion we can consider this distance and sense of being removed from one’s self (proposed by the film’s structure) as the very move that enables the heightened memory (in the women’s narratives). This split of self that is indicative of trauma, rather than undermining memory, heightens memory. This suggests that although Partition can only be accessed through memory, memories of Partition might succeed in providing the connecting thread between past and present selves. Indeed the women talk about their pasts with a clear sense of continuity, suggesting that they own their pasts even though Partition was an event that split
their selves. The film incorporates this paradox into its structure by pointing to the split self while also insisting on the legitimacy of the memory narratives.

The broken self of the film’s title is perhaps more indicative of what the film proposes overall, that the newly made self can never be fully made ‘anew’, and that national selves continue to be broken because their making was simultaneously their breaking. In my analysis of the women’s narratives I will unpick some of the ways in which they express an attachment towards the nation and national identity even though the processes of its development caused them pain. The paradox of Partition suggests the violence embedded at the heart of national subjectivities. Pakistani identity therefore emerges from a moment where traumatic experience becomes the centre of collective identification because its moment of becoming is the location from where the self gets rewritten. The new national self and national collective are formed from this place.

As I have suggested, the memory narratives can be understood as a way of joining the two selves through narrating how ‘self that was’ shifted to ‘self that became’. The women often use their memory narratives as explanatory, to attempt to give reason to why events unfolded as they did. It is in pursuit of a coherent narrative that we see some of the women explaining the shifts from the previous self who existed alongside Hindus within India, to the present self who is Pakistani. At times the women call on particular patterns for clarity on this shift. In trying to explain how they and other Muslims were not prepared for Partition, Zohra Begum and Hamid Jehan call on discourses of difference to explain that Sikhs and Hindus were more prepared and smarter during the processes of Partition. In discussing how she wept when leaving her Sikh and Hindu friends in India, but is no longer in touch with them, an unnamed narrator explains that this is probably because they are now grown up and have families. In this she works against naturalised discourses of difference as she resists explaining the separation between herself and old friends as becoming insurmountable as a result of Partition. Instead she provides a more mundane reason.

At times attempts at explanation fail the women, suggesting that logic cannot handle the sequence of events they are narrativising. Shamim Zahoor states that ‘towards the last days we didn’t understand what was going on’ and stops short. She does not follow this with any explanation she may have developed with time, suggesting that
there is no way to narrativise the last days that would provide them with clarity. At another moment Khadija Omar outlines how everyone had wonderful feelings for Pakistan. Of course we can say that our leader Quaid-e-Azam only had the best intentions for Muslims at heart. He did what he felt was politically the best for the Muslims. He was in the Muslim League and had been in the Congress and other parties as well and what we read about in books and papers. So...[She pauses considerably while looking down and fidgeting with her sari before continuing] the Muslims wanted a separate homeland for themselves which they were able to have.

In this quotation we see how Khadija struggles with the justification she is putting forward. She creates a logic of explanation for the existence of Partition, a justification for it that defers to the wisdom of Jinnah and simultaneously distances herself from that decision making process by referring to how she ‘read about’ Jinnah and the political processes that were taking place. It is here that she pauses for some moments and looks visibly distressed before continuing with reference to the desire for a separate homeland. In many ways this section outlines the logic of Partition and the faith in leadership to make the decisions that affected so many lives – Jinnah’s credentials as a political leader are referred to – but as we see her struggle with this very explanation we get an insight into how this narrative of events is developed but does not always succeed in providing clarity and reason. Khadija then goes on to talk about how, even after Partition, there are still more Muslims in India than Pakistan, pointing to another of the paradoxes of Partition. As she attempts to explain and support the idea of Pakistan, these contradictions offer confusion regarding its logic.

Structurally, then, the documentary points analysis in several interesting directions. Not only does it provide oral history testimony to engage with, but these testimonies are situated alongside fictional extracts that insist on the contextual positioning of the narratives, and structural markers that emphasise the importance of the women’s memories in creating links between the past and present. That these links are not always narrativised in ways that suggest the past has been, or can be, made sense of is a crucial element of their telling, and one that I will discuss further in analysing the affective dimension of the narratives.

64 Jinnah is often referred to as Quaid-e-Azam, which means ‘great leader’.
**Affective Narratives**

While Gabrielle Taylor amongst others has argued that the self is a pre-determined *object of* emotions (1), I deviate from this to formulate a self that is constructed as a national subject *through* the emotions. Furthermore I want to consider affect and the emotions as they relate to their wider political context. As Lutz outlines, ‘talk about emotions is simultaneously talk about society’, and that the construction of cultural (as well as personal) subjectivities is a matter of the learning of emotions (*Unnatural Emotions* 6-8). In Chapter One we saw how affects such as belonging can generate attachments that achieve political goals. In this chapter I continue that discussion to analyse the women’s narratives in terms of both affective registers and affective concepts to consider how national subjects are formed through affect and affective experiences. I argue that the development of certain affective registers of experience point to how new national subjectivities are constructed. In this section I take my lead from Jeff Goodwin et al. who argue that ‘the self is experienced as a site, state, agent, and outcome of emotions’ (24), and Mabel Berezin who states that emotion has ‘the capacity to create new identities’ (93). In conjunction with the discussion thus far regarding how the film charts the notion of the ‘broken’ self, I argue that engaging with the emotions alongside this allows for a fuller elucidation of how the women remember and attempt to make sense of their memories of Partition.

Engaging with affect raises several more layers of consideration especially in relation to gender. Lutz discusses how the qualities that are seen to define women are also seen to define the emotional, thus any emotion discourse is implicitly a discourse on gender (“Engendered Emotion” 69). Many theorists of emotion have highlighted how emotion is specifically gendered, and that an expression of emotion in relation to politics especially can work to undermine the points being expressed and frame them as irrational. 65 Political claims that are raised by women can similarly be dismissed as ‘merely’ emotional. Lutz has also argued that there is a tension and ambiguity at the heart of discussions regarding emotion, whereby the emotional is seen as weak but also holds a threat of uncontrolled release. Fear of emotion means it must be controlled, weakness of emotions mean women must be protected. These double-edged meanings that are attributed to emotions can be used in the agendas of gender and racial control (“Engendered Emotion” 77-8). Affect and

65 See S. Ahmed *Cultural Politics*, Campbell, Goodwin et al., Lutz *Unnatural Emotions* (especially 60-68), and “Engendered Emotion”.
the emotions then, come to join memory and the subject as contested sites that can pose a threat, and so can become sites of control. I propose that as *Stories of the Broken Self* portrays narratives that can be defined as emotional it thus positions itself in a place of potential threat to dominant discourses.

The connections being drawn between expressing memories and affective response remain complex. Kay Milton and Maruska Svašek outline the different forms of remembering that might take place and how these can impact on affective expression. Recounting memories can be either remembering or re-experiencing, with the former devoid of reaction and the latter laden with affective response (200). This re-experiencing can be formulated as a moment of rupture or trigger; in the documentary the surfacing of a traumatic memory can be read in the moments where the women cry, take long pauses, look to the distance or at the floor, or fidget with their clothes. However Kathleen Woodward has also discussed how memories can be reflected on in a ‘feeling’ way (24), suggesting that these moments of affective response do not fit seamlessly in to the category of trauma and disruption. Woodward’s discussion continues thus:

> [R]eflecting feelingly on our experience helps us to *recognize* the assault to which we are being submitted. We live in a mixed economy of feelings, one characterized by both the psychological emotions and intensities, and my point is that they often stand in *dialectical relationship* to each other, with the narration of our experience as crucial capacity. *Emotion* can be *intensity* recognized, redescribed, and owned, understood as if for the first time. (24-5)

Engaging and reflecting on what has gone can help us understand our context and the assaults of our context; narration here is central to any engagement with the emotions and intensities of existence, past and present. And so in terms of the challenge the narratives can provoke, they can do this through affective language as well as affective display, or effects. In this sense, I do not think we can approach the film’s affective engagement in a straightforward way as the affective registers are working on several levels. Judith Irvine puts this another way by referring to the linguistic concept of ‘register’ and its relation to affect. The usefulness of the register is discussed thus:

> Such conventions, linguistically expressed, represent a cultural construction of available emotions, personalities, and so on that are linked to other dimensions of culture and society. Independent, in a way, of what a person may ‘actually’ feel at a particular moment, they
nevertheless represent the resources the person has to draw on for affective display, the terms in which his or her behaviour will be interpreted by others, and the framework of interpretation for the experience as well. (131)

For Irvine, models for expression are ways of talking that become available in specific contexts and also shift the focus away from what someone may actually feel and what we might interpret from what they say. Again this framing resists a hermeneutic approach, instead we look to what we can understand about modes of expression rather than trying to access some fundamental meaning. This is crucial to how I approach affect; as Lutz argues, it is necessary to consider the emotions as a form of discourse rather than something to be discovered under the skin. As such there is a need to look at emotions in connection with political and economic structures (Unnatural Emotions 6-8), in particular nation and gender.

In an opening segment of the film we are shown Khadija. She is sitting on a chair in a domestic space and begins to talk, ‘in March...’ then immediately pauses to fight back tears. She stares up and into the distance then looks down and fidgets with the edge of her sari before starting to speak again, ‘I am talking about March 1947...’ Her voices shakes as she speaks and she intermittently looks down at her lap and pulls at her sari; she eventually stops speaking, drying her eyes with her sari (see figure 2.9). Further into the film Nusrat Maqbul says ‘I hope that no community in the world goes through what women had to endure’. She speaks slowly and deliberately and shakes her head as she speaks; though her voice remains steady she draws her hand across her lower eyelids as though wiping back tears and looks down (see figure 2.10). These two moments are the most obvious in terms of visual affective registers that are on display in the film as both women cry. Khadija only needs to mention the date of Partition and tears disrupt her sentence, and Nusrat’s sentence is affectively moving in its plea; her crying is subtle, though the wiping away of tears is more deliberate. In both of these there is a strong affective dimension to how the women narrate at the intersection of the visual and verbal. The moments of affective display are also significant as the moments of narrative that they accompany point to the central concerns of the film, women’s experiences and Partition. Not only are Partition and women’s experience thematically crucial to the film, the distressing impact of memories of them also becomes central.
I also want to engage with the affiliations that emerge in the narratives to affective concepts and investments. Following on from my analysis of *The Heart Divided*, national belonging is always an affective location. In this sense I am using affect in its multiplicity in order to emphasise how emotions are integral to the discussion of how we engage with these narratives and further how we draw out their gendered dimension. In some of the narratives the women recount with no obvious affective display, yet they draw on gendered language and terms in order to emphasise their points. In this extract the narrator appeals to an understanding of familial ties in order to communicate her engagement with the extremity of events at the time:

The Sikh women said we don’t want to be killed by these lower caste people (as they referred to the Muslims), so kill us with your own hands and throw us in the well’. The Sikh men did that. These were the Sikh women. Their wives, daughters and other relatives. [...] The Sikhs pushed their consenting women into the wells thus saving their honor. The men got on their horses and escaped with their lives. (unnamed speaker)
The way we are told this story is key as it builds in a cyclical way; at first we are told that the Sikh women did not want to be killed by Muslims so asked to be thrown into the well and the Sikh men did so. The story is then repeated and emphasises the point that Sikh men were *pushing* Sikh women into the well. The subtle contradiction here that the women were consenting but also needed to be pushed is interesting as it suggests some confusion from the speaker regarding this process. That the men were pushing in their wives, daughters and other kin is also emphasised. It is not enough to say that these were women; the fact that they were related is crucial to the speaker. Furthermore, that she has to repeat this with more detail, first saying Sikh women, then elaborating, suggests this detail is both important and baffling. The story is concluded with a stark comparison between the death of women for their honour and the escape of the men. The women jumping into the well are adhering to or unwillingly supporting, a masculine narrative of saving. However, our narrator seems baffled by this, evidenced by her repetition in the story with detail added incrementally to attempt to explain the occurrence. Although the narrator knows how to explain the events – through discourses of honour of which she is clearly aware, the repetition with increased detail serves to increase the extremity of what we are being told. The inflection in her voice is also insistent and demonstrates a level of awareness from the narrator that she needs to explain the story she is telling rather than simply recount it. In narrating she does not appear emotionally affected: she does not cry and looks directly at the camera, yet we are still seeing the mobilisation of emotion in terms of the emphasis on familial relations. The insistence in the way the story is told also suggests that the extra details are needed in order to explain the chaos of the time; the more we are told and the more detail added the less clear-cut the story appears.⁶⁶ We are left with a picture of families pushing their female relations into the well at their own request - this is not only a gendered familial violence but also an invited one. Reading this extract through affect emphasises the disarray prevalent at the time and the challenge of narrating this in a clear, comprehensive way.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ There were specific patterns to the gendered violence at the time, as outlined by N. S. Khan, but this is not to say that Partition was the only time when women were held up as symbols of honour or when they suffered violence. See George for a consideration of Partition violence and exceptionality.

⁶⁷ A speech by Gandhi is cited by Didur

I have heard that many women did not want to lose their honour and chose to die. Many men killed their own wives. I think that is really great because I know such things make India strong. [...] Not that their lives were not dear to them, but they felt it was better to die with courage rather than be forcibly converted to Islam by the Muslims and allow
Throughout the second section of the film (Self that Became), we see the multiple ways in which the women being interviewed negotiate their sense of belonging to the new nation of Pakistan. Though their ideas are conflicting, each of their stories has a strong affective dimension regardless of how we might engage with affective registers of facial expressions, tears or hesitancies. I will now analyse three extracts in detail in relation to attachments: attachments to the idea of Pakistan and attachments to the horrors of the past, and attachments that can exist in tension with one another. Zohra expresses what Pakistan provides Muslims thus:

There is murder and mayhem still taking place in Gujrat (sic). If, God forbid, Pakistan had not come into being, what would have happened to our people? We would have suffered the same fate as that of Gujrat’s Muslims. People have prospered a lot here, they have jobs which would not have been the case in a united India because Hindus were more educated, more resourceful and cleverer than us. They would get all the good jobs and Muslims would be left only to do menial tasks.

In this narrative Zohra directly identifies with why the establishment of the nation was necessary; the nation’s becoming is justified in terms of preventing ongoing oppressions and as such is fuelled by an affect of fear of Indian Hindus. Much of what Zohra articulates here is reminiscent of the arguments for Pakistan as outlined in the thesis Introduction, in that the status of Muslims was identified as lower than that of Hindus and the new nation was needed to safeguard the rights (political and economic) of Indian Muslims. Zohra expresses positive feelings about Pakistan – the idea that at least she has her country in which she feels Muslims are economically enfranchised means that she can understand the nation as the site that redresses this uneven past. The comparison she gives is to Gujarat and Muslims who remained in India as second-class citizens. She proposes that at least in their own country Muslims can prosper, and for Zohra this would not have been possible without Partition and Pakistan.

In Zohra’s view, Pakistan provides the conditions for this prosperity, the words ‘if, God forbid, Pakistan had not come into being’, suggests that Pakistan not existing is _them to assault their bodies. [...] When I hear these things, I dance with joy that there are such brave women in India. (3)_

This quotation is interesting on two accounts - firstly that the deaths of women were lauded as making ‘India strong’, and secondly that the women dying are coded as Sikh and Hindu due to them not wanting to die by the hands of Muslims. This suggests that to be Indian is to be Sikh or Hindu, and that the newly independent Indian nation is asserting itself on and through the ‘honourable’ deaths of these women.
a thought she does not want to entertain. In addition, Zohra’s matter-of-fact narrative upholds the authority of the nation to consolidate problems; here it is Pakistan that has prevented the ongoing marginalisation of Muslims. Alan Rew and John Campbell highlight how affective identity narratives of ethnic nationalism are ‘exercises in the mobilisation of emotion through selective drawing upon affective elements, for example a contextually defined sense of exclusion, fear and anxiety vis-à-vis significant Others’ (13). We can see how Zohra’s conviction that the Hindus were ‘more resourceful and cleverer’ engages with the nation as a site that provides a form of protection against these more resourceful communities. Identifying the discordance she recalls in India in terms of socio-economic structures rather than a naturalised difference would mean that Muslims could be enfranchised through political mechanisms that are not the nation state. As such the belonging that the nation provides through creating a site for Muslims to access decent jobs is a belonging that is forged by Zohra and provides the conviction of the need for the nation. Framing Hindus as naturally smarter than Muslims also suggests that the nation is the only solution to the problem of this discrepancy between them, and as pointed to earlier, relies on the discourse of naturalised difference. Her belonging is thus forged through multiple sites.

The next narrative I would like to address is that of Mairaj Begum:

No, there was no happiness. There was no happiness about Pakistan’s creation at that time. All we were concerned with was self-preservation. We were scared for our lives, and did not care about being happy or not. Afterwards, people would come and tell us “today is Pakistan Day” and we would tell them you are only making us remember the home and the homeland we have left behind. We left everything behind, and you are reminding us of it. People lit lamps and celebrated, but we did not feel any happiness at all.

This narrative highlights how any celebration of the nation of Pakistan holds within it the memory of the traumatic events of Partition; the very idea of celebration becomes abhorrent in this context. The feelings Mairaj expresses towards the nation are thus ambivalent ones; though its authority is not undermined, its affiliations are inextricable from traumatic memories. The new nation of Pakistan that was argued for as a homeland for Indian Muslims is not referred to as a homeland, it is India that is referred to as a homeland, and furthermore it is one that has been left, one that has
been lost. As debates around national responses to traumatic histories and memories have centred on the idea of commemoration and remembrance. As outlined in the thesis Introduction, Pierre Nora has discussed how monuments and archives have become sites of memory that function by creating a location and tangibility for memory. As Nora has argued, this creates memory as a place that is visited rather than one that is experienced. In the case of Pakistan, the site of memory is the nation itself; inhabitation of Pakistani national identity is a form of commemorating Partition. Mairaj’s reference to Pakistan Day reminds us of this argument and highlights how this inhabitation is conflicted. Memory of Partition is not adequately contained, and it is disruptive to national belonging as it is recalled with regret and sadness. The emphasis on Pakistan Day that Mairaj raises suggests that Pakistan is the site of the memory of Partition, and that celebrating Pakistan is intrinsically a celebration of Partition. National identity itself acts as a form of commemoration, maintaining the nation and its interests as the site of memory. The trauma of Pakistan’s becoming is channeled into a public celebration of its becoming; the existence of the nation takes precedence over the conditions of its making.

Rather than commemoration providing cohesion for Mairaj it in fact reminds her of something else: in place of generating memories of national affiliation, memories of loss and pain are provoked. In this sense the nation’s narrative that asks for itself to be celebrated and commemorated is undermined through her reluctance to celebrate. There is an alternative history being charted here and that is one of loss rather than gain. This split is reflected on by Kabir who, as outlined in the thesis Introduction, identifies a split between public and private subjectivity, in which the public celebrated independence and the private mourned Partition (“Gender, Memory, Trauma” 184). The public celebration of an independence achieved through nationalism takes on a nationalist form, as we see through Pakistan Day. In many ways we can read Mairaj’s resistance to this celebration, motivated as it is by painful memories, as anti-national. The nation does not provide consolation for the costs of Partition, in part because Pakistan does not provide affectively as a homeland and

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68 See George for a consideration of how narratives of Partition such as Mairaj’s can be read as diasporic narratives due to their concern with ‘the trauma of relocation and homesickness for the place left behind’ (135). She goes onto discuss that this articulation of diaspora also applies to those who did not migrate because the location of shared history has been left behind (154).

69 This has largely been done in relation to the Holocaust. See Rose Last Resistance, especially “Holocaust Premises”, and Edkins, in particular “Concentration Camp Memorials and Museums”.

cannot act as a substitute for what is lost. In fact Mairaj resists claiming Pakistan as a homeland at all – Pakistan fails to generate affects of belonging for Mairaj because she remembers its becoming as a time of fearing for life and of disruption. The concept of homeland in itself is not being disrupted in her narrative however, but the expected location of this homeland is, as she identifies it as being in India. What this does emphasise is that the homeland, wherever it may be identified, does not always provide safety or belonging. Neither India nor Pakistan did so – India did not make it safe for them to stay or able to return, and Pakistan did not make them belong in the new place. What we see in this narrative is distinct from that of Zohra who supports the idea of Pakistan and is more convinced of what it provides. For Zohra, commemoration succeeds, but for Mairaj it fails. If commemoration becomes the way to consolidate traumatic histories and makes history a site to be visited, then the fact that she rejects commemoration means she is not ready to visit memory/history. As such the processes that marked this history are very much alive and ongoing. Identity is secondary to survival in Mairaj’s narrative; Pakistani identity and national affiliation is shown to be circumstantial, or a symptom of a time that was primarily characterised by disruption. Pakistan and national identity are not fought for in this narrative. Survival was fought for, with the nation acting as a by-product. Indeed, the split between public and private feelings towards Pakistan suggests again the fragmentation of the self that comes of trauma, but this time proposed on a more collective level. What these narratives suggest is that these processes are not homogenous and not always consolidated.

A short extract from Nusrat addresses many of the demands made by affects of national belonging, and the way in which emotions are called upon to secure affiliation to the nation:

None of this is written in any of our history books. [pause] We have never read about it, never thought about it. [pause] Why are we only concerned with ourselves, our own selves? [pause] My children tell me “Ammi, forget about it, we want peace,” especially my grandchildren. And I say, “Yes, so do I.”

First Nusrat points to memory, history, and the way the events of Partition are not present in official histories as though forgetting is a positive requisite for moving on. For Nusrat’s grandchildren, forgetting means having peace, and although beseeched to do so by her family, for Nusrat forgetting is not possible; instead she challenges the ways in which the violence of Partition is not taught. In expanding on the
requests made of Nusrat by her grandchildren I would like to adapt Sara Ahmed’s formulations when she discusses the concept of an affect alien: one who experiences a gap between the promise of feeling and the feeling of feeling (“Creating Disturbance” 35). Nusrat does not express affects of national belonging that might diminish the affects of engaging with traumatic histories; the promise of the nation to be able to do this fails her. Whereas her grandchildren and other narrators such as Zohra either want to move on from the past or narrate the present in such a way that the past is justified, (and in so doing express feelings that participate in the feelings promised by national belonging), Nusrat cannot access these feelings.

Engaging with the affect gap expressed by Nusrat highlights the demands made of women by national discourse with regards to feeling. Emotions are not undisciplined, the expectations of social interaction shape them (Goodwin et al. 16), and where emotions cannot be shaped they are expected to be expressed in certain ways. Arlie Hochschild has discussed this move whereby affective control is necessary so that the expression of negative affects does not hinder economic productivity; where employees need to appear happy their affects must be managed. In Nusrat’s narrative we see the demands of nation take the place of commerce. To her grandchildren Nusrat is a block to her own individual peace in the nation – she need only ‘forget about it’ in order to access peace. However for Nusrat the violent histories are the block. National narratives may generate forgetting – as she points to in her comments on the erasure enacted by history books – but she is unable to participate in this, and as such is unable to find peace. This emphasises the false consciousness of emotion control, as Sartre has argued we change ourselves to deal with the world as it is (cited in Flatley 18). In this case affects are adjusted so the subject is satisfied and pleased with the current nation through feelings of belonging as this is more easily accomplished than changing society or repairing the past. That she is asked to move on situates the problem as hers and not that of history or national politics; her narrative of history needs to be forgotten for the future happiness of others. In this final narrative Nusrat identifies ways in which society

70 Hochschild’s study refers specifically to the affective management of air stewardesses, who must appear happy; here the demands of economic productivity dictate affective display. Also see Flatley who argues that structures of feeling operate alongside ideology, they are socially produced and can facilitate our affective attachment to objects in the social order (26). Flatley borrows the term ‘structures of feeling’ from R. Williams’ chapter of the same name. For an explicitly feminist analysis see S. Ahmed who argues that ‘feminism involves political consciousness of what women are asked to give up for happiness’ (“Creating Disturbance” 39).
could be changed, looking to the problems of official histories in the current socio-political structure. Currently, the story of Partition is everywhere, but framed in a particular way that upholds a particular nationalist telling. It is Nusrat’s struggle against these hegemonic forms of remembering which means that she does not have peace, as the narrative she recognises as authentic is not acknowledged. The use of history in and for national and hegemonic interests is picked up in more detail in Chapter Three.

Memories of Violence

1947 saw multiple upheavals accompany Partition as a time of both nation creation and independence from British colonial rule. The politics of emotions are crucial here for us to understand how the nation is structured by emotions as it has clear ramifications for how we might understand the processes of nation creation and political movements more generally. I argued in Chapter One that The Heart Divided creates affect as central to the development of national affiliations and sense of belonging in relation to the emerging nation of Pakistan. Bearing this in mind we can see the narratives of the documentary engage with the emotions in two ways: in one through affects of belonging to a nation and in another through the engagement with the traumatic time of gendered violence that characterised the becoming of the nation. As such, this traumatic mode of becoming is one of a national subjectivity as well as a nation and further, one that emerged through multiple political influences.

Some of the stories of violence in Stories of the Broken Self are told in such matter-of-fact ways they seem absent of affect, the chaos of the past is largely managed by the women’s expression. Any injustice of this past and the violence embedded in how the country was partitioned becomes normalised in the resigned way it is communicated. Nancy Whittaker has discussed the emotional labour of survivors of violence who manage emotions so that they will not be disbelieved because of an ‘irrational’ display. As well as not wanting to appear unreliable, the narratives she discusses seek to avoid making the effects of violence seem too horrific, as this would suggest that the problems being recounted are not ordinary and widespread (237-248). As such, emotional expressions can be understood as strategies and ways of coping; they serve a purpose even if the deployment of these strategies is not always conscious (Sartre, cited in Solomon 194-203). The level to which expression is managed in relation to Partition points to how normalised this history is for so
many; the narratives suggest is that there is much about Partition that the women accept in order to facilitate their survival in the present. What I want to point to in this section is that this normalisation does not make a history any less violent. Violence may not always disrupt the women’s display but it is always present. In this I am highlighting the ways in which violent histories are part of Pakistan’s history in more ways than the commonly discussed communalism, and propose that we consider the locations of violence in more detail.

Maureen Turim has argued that trauma is the effect of a ‘layering of several experiences’ (glossed in Radstone 192), and with this in mind I want to turn to the idea of uncertainty that many of the narratives point to. My contention is that lack of preparedness in relation to Partition comes to exist as a lexicon of violence. It is this very uncertainty that is repeatedly identified as exacerbating communal violence, and as such exists as an element of the matrixes of power through which the national subject emerges. Zohra Begum articulates this exacerbation thus:

Initially we were elated that Pakistan had come into being. We lit up the house with lamps and celebrated. It was then that we discovered that Gurdaspur had not been included. If Gurdaspur had not been separated the resultant crises would not have taken place. It was only after the separation of Gurdaspur that the Jathas started looting and killing.

Shamim Zahoor also emphasises these sentiments:

As soon as the partition was announced, people thought that Ludhiana would be part of Pakistan. However all this changed quite suddenly. From what we heard, it was something to do with those in higher positions of power basically those involved with the Radcliffe Boundary Award and Ludhiana was given to India. The uncertainty prevailing at the time made the situation more explosive than it should have been. 71

For Zohra and Shamim, the uncertainty and confusion regarding into which country districts were to fall were directly connected to the explosion of violence in these locales. There are subtle differences in their approaches which warrant attention – Zohra expresses the fact of Gurdaspur not being in Pakistan as causing discontent, yet Shamim identifies uncertainty and last minute decisions as causing the problems. Zohra’s narrative can be understood as engaging with belonging again – she expresses discontent about which nation the boundary award decided Gurdaspur belonged to, and identifies this as causing violence. In Shamim’s account it is the

71 As outlined in the thesis Introduction, Pakistan’s contours were vague until early 1947 and doubt around Ludhiana and Gurdaspur is considered to have exacerbated much of the violence in Punjab.
way in which the process was managed and communicated that exacerbates the violence. Although this is an interesting divergence, it is key that these bureaucratic decisions and their processes are highlighted as causes of violence, as this identifies the culpability of the withdrawing colonial forces rather than the concept of Pakistani sovereignty in and of itself. These narratives remind us, as outlined in the thesis Introduction and Chapter One, that Pakistani sovereignty was bestowed by the British alongside the chaos of colonial withdrawal. What we see here are the ways in which Pakistani sovereignty and becoming through bureaucratic articulation are two vastly different things. As discussed in the chapter on *The Heart Divided*, sovereignty for both India and Pakistan was fought for by the people of colonial India, yet the actual structure of this was decided by colonial leaders and it is in these decisions that the narratives identify the problems that led to violence. The erasure of this history that is enacted by textbooks (pointed to by Nusrat) may well be done in the ‘service’ of the Pakistani nation, however what is erased in this move is also the bureaucratic violence enacted by departing colonial forces.

The confusion being generated at Partition, and the limited communication at the time points to the lack of permanence expected by some: Mairaj Begum explains how her family left glasses and other possessions behind as they were sure they would return to their homes after Eid. We can see how this suggests that Pakistani identity was not complete to her and her family; movement and migration did not mean committing to the new nation, it was a move in escape of violence that was imagined to be temporary. Though it is clear that this was not the same for all, the heterogeneity of experience here points us away from any cohesive narrative of national becoming, in direct contrast to official national narratives. In her interview, Hamid Jehan makes an evocative comparison to natural disasters: ‘The general feeling at that time was one of a natural catastrophe, such as an accident or an earthquake’. The idea of disasters such as earthquakes is interesting symbolically in terms of the land being split, but closer engagement asks that we consider agency and control in the face of disasters. That people at the time described the events unfolding as a natural catastrophe suggests that they could only explain what was happening in relation to an occurrence over which they had no control. Communities have no power to stop earthquakes, though there might be the technology to anticipate their arrival. Likewise communities did not have the capacity to plan and prepare for Partition, but as with natural phenomena the responsibility for
minimising chaos and damage falls on bureaucratic structures and the rule of law. As outlined in the thesis Introduction, this planning was not done, and care not taken; the effect is that of an unplanned disaster rather than a thought-through political manoeuvre. The helplessness evoked by this comparison to a natural catastrophe suggests a critique of those dividing the land and failing to oversee the processes.

The spiralling of violence that occurred is also discussed in a way that distances it from any original cause. Shamim Zahoor recalls that, ‘they fell upon each other like butchers. The whole atmosphere just changed. Slaughter after slaughter, irrational and spontaneous slaughters’. In this description Shamim is charting the shift that happened in people’s attitudes and the atmosphere around her and identifying it as both irrational and spontaneous, suggesting that neither the behaviours nor the change in atmosphere had any cause or provocation. Mairaj Begum also highlights how violence came to be enacted in response to violence and no longer in response to confusion: ‘Women who would arrive used to be in such a bad condition that people would lose control. As a result riots started in Bahawalnagar’. It is not belonging, borders or colonialism that directly generate violence here, instead responses to violated honour take over. In Shamim’s account, the slaughters cannot be explained, in Mairaj’s they are enacted in response to other slaughters. Riots begin because of the state women arrive in, and their focus on the chaos and communal violence of the time has the potential to obscure the structural violence of the colonial bureaucracy that has been outlined in Zohra and Shamim’s narratives above. Taken together then, the stories begin to explain each other. While some of the stories might give the impression of suddenness, others frame the outbreak of violence in bureaucracy. What is suggested is that for some women, the events cannot be explained and for others there are direct causes. From a close reading of these stories in relation to one another a narrative emerges that explains the ‘whole atmosphere’ changing, at least in part, because of bureaucratic mismanagement.

What is striking in the accounts is how Partition is understood to disrupt completely the fabric of life. Shamim goes on:

72 Y. Khan argues that ‘[o]verspilling trains have provided the most enduring images of Partition’, and 2.3 million people crossed the new borders by train (156). Many trains were attacked, sending carriages of corpses and violated passengers to the other side of the border.
Outside the Railway Station, there was a queue of people. Trains were coming in. It had been decided that they would take Muslims to Pakistan. There was no space available, even the rooftops were full. We tried to get on them everyday but came back without any success. An acquaintance of my grandfather was in the Railway. He promised to help us find a place on the train from the Station. But we had to hide the fact that we were Muslims, the ladies put bindis on their foreheads, as well as changed our names to those which sounded like names of Hindus, such as Bimla and Usha. [...] On the way, whenever the train stopped, Hindus were ready to attack with swords and kirpans.

In charting her departure from India, Shamim outlines how she and her family had to go in disguise to pass as Hindu in order to assure their safety. This is striking because it emphasises to us how much this moment crystallised identities. The awareness of having to identity-cross for safety demonstrates the knowledge of their identities and therefore their enemies, and their associated location of safety. Safety for Shamim and her family is getting to Pakistan, and whilst in India appearing to be Hindu. The ways that violence insists on the adherence of Muslim in Pakistan and Hindu in India is insistent in her recounting. Pertinently it is fear for safety that forces Shamim and her family to engage so strongly with identity and thus difference. The idea that the new nation will offer protection is repeated by another narrator who recounts, ‘our whole village fled to the safety of Pakistan’; safety becomes a destination called Pakistan, meaning Pakistan is not just a nation, but a place that will protect. This is reminiscent of the campaigning for Pakistan, which was also framed around an idea of safety, but political safety. In this discussion we see the safety that the nation offers, be that of life as well as political parity.

In her interview, Hamid also outlines how Hindus wanted to leave what was to become Pakistan because of fear of violence. Fear is explained as being the catalyst for leaving, and also as growing in response to communal violence that was prevalent. Several women recount being warned of approaching violence by Hindu or Sikh neighbours, being protected or trying to protect neighbours from different religious communities and trying to make people stay. The understanding of the general atmosphere of violence becomes separate to what was being experienced on a micro level, which was that of people gathering together rather than turning on one another. However, the responses to, and impact of the general atmosphere demonstrates how quickly identities become consolidated as oppositional through fear. Michael Haldrup et al.’s discussion of ‘practicing fear’ suggests that fear is not a generalised emotion that becomes disseminated between people from media and
politics, but is constructed and reproduced in everyday encounters (125). This is an illuminating way to approach these narratives because the escalating violence at the time of Partition suggests that violence became an everyday encounter. As such, fear gets reproduced by violence and each wave of violence reproduces fear. As Mairaj outlines, riots began due to the state women arrived in; women arrived in such a state because of violence. Identity, fear and violence get connected in a reproducing cycle; so much so that no-one can identify its beginning. Khadija articulates this precisely ‘I don’t really know why the Hindu-Muslim riots started’. With each wave of identity-based violence we can see how fear gets more entrenched and national locations begin to promise safety because of their position in relation to identity. We saw in Chapter One how notions of difference informed and were informed by nationalist politics, and here we see how this difference becomes confirmed through violence. Violence, then, becomes the way in which Partition became irreversible. In consolidating difference, violence ensures that things cannot return to how they were – as suggested earlier in the chapter, violence is what sunders people from their former selves.

**Collective Voices**

Although telling personal stories, the women’s narratives are always contextual, focussing on the specific political turbulence of Partition in which to frame their personal reflections, memories and experiences. As such, although speaking as individual voices, they point towards a more general collective experience. In Wendy Brown’s discussion of ‘wounded attachments’ (391), subaltern subjects that become invested in the wound of subaltern identity that then comes to stand for identity itself, represent the dangers of fetishisation of the wound. This raises the challenge of how to move on from the wound when it becomes the very foundation for identity. The question being raised is, if trauma creates an identity, is the trauma needed to continue the identity? There is a risk, as articulated by Ahmed, that making universalising claims that fetishise pain, transforms the pain into an identity that is dependent on pain for its continuation:

Crucially, responding to pain depends on speaking about pain, and such speech acts are the condition for the formation of a ‘we’, made up of different stories of pain that cannot be reduced to a ground, identity or sameness. Stories of pain can be ‘shared’ only when we assume they are
not the same story, even if they are connected, and allow us to make 
connections. (Cultural Politics 174) \(^\text{73}\)

As discussed, there are many ways in which the women’s narratives, however subtly, 
diverge. However, there is a strong sense of convergence around the subject of 
gendered violence, which could be understood as a unifying urge. The challenge lies 
in how we credit and respect the women’s narratives whilst remaining critical of this 
unifying urge that can be seen within them. Milton and Svašek discuss the ways in 
which trauma survivors use discourses of collective victimhood to attempt to gain 
compensation or influence (196). However, these critiques are based on cases where 
women have been given a platform from which to make claims; the only way 
women’s experiences of Partition have had influence has been when they have been 
used by the state for its own ends in the recovery mission. The unification we can see 
within the documentary is both an effect of the film editing the women’s narratives 
together, as well as the use of similar tropes by the women to discuss Partition 
violence. The structure of the film also resists any fetishisation of Partition violence 
in that the past is not the focus in and of itself, but in relation to the effects it 
continues to have on the present.

Judith Herman, in her discussion of feminist consciousness raising has pointed out 
how women may share their own individual and unique stories but through this the 
group experiences a ‘profound experience of universality. The group bears witness to 
the survivor’s testimony, giving it social as well as personal meaning’ (74). What 
Herman points to is how the experience of universality gathers these testimonies 
within their systemic context. That is to say, within the power structures that produce 
the conditions of their experience. Following this I argue that where the women are 
utilising similar models within expression - massacres at train stations and on trains, 
in particular that of women - this is not necessarily the unifying move that Ahmed 
warns against. Instead I propose that we consider the voices to be ‘talking in unison’, 
which I consider to be using ways of speaking that get established precisely because 
the narratives are difficult to recount and this recounting is aided by having a form of 
template. Instead of engaging with these narratives as, in Ahmed’s words, ones that

\(^\text{73}\) Ahmed is specifically referring to how testimonies of violence can be a point of entry for women 
into feminism, and have contributed to the development of feminist subjects. While this move in itself 
is not undermined, she warns against pain becoming a necessary condition for one to become a 
feminist subject, rather than characterising some becoming.
encourage ‘narcissistic agendas of neo-liberal and therapeutic culture (Cultural Politics 174), it is crucial to note that the women’s narratives are never of their own bodily experiences of abuse. Their accounts, though incredibly personal, remain located within a moment of clear wider political significance. This talking in unison about Partition creates more of a critique of masculine nation building than it supports individualised accounts, and as such the narratives point towards the connections we need to make between them. What I am arguing is put aptly by Das when she states that ‘there is a paradox in that communities created around suffering might become communities of ressentiment’ yet that does not mean that we should participate in the silence of suffering (101). Furthermore, listening to the stories of suffering in the case of the documentary situates what they say in order to, as Roger Luckhurst puts it, ‘expose patriarchal logic’ (74).

That none of the women actually recount bodily violence on themselves is not to say definitively that they did not experience bodily violence, as they may be remaining silent about their own experiences; equally the narratives could be made up of women who managed to escape these forms of violence. These are facts we do not know, however this unknowing points us to the ways in which the individual and collective are linked within traumatic experience. Turim outlines:

[I]ndividual and collective elements of trauma are often interwoven and inextricable. When one is a member of a traumatized collectivity, what has happened to others like oneself has the potential to multiply the wounds. (“Trauma of History” 210)

Turim is pointing to the impact on individuals of things that have happened ‘to others like oneself” which is crucial to our understandings of the documentary. It may not be clear to us as viewers how personal the experiences of bodily violence may have been for the women, however, through this analysis we can see how the experiences of bodily violence that they may have observed or come to hear of have direct implications for themselves as national gendered subjects. Their sense of collectivity is defined by what has happened to those like them, so although they may not have had these experiences themselves, they become part of a collectivity that is identified through these traumatising experiences. Khadija outlines:

74 Das discusses at length the ways in which women do not talk about Partition but how it emerges within patterns of interaction. N. S. Khan also points to how in the interviews she conducted with women they often discussed violence unselfconsciously, but mostly in the third person (137).
We reached Delhi in the morning but did not stop there. We took the next train to Aligargh (sic). Many Muslims, including burqa-clad women were sitting on the Station to come to Pakistan. This was approximately in the first week of September. As we were heading back, a cousin of ours had come to meet us and we coerced him into joining us on the train. After that, no relative of ours was left behind. We were all on the train and arrived at Aligargh from Delhi. Upon reaching there, we learnt that all the Muslims at the Delhi platform had been murdered [pauses and dries eyes with sari, voice shaking]. Ours was the last train.

Here the ones doing the attacking are not named or identified, but the ones murdered are, reflecting Khadija’s identification with those massacred. This identification is crucial as it highlights how Partition was not just about what happened to individuals but what happened to individuals like them.  

We can also take the moments of bodily violence recounted as particular moments of embodiments, that is to say the bodily moment of coming into being as national subjects. Nusrat talks about this in detail:

Cutting off the breasts of young girls with their kirpans is one thing which would have been the end of it. They were sliced as one carves out a piece of meat. And then they left them there. A young girl’s legs were pulled apart by a man on each side of her and then a kirpan was used. [long pause] why women have been brutalized in such a manner throughout the ages. Only God knows better. [long pause, looks down and fidgets with watch] there were so many such cases. […] They would rape the women, destroy them and send them to Pakistan.

Here Nusrat points to the violation of women before being sent to Pakistan. The migration that characterised Partition takes on another violent edge, as the violated body becomes part of this narrative of movement and affiliation to a new nation. The hesitant and emotive way that Nusrat explains this suggests affects of association, as she recounts the bodily traumas experienced by those just like her. The connection here between the national body and individual body is another trope that gets repeated throughout the film; we need only look at Nusrat’s reference to how women’s bodies were ‘sliced as one carves a piece of meat’ to relate this to the way the land is carved up without any agency of those living in it, of those to whom the land can be said to belong in terms of sovereignty. Sara Murphy has argued that rape, like childbirth, creates the traumatic separation of one from one’s body (93). This parallel with childbirth is interesting here as it generates a consideration of birth, in

Khanna discusse how, in Assia Djebar’s fiction ‘memories of pain remain as wounds on the bodies of all other women’, and that this experience of memory can lead to solidarity (234).
the sense that Partition was the birth of a nation, but here it also contains the
*separation* of one from one’s body. Partition, argued for to make people belong,
actually violates the idea of home and separates people from their national body.
Partition and its associated violence were thus events that caused separation from the
body as well as from the locale and throw the notion of belonging into disarray.  
Returning to the framing of ‘self that was ... self that became’, this discussion
suggests that there is the need of a bodily sacrifice, both symbolic and material, in
order for the new national body to come into being. The new national body cannot
come into being without the old one being destroyed in the service of being entirely
rewritten. Partition’s effects were not solely discursive (though as discussed they
were strongly discursive); there were huge material ramifications of Partition that
imply the disturbing notion that Partition as both independence and nation creation,
required bodily sacrifice.  

We can read the narratives as having a more explicitly political move, in that they are
an active connecting of individuals to others. Turim argues:

> Ironically one of the effects of trauma is to distance the self not only
from one’s memory, but also from the experience of others, and from any
collective formation. In many ways then the works that attempt to
represent trauma become a call for attention, for an end to isolation, and
for a meaningful return of historical memory. (“Trauma of History” 210)

The collective discussions of embodied violence and trauma, instead of creating a
unifying tale, create a connecting narrative, one that reaches across to link isolated
experiences to each other, while the narratives also connect past to present. Largely,
the moments being recounted are those of women being violated by men, or
descriptions that allude to women being dragged along in a power struggle. The ‘I’
that is being formed at this time of national subjectivity being established is a
specifically gendered subjectivity. It follows that any deductions being made in terms
of this will in turn be gendered, in terms of affect, in terms of experience and in
terms of historicisation and trauma. Murphy argues that ‘rape can be understood as a
violent re-enactment of sexual difference upon the bodies of its victims, [...] that
seeks to reduce those victims [...] to a fantasized body of woman’ (‘Social Bonds”

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76 I am not comparing rape to Partition here but using tropes to consider trauma. Rape is a specifically bodily and humanly experienced trauma and should not be compared to the experience of the land.

77 See note 11 (this thesis 22) regarding the idea that blood-letting may be required for the making of nation-states and the partitioning of land.
If we understand the body of woman as coming to represent the body of a community at a time of communal violence then this is an act of difference, both sexual and national whereby the body is produced as a particularly gendered and nationalised subject.78

Das has argued that the post-Partition recovery projects run by both India and Pakistan inscribed the new nations as masculine through prioritising the needs of the national ‘recovery’ over women’s agency and choices (18-37). Although I agree that the recovery operations had such an effect, I propose that the nations were already inscribed as masculine through the violence that characterised their becoming. Through becoming gendered individuals within a national collective, women became individuals in a masculine national collective.

**Conclusion**

In pointing to the next chapter I want to emphasise how trauma can lead on to the everyday. Kathleen Stewart argues that the ordinary can stem from a traumatic root – i.e. trauma creates the ordinary (56-7). Following this we can understand the subject as being created both within the traumatic past and the ordinary present, highlighting how the subject is formed from multiple locations that can potentially fragment it. Susannah Radstone in her gloss of Turim outlines the ‘ensuing internal conflict between the pre-traumatized and the traumatized self’. The self becomes fragmented around the trauma and as such, trauma is not just the ‘impact of external events’, it is internal too (192). In this chapter we have seen how the cleaving of the ‘self that was’ and the ‘self that became’, which took place at Partition, is reflected on by the women being interviewed. That this cleaving is what now underpins the everyday is what Stewart is referring to; as well as creating the ordinary, trauma permeates the ordinary. Jonathan Flatley has argued that basic social formations such as patriarchy and capitalism can only endure to ‘the extent that they are woven into our emotional lives in the most fundamental way’ (79). Hierarchical differences are not just tools we use to make sense of our worlds, but things in relation to which we have a whole range of emotions. Affects both inform the social and are informed by the social.

With this in mind, if affects of belonging to a nation are created as the nation is created, and the nation is created through trauma, belonging is saturated with trauma.

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78 See Das for a discussion of how women’s bodies were marked with nationalist slogans as part of communal violence.
whether it is commemorated or not. The implications of this will be discussed in the next chapter.

In *Stories of the Broken Self*, Partition is often discussed outside of stories of gendered violence, however gendered violence is never discussed outside of Partition, identifying how the disruption of this time supported the violence being enacted. Each story has wider echoes and implications for the political situation at the time. So what is the challenge that is posed by foregrounding women’s affective responses to Partition? What is at stake for the nation when the social formation of the nation is woven into psyches through a traumatic imprint? This is something that is not tended to by dominant discourses for good reason, as what it points to is the fact of a nation whose existence is predicated upon gendered violence, power and control. While I do not think the Pakistani nation is unique in this, Partition was a moment that highlights these processes explicitly. I have argued in Chapter One that Partition was made affectively rewarding as a concept; what we see here are the negative affects that become attached to its moment of becoming. And this is the importance of the documentary and the women’s narratives in both structure and content: they propose that the gendered dimension not be forgotten and insist that women’s narratives be listened to. Furthermore, the ways that women seek to make sense of their experiences of the past, have implications for how we might engage with the ongoing impact of Partition. There is a need for a medium for women’s experience that is otherwise largely subsumed within more dominant national narratives. *Stories of the Broken Self* contextualises and foregrounds these, and dares to emphasise unhappiness whilst also challenging what is being marginalised in the name of belonging.
Gender and the Repeat of National Trauma in *Khamosh Pani*

My analysis of Sabiha Sumar’s film *Khamosh Pani [Silent Waters]* (2003) will engage with trauma theory as a method through which to interrogate the disruption of individual women’s histories to dominant national narratives. The film is set in a small village in Pakistan’s Punjab in 1979, and focuses on Ayesha (Kiron Kher), and her son Salim (Aamir Malik) who gets increasingly involved within religious extremist politics during the film. Though the main story is set in 1979, from the beginning the narrative is disrupted by small intermittent sections in sepia that refer back to Ayesha’s experiences of the 1947 Partition. A consideration of the themes of trauma allows us to understand the Partition of India as not only having ongoing effects, but also underpinning and creating the everyday as dependent on its events (Stewart 56-7). This chapter will argue that *Khamosh Pani* is an especially rich text to analyse due to its manipulation of structure and thematic engagement with nationalism, identity and memory. I propose that the film articulates the trauma of a nation that has not worked through the gendered violence of its formation.

Directed by Sabiha Sumar with screenplay by Paromita Vohra, *Khamosh Pani* has won several awards including the Golden Leopard. Interestingly, the film had broad financial support from several arts organisations across Europe, including Germany and France. This transnational element is also evident in the creative element of the film, with Vohra being Indian and Sumar Pakistani. Vidhi Films, under whose auspices the film has been developed, is a Pakistani based organisation that ‘believe[s] cinema is a powerful vehicle for political education and social change in Pakistan’ (“Vidhi Films”), in the service of which they arrange film screenings and discussions within small towns and villages with no access to cinema. This was done with *Khamosh Pani*. This action by Vidhi Films contextualises the film in interesting ways as the organisation ensures that the film has circulation by arranging their own screenings, including ones in the locations that are featured in the film. The power of cinema as a vehicle for change is emphasised by the organisation (see “Vidhi Films”), and suggests that disseminating the themes of the film, such as women’s experiences, religious nationalisms and national history are paramount. There is therefore a conscious awareness of what the film can do and effect through its narrative. As pointed to in Chapter Two, in the absence of written documentation of particular histories of the experience of Partition, and adequate schooling regarding
the human element of 1947, film texts act as circulations of memory. The move by Vidhi Films to arrange screenings of the film serves to ensure that it can participate as part of memory circulation and education.79

The present timeframe of the film is 1979, shortly after Pakistan underwent a second military coup by General Zia-ul-Haq who ousted Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as leader of the country in July 1977. Interrupting the narrative progression of the film are intermittent sepia sections that refer back to 1947, creating Partition as the film’s past tense. This past tense is set up largely through images of a well that come to stand in for 1947, and act as motifs of memory, and gendered and communal violence, throughout the course of the film. The brief closing scenes of the film move forward to 2002 through a continuity cut, which suggests that this move forwards from 1979 to 2002 is a smooth narrative progression. 2002 then, is not the film’s future but the film’s present at a future date. These three time frames each refer to politically tumultuous times in Pakistan’s life: 1947 being its violent becoming, 1979 the official Islamisation of the country, and 2002 General Musharraf’s military dictatorship with its instrumental role in establishing Pakistan as an ally in the war on terror. Each of these time frames is therefore significant in the political life of the country, as turbulence emerges within Pakistan as well as between it and other international actors.

General Zia’s rule was characterised by promises for elections that never transpired, and is largely remembered for his Islamisation programme. This time enacted what Stephen Cohen has described as a turn away from South Asia and towards the Middle East (170-1, echoed by Talbot Pakistan 33). General Zia considered his introduction of an Islamic system to be an essential prerequisite for Pakistan’s survival, and had aspirations for the country to become an ideological Islamic state. However, these aims were not realised to the extent that the Islamisation project increased sectarian divisions and was at odds with Sufism (Talbot Pakistan 245-251). This tension is dramatised in the film through the animosity that develops between General Zia’s followers and many of the villagers. However, General Zia’s

79 See Jaikumar for a discussion of how this transnational funding was a necessity due to the lack of support from a ‘politically conservative and financially beleaguered film industry’ (214). This is interesting in terms of the intervention the film as a product makes; although looking to the transnational market for funding, Vidhi films took this investment and used it to create cultural production they would circulate around Pakistan themselves.
approach, as exemplified by his followers, is shown to be appealing to others, especially young men.

General Zia’s regime is also known for creating an emphasis on the regulative and punitive elements of Islam rather than socioeconomic egalitarianism. In particular laws brought in regarding women: the introduction of the Zina Ordinance in 1979 whereby adultery became a crime against the state, the ban on women models and imposition of a dress code for women (Khan Zina 39). Also of note was the establishing of Pakistan studies as a compulsory module in schools (Cohen 171), and the plans for prayer wardens to persuade and inspire five a day prayers (namaz) (Talbot Pakistan 251-73). Less often cited but central to General Zia’s rule was the close relationship forged with the U.S. Government. Large amounts of C.I.A. funds went towards the establishment of Jihadi freedom fighters in Afghanistan to resist Soviet forces as part of the larger backdrop of the Cold War (Khan Zina 39-41). It is crucial to consider the film with an awareness of this context as Sumar makes a point of referencing many of these features of General Zia’s time in power. Villagers make jokes about General Zia’s resistance to elections; his followers disapprove of Ayesha’s Sufi teachings, and act as prayer wardens, coercing shopkeepers to close their businesses at prayer times; and Salim first acquiesces to join General Zia’s followers through being shown pictures of children being maimed by Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

As viewers our viewing experience is disrupted by 1947 but taken through to 2002, suggesting that although the nation continues to move forward in time the past is a constant presence. The flashbacks embed trauma into the film’s structure: characteristic of traumatic memory these flashbacks are fragmented and incomplete. As viewers we are required to engage with the fragmented past and turbulent present simultaneously; there is an active past-in-present formation that is being constructed. The manipulation of the temporality of the narrative and the themes of nationalism

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80 However, Talbot has urged that assumptions regarding Islamisation and women be avoided as location has much to do with whether Islamisation benefitted or restricted women. In tribal areas Islamic law increased women’s rights regarding divorce and inheritance, and also charted the end of bride price. In rural areas, poor schooling for girls was often due to the lack of Islamisation as women’s organisations were often limited to urban areas and middle classes. General Zia also set up a cabinet level women’s division so it would be simplistic to think of him as misogynist (Pakistan 279-80). Ayres also proposes that the changes implemented by General Zia, in particular the Islamic education policies did not represent “a moment of dramatic rupture, but instead the fruition of a particular vision of the nation quite apparent from the start” (Pakistan 128).
and identity, create a film that provokes many questions rather than offering definitive representation. As the film proceeds we learn through the flashbacks that during the communal riots of Partition, Ayesha’s mother and sister jumped into the local well at the behest of her father.\footnote{As outlined previously, women were celebrated within Indian nationalism for jumping in to wells. Gandhi in particular celebrated women for not letting themselves be violated by Muslim men. Ayesha’s act of running away from the fate of death and being captured by Muslim men works against this nationalist claiming of women’s bodies as containing the honour of the nation, instead she makes her own future. Also see note 6767 (this thesis 106).} In short, Ayesha is also to jump but at the last moment runs away and is captured by a group of Muslim men. She converts to Islam and marries one of her captors (Afsaan) then settles in the same village of Charkhi where she had lived up to that point. The site of the well comes to hold much significance in the film. As the location from which Ayesha escapes the threat to her life, it is one she avoids until the very end of the film when she returns to the well to end her life.

I want to argue, through the tools of trauma theory, that Ayesha’s personal trauma of Partition is something that she is effectively working through. For this reason she chooses to stay away from the well. This choice of hers is significant in that it suggests she does not want to revisit the site of the threat to her life and is attempting to put troubled memories behind her. The moments when the visual sequence shifts to sepia are moments of peace or control for her, she generally looks into the distance as though daydreaming or slightly distracted. Rather than disrupting Ayesha, I propose that the different temporal sequences disrupt the viewer. Our engagement with 1979 is interrupted by the emerging knowledge of 1947, as is our understanding of life in Charkhi through learning what underpins it. In this sense, the story emerging is not just about an individual, it is about a nation and a time. As such, I will argue that it is the nation that is articulating the effects of unresolved trauma, whereas Ayesha is expressing the result of her labour of working through her trauma.

In 1979, the lure of heightened nationalism is introduced to Charkhi through the arrival of two of General Zia’s representatives, Rashid and another who remains unnamed.\footnote{From here on I will either refer to Rashid or term the two the Lahoris.} We see their particular form of politics draw Salim towards a more fundamentalist view with regards to religion, through which his relationship with his mother and girlfriend Zubeida begin to erode. These attitudes of Rashid and their
promulgation across the village reflect the repetitive dimension of communal nationalist politics, which I frame as a traumatic repeat at the level of the nation. It is this repeat that leads to Ayesha’s community ties falling apart, and dictates her return to the well. At this point the memories she has been working through return with a force that demonstrate how the repetitive patterns of a nation that has not dealt with the violence of its formation impact upon individual negotiations of traumatic pasts. In this sense, the collective trauma of Partition that exists in terms of the nation effects the repetition of gendered persecution and communalism. Therefore I will go on to argue that these repetitive patterns suggest that denying women’s voices renders the site of the nation as one that cannot work through any formative trauma. As such, the film’s structural assertions thus critique formative gendered violence through the tools of trauma.

Structurally the film thus encourages a thematic analysis of ideas of history and memory, and as Maureen Turim aptly notes:

The flashback is a privileged moment in unfolding that juxtaposes different moments of temporal reference. A juncture is wrought between present and past and two concepts are implied in this juncture: memory and history. (*Flashbacks* 1)

In *Khamosh Pani* the flashbacks present a time when Ayesha’s religious and national identities shift, from Indian and Sikh to Pakistani and Muslim. Set against increased religious nationalism in 1979, these flashes of ‘47 expose Ayesha’s traumatic history but also the nation’s traumatic founding. I propose that through its structure the film foregrounds its concerns with memory and the battle for historical narrative. As a text that circulates through free public screenings it can also be seen to participate in the development of historical narratives. During the film’s ‘present’ - 1979 - we see that memory emerges as a contested site for the establishment of national narratives. As such I want to argue for the impact of Ayesha’s personal story on an individual level, but also considering how this has implications regarding national narratives. While forgetting is not an option in the film, the battle is over _how_ Partition is remembered and how the becoming of Pakistan is formulated. In the push for a particular Islamisation, General Zia’s followers repress marginal voices and women’s enfranchisement in favour of narratives of sacrifice and heroism. Stories of loss must be narrativised in a particular way that emphasise their necessity in the service of the nation’s becoming. I will argue that the narrativisation of General Zia’s
followers takes three forms: that of reframing (deaths), disregarding (mundane losses), and controlling (women’s experiences).

The tension that emerges between these forms of narration and the villagers will be discussed in more detail through using Michael Billig’s concept of ‘banal nationalism’ in which the existence of the nation is taken for granted, and affiliation towards the nation is expressed through absent-minded articulations of belonging. This, I argue, is what is articulated by the villagers, and can be considered as what Homi Bhabha, in his essay “DissemiNation”, would term a performative account of the nation. The inhabitants of the village are shown to be integrated into the nation through markers such as them reading the newspaper and discussing politics. Although they may despair of or ridicule the political climate, they do so because they feel themselves connected to national politics. Bhabha proposes that the narrative of the nation emerges between the performative and the pedagogic, and it is the pedagogic expression of nation that we see articulated by General Zia’s followers. This is an expression that does not take the nation for granted as there is a particular construction of the nation that is being promulgated through it. General Zia’s followers wish to construct an experience of the nation that is coherent through homogenisation, and through imposing a more restrictive practice of religion as a model of national belonging. As I will argue, establishing this articulation of nationhood is very reliant on a particular telling of history. If, as Bhabha proposes, the narrative of the nation emerges between the performative and the pedagogic, in *Khamosh Pani* we see the nation emerge between locations that are in tension with one another. And as I will go on to argue, this tension is largely to do with how gendered histories are incorporated and understood.

**Situating Trauma**

Any discussion of trauma will undoubtedly refer to Freud as the field of trauma studies is indebted to his work. Although I am not taking a Freudian approach in my use of trauma, Freud’s concepts are crucial for developing the more political engagements of trauma theories that have stemmed from his initial proposals.\(^{83}\) As such the engagement with trauma that I develop and utilise here necessarily refers

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\(^{83}\) See LaCapra’s introduction to *Writing History and History in Transit* for a useful discussion on a use of psychoanalytic terms that does not entail a psychoanalytic approach. See Leys for a discussion of the development of trauma as a concept.
back to Freud whilst also departing from his work. I utilise Freudian approaches regarding trauma for what they can elucidate regarding the politics of national histories.

*Khamosh Pani* operates at the intersection of traumatic and narrative memory in terms of both structure and plot. In Freudian discussions of trauma, experience is not registered as it happens, and so it is not available to conscious recall. Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, in discussing the work of Pierre Janet, describe how frightening or novel experience resists assimilation as it ‘may not easily fit into existing cognitive schemes and either may be remembered with particular vividness or may totally resist integration.’ As traumatic experience cannot be accommodated, memory of it is stored differently and is not available for retrieval under ordinary conditions, it becomes dissociated from conscious awareness and voluntary control. As such traumatic memory and narrative memory must be understood as distinct (160). While narrative memory has a social function and can be communicated to others, the psyche has not made sense of traumatic memory. As E. Ann Kaplan and Ben Wang have argued, this emphasises traumatic memory as one that has no social component and has an automatic or evoked recall rather than a conscious one (170). Where trauma is that which defies articulation in narrative, precisely because it is traumatic, to narrativise trauma would be to undermine it. This crisis can often lead to a fixation on trauma as unrepresentable, as through representing trauma the trauma is undermined.

Where focussing on the unrepresentability of trauma may result in a stasis in terms of interrogating traumatic histories and their causes, there are equal risks in attempting to assimilate traumatic stories into coherent narratives. In response to this, many artists and critics look to non-linear narrative representations that can denote trauma through form rather than plot. Joshua Hirsch has argued that film needs to make a ‘textual compromise between the senselessness of the initial traumatic encounter and the sense-making apparatus of a fully integrated historical narrative’. For Hirsch this produces a post-traumatic cinema: one that uses form to mimic elements of post-traumatic consciousness (19). This results in the deployment of modernist forms that repeat the traumatic structure through rejecting realist forms that, through linear
representation, propose a sense of mastery over the past (3).\textsuperscript{84} Roger Luckhurst elaborates here in relation to the written medium by proposing that narrative must be used to reflect trauma within its structure, arguing that ‘because a traumatic event confounds narrative knowledge, the inherently narrative form of the novel must acknowledge this in different kinds of temporal disruption (88). In the case of the written and the filmic, trauma narratives do not simply represent trauma but incorporate it into their structure.\textsuperscript{85} This is precisely what I am arguing in relation to \textit{Khamosh Pani} – that its use of structural tools takes the viewer through a ruptured engagement with experience, history and context, which serves to offset premature understanding by insisting on the complexity of the contemporary setting. The form of the film with the flashbacks tempers the need for a textual compromise as it does not attempt to \textit{represent} trauma; instead, it \textit{recreates} elements of trauma through the flashback, and slow incremental revelation of the past.\textsuperscript{86} I will go on to argue that the film also \textit{refers} to trauma by maintaining gaps within its narrative and thus our knowledge of Ayesha’s past.

Debates within trauma studies have often focussed on this unrepresentability of the traumatic event, and the concern that full articulation of trauma would effectively diminish trauma. Kaplan and Wang critique this focus within trauma studies thus:

\begin{quote}
This isolation of a self-contained event and its trauma ignores the larger issues of systemic proportions and forces at work over a long stretch of history. There is much asking of what happened and how, but too few probes into why. The lack of historical perspective seems to underlie a major tendency that has varied manifestations in the academic study of trauma. This is the fixation on trauma as the ultimate limit of representation. (4)
\end{quote}

In this intervention Kaplan and Wang argue that the preoccupation with the limit of representation elides a discussion of history and systemic power dynamics. This is a critique echoed by historians such as Dominick LaCapra who warns against conflating historical and structural traumas. In his framing historical trauma is related

\textsuperscript{84} For further discussion on trauma form in visual media see Walker, and L. Williams, who discuss cinema and television respectively.

\textsuperscript{85} See A. Whitehead \textit{Trauma Fiction}, and also L. Vickroy for a consideration of trauma form in relation to fiction.

\textsuperscript{86} Luckhurst has discussed concerns from critics that warn of certain narrative tools becoming standard for communicating trauma. He has responded to this that rather than engaging with limited tools, we need to think of narrative possibility, i.e. what the text \textit{produces} rather than represents (89).
to specific events and contexts. Structural trauma on the other hand, is a condition of existence itself – an understanding of the trauma of separation from the mother, or the entry into language. Through conflating the two, historical trauma becomes indiscriminate and generalised due to the proposal that everyone is a victim or a survivor (*Writing History* 77). Furthermore, if all individuals are victims or survivors of trauma through their very existence, this precludes any understanding of trauma (and therefore traumatic events) as avoidable. Where history is not engaged with closely, and traumatic events only understood insofar as they defy understanding, the systemic causes and effects of trauma are ignored in the service of more ontological debates. LaCapra thus insists that the focus on trauma and usage of psychoanalytic concepts should not ‘become a pretext for avoiding economic, social, and political issues’ (*Writing History* ix).

My argument in relation to *Khamosh Pani* engages closely with the stances of these critics, and I will posit that the film juxtaposes an individual story with political contexts in a way that foregrounds historical and systemic power dynamics in relation to gender and geography. The film utilises the tropes of trauma to create a particular viewing experience that points to the power structures at play across history, using the mode of trauma in order to represent history and engage with repressed memory. Although the character of Ayesha is our main protagonist, the film does not individualise her, we are reminded that her experiences although very much her own, are not unique to her. When Ayesha’s brother Jeswant comes to Charkhi on the Sikh pilgrimage, he makes enquiries about women who were left behind at Partition in the hope of finding her. He asks this generally and gets the response ‘there is no such woman here’. That ‘such’ a woman exists points to a type of woman (one that was left behind) that emerged through the conditions of Partition. Experiences at Partition were so widespread that it would be reductive to individualise them and the film makes sure to incorporate this through references to another character’s (Amin) daughter (Meena) who was lost at the time of Partition. The references to Meena throughout serve to remind us that although Ayesha is in fact one ‘such’ woman whose story deserves focus, hers is not the only story and the film is not offering a homogenising representation. Ayesha’s story is located within the particular circumstances of Partition but this time also featured Meena and many others whose stories demand respect; therefore her story is very much situated within political history. As I have argued in relation to *Stories of the Broken Self* where the
risk of individualising through testimonial structure is resisted through an explicit political contextualisation, the risk of individualising through the traumatic structure in *Khamosh Pani* is also resisted.

As J. Hirsch has argued, trauma has the potential to be a social phenomenon, one that is exemplified in both individual psychology and public discourse (18). Although trauma may exist at the site of the individual, it does not mean that it is contained within the individual. Ayesha’s trauma is juxtaposed with national trauma – a trauma on the socio-political landscape as well as an individualised state. The structure of the film means that trauma is engaged with as larger – that is, not belonging to a character but to the viewing process, to the state of politics more broadly. In this sense, historical perspective is paramount even though subtly stated. There are many moments in the film where historicity is insisted upon, for example Amin showing Ayesha the newspaper headline that declares the hanging of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; the close of the film where General Musharraf is interviewed on the radio in the background of Zubeida’s apartment, speaking of the ‘war on terror’. Each of these moments situates the film’s narrative both in time and politics, while also pointing to the personal and political traumas that come of history. In this sense, *Khamosh Pani* participates in the mediation of the ‘why’ of trauma that Kaplan and Wang point to. The use of three time frames in the film means that through exploring the ‘why’ in the present an understanding of ‘why’ in the past is provoked.

The risk of depoliticisation associated with trauma studies is countered in the film through these locations, the flashback structure insisting that trauma is considered as personal precisely because it is impacted on by the political, and as such the two cannot be separated.\(^{87}\) I want to argue that we can read the flashbacks in a particular way – that is as reflective of a collective trauma. This trauma is told through Ayesha’s story as it is her story that exemplifies the trauma at the site of the nation.\(^{88}\)

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\(^{87}\) In the film we are encouraged to understand the political through the impacts on the personal: politics has its effects on people in terms of ideology and not just materiality. The characters in the film seem to try and exist with an insistence of the two remaining in separate spheres, perhaps because of how the political has negatively impacted on their lives before. However, this is shown to be a futile effort as the political repeatedly imposes on the personal.

\(^{88}\) I want to be clear here that I am not using Ayesha to allegorise the nation, but rather argue that her individual story tells us something about the nation.
As such, there are patterns of nationhood that become exposed when we read from the margins through the tools of trauma.

**Mourning and Melancholia, Acting Out and Working Through**

A consideration of the Freudian notions of mourning, melancholia, acting out and working through is enlightening in this respect. What becomes clear through an engagement with Freud is that mourning and melancholia are very much to do with loss, whereas trauma is to do with fright. Freud argues that central to our understanding of fright is surprise; without surprise we would be dealing with fear, and the apprehension of fear allows the psyche to prepare itself (“Beyond the Pleasure Principle” 31). It is surprise, then, that means the psyche is unprepared, which effects trauma. In the case of Partition we see a juxtaposition of loss and trauma. As outlined in the thesis Introduction, Partition was a time when territory was lost (through the process of parting or being parted from). Individuals were also parted from one another as well as their national selves and geographical histories. Furthermore, as pointed to in Chapter Two, there is a loss of self that was incurred at Partition, and also in many cases the loss of a pre- or non-traumatised self. In terms of national trauma, the accelerated incitement to violence that imploded during the time meant that Partition did not unfold as was hoped or anticipated, as such how the events proceeded were a surprise, and largely a violent one. Loss and trauma are thus both relevant to Partition, as are the psychic responses they incur.

While most of my discussion will focus on trauma, it is useful to use the framework of loss when considering Ayesha’s relationship to her previous life. For Freud, mourning is a psychic process whereby the libido is gradually detached from a lost object, and melancholia the enduring devotion of the ego to this lost object. In this sense, melancholia is a never ending mourning, expressed through an inability to resolve or let go of the grief, and is detrimental to the wellbeing of the ego. Detaching from the lost object fixes it temporally by leaving it in the past; this act of complete withdrawal also requires that the object be completely defined in order to be detached from. As such, the resolution that can be achieved through mourning depends on a level of definition and temporal containment that can be attained through narrative. Conversely, melancholia is characterised by an ongoing

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89 For more discussion and application of these Freudian themes see the essays in Eng (ed). For a discussion of marginal identity in relation to mourning see Crimp and also Ricciardi.
attachment to the lost object, and as such what is lost, what is past, continues to exist in the present and impacts negatively on the subject, or the melancholic. However, this presence has a spectral quality as it cannot be entirely defined or known, knowing the loss is a step within the mourning process that must be achieved through narrative. As such melancholia is a form of contradiction, an ongoing attachment to something that cannot entirely be known (“Mourning and Melancholia” 244-6). In relation to Ayesha, loss operates on several levels, but most pertinently she has been separated from her Sikh past. In relation to this I argue that she has effectively mourned this loss and detached from her past self, though she maintains this self as important through keeping objects that are related to her past Sikh identity in a suitcase. The case becomes a literal and symbolic container of her individual but also collective past. Her past becomes represented by objects, items that can be known, but also contained thus preventing them from impeding on the present. Ayesha keeps this case locked but regularly opens and peruses the contents, pointing towards how the case comes to act as a memorial of her past life, her perusing of its contents part of her own personal commemorative practice. As such this commemoration evidences the work of mourning undertaken at an individual level; Ayesha’s past remains important to her, signified through her return to the suitcase, but the containment offered by the suitcase demonstrates the labour she is doing to temporally fix her past identity and acknowledge it as lost.

A work of mourning can be understood as ensuring that the lost object does not impede on the present, but is also dependent on knowing the lost object, a knowledge resisted by melancholia and also by trauma. As discussed earlier, much theorisation of trauma discusses its unknowability – an understanding that its extremity renders it unregistered by consciousness. However, critiques of this stance insist that we contextualise trauma and that it is possible to do this without diminishing an engagement with the traumatic impact of an event. In so doing LaCapra has expanded on and politicised the Freudian notions of acting out and working through, in relation to trauma and temporality. For LaCapra, post-traumatic acting out, or the

90 Thanks to Mike Upton for this insight.

91 Freud also notes that detaching from the lost object enables the subject to exist fully in the world. Through mourning one becomes aware that what is lost no longer exists, and therefore one detaches from what is lost in order to continue existing oneself (“Mourning and Melancholia” 255, 257). In this sense, effective mourning signifies a commitment to life and survival, a commitment we see Ayesha express.
compulsion to repeat, are reflected in the implosion of tenses. Alternatively, working through trauma entails an ‘articulatory’ move whereby events become temporally located. One becomes able to distinguish between past and present and recall events that happened, realising all the while that one is living in the present with movement into the future. This working through, LaCapra posits, can be understood as countering acting out and the repetition compulsion (Writing History 21-22).

LaCapra goes on to argue that memory work can assist people in distinguishing between what happened back then, which is related but not identical to, now (Writing History 66). In these terms, working through means situating oneself within a linear temporality where the past is understood to be the past. Although this past may have produced the present, it does not rupture it. Acting out occurs when the past is not rendered past and can continue to pervade the present. It is not only allowed to effect the present but becomes an active part of the present through the compulsion to repeat. Distinguishing between past and present with a movement into the future suggests linear time where one understands one’s position within this. This is subtly distinct from mourning however, as working through does not require that the event be known, but that it be temporally located. In many ways this engages with the challenge of trauma theory to formulate how to leave trauma behind without undermining it. It can still be a paradox but one that is past, but to be put in the past it must be acknowledged.

Paul Antze and Michael Lambek echo this analysis by positing that sufferers of trauma are condemned to repeat their stories over and over until the work of interpretation is begun (xix). Repeating stories can be equated with acting out, and interpretation with working through. For LaCapra, Antze, and Lambek, key to working through is to note patterns of the past and how they repeat. Also crucial is to distinguish between what is past and what is present, at what point these are collapsing in perception, and what role we play in keeping the past alive (Antze and Lambek xxvii). The memory work required is that of telling the story of the lost object or the traumatic moment. What emerges in these debates is the importance of narrative in facilitating the shifts from melancholia to mourning and acting out to working through. This narrative can either take the shape of temporal situatedness, or that of definition and containment. Considering Partition in relation to these ideas reminds us that loss, mourning and melancholia on the one hand, and trauma, acting out and working through on the other, can operate at the site of the individual and the
site of the collective, which in this case is the nation. As I have pointed out, the insistence on context regarding Ayesha’s story means that the sites of individual and collective cannot be separated out. What I want to propose is that a resistance to working through at the site of the nation triggers acting out at the site of the individual. I argue that the film begins by showing us how Ayesha is effectively working through her individual trauma, but the nation’s inability to recognise her history means that this working through is effectively sabotaged. She may exist in the present and locate herself there, but the national narrative refuses to make space for her in its story, thus leaving her with limited options.

As discussed in the thesis Introduction, for Freud trauma causes a break in the mind’s experience of time. This results in a latency within experience, a time when the effects of the experience are not apparent. In this sense, it is first experienced through a gap, or through forgetting. The return of experience in the form of flashbacks and hallucinations, is the mind’s attempt to grasp what it could not grasp at the actual time of occurrence. For Cathy Caruth it is this delay that is central to an engagement with Freud’s insight into trauma, for it is the belatedness that is both the impact of a traumatic event and proof of the event as traumatic. Trauma is not a single temporal experience of an event as its traumatic force is assumed through its temporal delay (“Trauma and Experience” 9). This focus on the primacy of temporality provides an ideal entry point into discussions of the film, for as already outlined Khamosh Pani’s most overt articulation of trauma is within its temporally overlapping sepia sections. In Caruth’s words:

trauma is not experienced as a mere repression or defense, but as a temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment. The trauma is repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site. (“Trauma and Experience” 10)

This consideration furthers our engagement as it highlights the psyche’s self-defence and the potential agency that can be found within the repeat of the traumatic moment in Khamosh Pani. Within Ayesha’s sepia flashbacks what is being recalled is her near-death experience, but also her escape. These considerations bring a focus on to Ayesha as a survivor and the agency she employed in escaping her father. Exploring this further we can note that the threat to life that she escapes is one constructed by her father within the climate of communal violence. His actions here, of successfully encouraging her mother and sister to jump into the well, and of unsuccessfully
forcing Ayesha, or Veero as she was then known, were a form of protection. This is protection of the women from potential Muslim captors and violators, and by association protection of his family honour. Ayesha’s escape here not only claims agency for herself but refuses the patriarchal protection that requires her death. She not only escapes the threat to life but challenges the validity of this threat to have existed in the first place. The flashbacks to this threat on her life also operate as reminders of her escape and survival. As viewers, the intermittent sections emphasise her survival and how she has successfully built a life for herself.

The film’s structure honours trauma through maintaining gaps and absences and making the viewer partake in the disruption and slow gleaning of information caused by the flashbacks. The integration of the flashbacks warrants in-depth analysis. They have become ubiquitous in relation to representations of trauma and we can glean much from a close reading. The flashbacks themselves are short and interspersed throughout the narrative of 1979. Though they disrupt the viewing experience and story of 1979, they are not shown to be disruptive for Ayesha. The sepia sections are cut to when she is staring into the distance or about to go to sleep, they do not seem to invade her. Though the sections come in a number of times when the well is mentioned, these moments do not seem to trigger Ayesha as they are not disruptive, rather they prompt her to think about her past. Ayesha’s conscious decision to stay away from the well suggests that she knows her history in relation to the well and does not want to be in its vicinity through daily trips to collect water. This all points to how Ayesha is working through her past, temporally situating it in order to engage with her present. This working through is also exemplified by the first two flashbacks that visually centre on the well, as they are narrativised by Ayesha. She is able to talk about 1947 with an element of distance, suggesting that she maintains control over how she engages with her past. The first flashback has a voiceover that states ‘Summer days in 1947 seemed so much hotter. How could we know it would be forever?’ And the second one that outlines:

92 Luckhurst’s discussion of the flashback uses the television film Sybil to highlight how embedded the use of flashbacks has become as a cinematic tool. From the high art of Hiroshima Mon Amour, to the television movie twenty years later, he proposes that it is hard to consider the presence of flashbacks as not being self-consciously used.

93 I have argued elsewhere that the visual use of the well refers to the original site of trauma; see Saeed.
Two countries were born. Men abducted women. Fathers killed their daughters. Everyone said it was to save their honour. Some young girls died. Others survived. People moved like the sea, leaving everything behind. Broken memories, half-dreamt dreams, places of worship.

These two sections provide a general introduction to Partition but do not touch upon Ayesha’s personal experience. Subsequent flashbacks directly engage with Ayesha’s own experience of 1947 and reveal her story slowly; they are not narrativised and the picture of Ayesha’s experience at Partition remains incomplete. Through the very form of flashbacks what is being referred to is located in the past. That there are gaps in what is revealed and in what we are told, suggests that the experiences being referred to are temporally located but not fully known. In this sense Ayesha can be understood as working through while simultaneously not being able to commit trauma to narrative. Furthermore, an early shot of the well shows dust blowing around it, almost entirely obscuring the well from view (see figure 3.1). Where the well acts as a motif of the violence of 1947, this suggests that the violence is concealed, not fully known, or cannot be fully represented.

(Figure 3.1: The village well obscured by dust)

Although Ayesha’s Sikh past is known to many of her generation, it is never spoken about and her avoidance of the well is an accepted fact, (though it is unclear whether anyone is aware of the reasons for this avoidance or what the well represents to her). This does not hinder her access to water as Allabi and daughter Shanno fetch it for her on their daily trips. Our engagement with Ayesha at the start of the film is of someone who is settled and valued in her community. As contemporary events come to mirror those she lived through in 1947, this working through is slowly undone as her community ties erode. As her Sikh past is discovered and considered
incompatible with the Islam and public politics being promoted by Rashid, Salim makes demands of honour on her through asking that she declare her Islamic faith and renounce her Sikh past publicly. Allabi and Shanno no longer come to fetch water for Ayesha (forbidden by Allabi’s husband) so she must go to the well herself. It is here at the well that the nature of the flashbacks shifts. Instead of Ayesha narrativising the flashbacks, as the sepia fades we hear Ayesha in the present talk along with Ayesha in the flashback as she says ‘no, not me’, and runs away from her father and the well. In this moment past and present cease to be distinct, and the separation between Ayesha is 1979 and in 1947 becomes blurred. The past is being uncontrollably relived and as LaCapra argues regarding acting out, Ayesha is experientially back in the event, reliving something she was not prepared for (Writing History 89-90). For LaCapra this experience:

haunts or possesses the self, is acted out or compulsively repeated, and may not be adequately symbolized or accessible in language, at least in any critically mediated, controlled, self-reflexive manner. Words may be uttered but seem to repeat what was said then and function as speech acts wherein speech itself is possessed or haunted by the past and acts as a reenactment or an acting out (Writing History 90).

On Ayesha’s return to the well she begins to relive the past where previously she had maintained a narrative distance from it. The element of working through that considers one as able to project oneself into the future also collapses here: rather than being able to envisage a future for herself Ayesha later returns to the well to jump in, to complete the threat to her life that she had previously escaped and thus end her futurity. I will return to this later in the chapter to argue that this ‘triggering’ does not simply occur because she has had to go to the well, but because of the conditions that have led her there; the conditions being the repetitive cycle of the nation’s public politics. What becomes clear through this is that Ayesha has not avoided the well because she fears the well itself, but because she fears being in the well. When Ayesha returns to the well, the possibility of being inside it returns (when avoiding the well, this possibility is diminished). This possibility returns due to her current situation where Allabi will no longer fetch water for her; as such the possibility does not reside in the well itself but in Ayesha and her situation – specifically that she is now isolated from her community. Although the context may be different, the repetitive cycle of politics means the well’s possibility in 1979 becomes the same as it was in 1947. That this possibility increases over the course of the film is reflected

94 Thanks to Anastasia Valassopoulos for this insight.
in how the well as a motif recurs. At the start of the film we see the well in context, in it surroundings, but as the film moves on we are shown the water in the well, or the well’s interior (see figure 3.2), suggesting the possibility of being in it. Ayesha’s current circumstances can be understood as the result of acting out at the level of national politics, whereby the gendered conditions of 1947 repeat within the village. This counters her own labour of working through, resulting in the traumatic repeat of the past for her on an individual level.

(Figure 3.2: The well’s interior)

**Narrating Silence**

Didur has noted that silence around women’s history is the price paid for acceptance in the community. In her reading of Veena Das’ work with women who had lived through Partition, she discusses how one woman was able to socially forget her past experiences; society allowed her to be a woman whose life could unfurl, who had a future (Didur 145). This is reminiscent of LaCapra’s ideas of projecting oneself into the future, and is characteristic of working through trauma. Didur comments that this permissiveness of society is at the price of her silence and denial of her experience; in order to project herself forward, she must follow patriarchal expectations. In *Khamosh Pani* we see how the political public demands that Ayesha’s story remains silent and forgotten. When it is revealed her future collapses, she cannot continue within her community and jumps into the well. These formulations taken together again suggest that, to be able to project oneself forward as an individual, one must have the permission of one’s context. What Didur and Das outline is that this projection comes at a cost. We see a similar pattern emerging in *Khamosh Pani* in relation to silence and how Partition is remembered. Silence about Ayesha’s past is also silence about the incidents that befell women. The silence can be understood as
a larger concern regarding how Partition and its associated violence is commemorated. What occurs, and as I will show, Ayesha’s individual working through poses a challenge to the attempts to construct a cohesive national narrative around the events of Partition. As such, space is not made within both political and personal publics for her story to exist on her terms, emphasising that there is much at stake in her narrative.

Didur argues persuasively for a focus on women’s stories, proposing that the silences and ambiguities within their stories need to be understood as women’s ‘inability to subsume their experiences within the project of patriarchal modernity that has produced them in the first place.’ She goes on to posit that women’s narratives actually disrupt totalising accounts of Partition (11). Where patriarchal modernity has caused violence and dislocation for women, it also upholds the conditions by which their stories cannot be heard, for these stories hold within them the threat of disruption. The totalising accounts that Didur mentions are those relied upon by patriarchal modernity, and created by patriarchal modernity to mask its responsibilities. In short, patriarchal modernity covers its tracks through disallowing the conditions whereby women’s stories may find their own forms of articulation. In this sense, following Chandra Mohanty in Feminism Without Borders, it is the task of the feminist critic to ensure that these articulations are identified.

The silence in women’s narratives exists at the site of the individual and also the site of the collective/social where the national body must find ways to control stories such as Ayesha’s. Veena Das has pointed to the articulation of this need through the discourse of recovery. As argued by Das and Didur, recovery of abducted women was a significant drive by the new nation-states of India and Pakistan. In Das’ discussion, the figure of the abducted woman becomes the site whereby the state exerts and forms itself. This is achieved through returning women to their families and reinstating a correct kinship (21). The new nations established a social contract that recognised the suffering of women only insofar as it could be a symbol to which the state could respond (37). Connecting Das’ analysis to the tropes of trauma and my reading of Khamosh Pani demonstrates how women’s traumatic experiences are co-opted by the state as the state establishes itself. In other words, the state establishes itself through co-opting the traumatic experiences of women. Where deaths of perpetrators and women’s suicide become framed as heroic, women’s
attempts to build life into the future are terminated by the demands of the state’s development. Women were often returned to family members who did not want them, or parted from abductors with whom they had now settled and were successfully rebuilding their lives.

Didur has argued that the silence that exists around the violence of abduction means that women are required to ‘re-narrativize their relationship to the state, community, and their own identities’ to make sense of how violence marks their bodies. This negotiation is necessary for survival. For Didur, literature can point to the discourses available to the subject and the specificity of the limits of what can be known about their experience (11-12). In the film we are left not completely sure of what happened to Ayesha in 1947, yet what we do see is an Ayesha who had negotiated survival in relation to the nation, community and identity. By the end of the film this has crumbled, prompted by her history being spoken about. We come to see how silence facilitates her negotiation of survival, whereas public knowledge means she becomes isolated. In addition, Ayesha’s act of jumping into the well ensures that the silence around Veero remains. As Zubeida says in a voiceover towards the end of the film, ‘this is how Veero left and Ayesha stayed behind’.

Ayesha’s isolation is starkly reflected in her death, the wide shot showing the well in its empty surroundings. All around her is still with no evidence of people (see figure 3.3). The shot shows Ayesha from behind, also taking away the individuality of her face from the shot. As she jumps this is less of an individualised moment than an isolated moment, the wide shot also suggesting towards the broader contextual significance of her decision. This also encourages the viewer to imagine Ayesha alongside many other women; through this framing she comes to stand in for many others whose lives have been affected in similar ways. Before jumping there is also a shot of the inside of the well, for the first time it is not in sepia, reflecting alongside her jumping, that history has come to the present (see figure 3.4).

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95 See Spivak In Other Worlds, in particular “A Literary Representation of the Subaltern” for a discussion of the ‘loneliness of the gendered subaltern’ (350), which is a way to engage with women’s experiences of marginalisation.
Ayesha’s refusal to declare her faith publicly points towards her own awareness of the failure of discourse to do justice to her situation. I argue that instead of adhering to the claims being asserted over her in relation to the speech act of declaring herself, she claims action over her own life, and refuses to speak in the dominant terms of representation. In relation to the discussion above on silences, this adds another dimension in that she articulates her agency through claiming silence in 1979, as well

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96 This is reminiscent of Spivak’s much discussed essay “Can the Subaltern Speak”, which has generated many divergent interpretations regarding her argument of women’s agency. I refer to the end of the essay where she discusses Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri’s suicide, and the agency inscribed in her decision to end her life while menstruating so the action would not be ascribed to an assumed pregnancy. However, interpretations of Bhaduri’s decision co-opted her suicide into dominant narratives that read her decision as connected to ‘illicit love’. My own interpretation is that by citing this case Spivak makes the point that it is not an absence of agency on the part of women, but a refusal to read agency in their acts that renders them silent.
as the film’s structure honouring the silence around her experiences of 1947. Critics such as Didur have warned against the desire to recover women’s experience in the service of broadening our understanding of history. She rightly identifies the risk of turning women into informants who allow a particular and comfortable remembering of the past. This, Didur insists, takes us away from the exploration of women’s experience as a way to disrupt ‘past and present hegemonic definitions of national identity’ (131). To use women’s narratives to facilitate an easy remembering would be to co-opt their stories. We need to sit with the discomfort of the stories and see what they are telling us about the national, to see what they are disrupting. Rather than looking at the stories as though they can be completed and narrativised easily, we need to pay heed to the gaps.

The move to fill silence regarding women’s stories is shown to have violent consequences in the film, through Amin allowing Ayesha’s past to make its way into the village’s public. Amin’s experience of losing his first wife and daughter in the Partition, while creating an affinity with Ayesha, also positions him in opposition to her. His desire can be seen as mirroring that of the nation to reinstate ‘correct’ kinship structures. When Jeswant arrives in Charkhi and asks around after his sister who was ‘left behind’, Amin consults his wife Shabbo, wondering whether he should inform Jeswant of Ayesha’s whereabouts:

Shabbo: Tell her. Let her decide.
Amin: It’s dangerous.
S: It’s not the end of the world if they meet.
A: People are watching Ayesha. One wrong move could bring trouble.
S: If he keeps asking questions there’ll be trouble anyway. It’s better if she knows.
A: It’s not right.
S: Then what is?
A: How should I know? But I know their pain.
S: Whatever you do, do it for Meena’s sake.

Here Amin can clearly be seen to be identifying with Jeswant while also understanding what is at stake for Ayesha. However, identification affects how he judges the situation and he goes to find Jeswant without asking or warning Ayesha.

Furthermore Ayesha is referred to as ‘the one who doesn’t go to the well’ by villagers when Jeswant wants to find her. She is defined by her trauma or her avoidance of a reminder of the trauma. She is also defined as ‘left behind’ by Jeswant although her actual story is not one of being left whereby the action lies with those leaving, but is one of running away from honour violence, where instead she was active. The term ‘left behind’ thus denies her agency and assimilates her story into a particular narrative even as she tries to claim it as her own.

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He does not prioritise the risks there are for Ayesha, and rather than thinking of Meena, as Shanno asks him to, thinks of his relation to Meena. As a result of this Jeswant finds Ayesha prompting an escalated unravelling of her sense of belonging in the village. The silence that is needed here for Ayesha’s survival is not honoured by Amin, he is instead motivated by his desire to reinstate a ‘correct kinship’ that he has also lost.

When Jeswant finds Ayesha to speak with her he asks her to leave Pakistan with him to see their father who is on his deathbed. Jeswant implores her, stating that their father wishes to die in peace and wishes to see her one last time. Ayesha refuses and in one of the most affecting scenes of the film states:

Ayesha: What do you want after all these years? What do you want?
Jeswant: Father is dying. He wants to see you one more time.
A: So he can finish the job? Wasn’t killing mother and Jeeto enough?
J: He just wants to die in peace.
A: He wanted to kill me for his peace. What will he do if he sees me alive and a Muslim? How will he go to his Sikh heaven? And what heaven is there for me? A Sikh heaven or a Muslim heaven? You were happy to think I was dead. But I’m alive. I made my own life without you. Now this is my life and my home. Go away. Leave me as I am.
J: Veero.
A: Go. Go back.

In this rebuttal of Jeswant’s request Ayesha also refuses the authority of the patriarchal demands that are being made of her, as she did in 1947. The request of her father suggests that Ayesha returning to her biological family will provide some peace to him. The request by their father to see her one last time is framed as benevolent as though not only is the past done but should be forgotten as temporary insanity, or necessary behaviour given the context at the time. Yet in this scene the past stands between Ayesha and Jeswant, symbolised through their positions on either side of the well (figure 3.5). Where the well is a motif for the violence of 1947 in the film, Partition stands between them. The framing of this shot emphasises this, for rather than showing Ayesha and Jeswant in a shot reverse shot as is the classic way to indicate dialogue, when Ayesha speaks we see the well and Jeswant’s side. Both Jeswant and their father assert claims on Ayesha without honouring the person she has become, and the way she has made a life for herself that heads towards the future. Ayesha’s return to her father would indeed reinstate a ‘correct’ kinship but at the cost of the loss of her current self and the working through of trauma she has been doing. In this case Jeswant’s knowledge of Ayesha’s past provokes more
demands to be made of her. Jeswant’s interests here are not to do with her or her survival. Her history and story are instead required for the peace of others.

(Figure 3.5: Ayesha and Jeswant with the well between them)

The peripheral story of Meena adds into the narrativisation of silence that the film constructs. We can glean that she was Amin’s daughter and that Amin lost both daughter and wife during Partition. Amin cycles the daughter he has with Shabbo to and from school; he does not explain why but stubbornly and stoically does so every day without fail, suggesting towards the anxiety he feels when she is unsupervised. Veiled comments between Amin and Ayesha suggest an affinity between them due to their experiences of 1947. What happened to Amin’s family is not directly spoken about but the events still pervade the present in their silence. We do not know what happened to Amin’s first wife and Meena, yet it is clear how grief affects Amin and also his relationship with Shabbo. Through maintaining the silence around this story Khamosh Pani emphasises how much the everyday is underpinned by these unspoken stories. We may not come to know what happened to Amin’s family, but we are shown how whatever did happen continues to have effects.

The plot of Khamosh Pani reveals what is at stake when silence is countered, and what damage can be done. The structure maintains silence that is testament to the trauma experienced by Ayesha and women like her and ultimately respects her story. In the flashbacks that refer to what happened after she escaped her father we see her dragged into a dark room by a group of men. In a subsequent flashback she is slapped and called infidel by one man, but Afsaan intervenes and encourages her to eat; he then suggests they should marry. There is a gap between when she is captured and when she is told she will marry and all that is revealed is that she was kept in a
dark room – made clear as she is shown blinking and adjusting to the light as the
door is opened. While Afsaan makes the suggestion of marriage gently, we do not
know what preceded it.\textsuperscript{98} Ayesha’s flashbacks do not tell us or take us there, perhaps
suggesting that the lacuna is representative of a traumatic moment. The fragmented
and incomplete way in which we learn of how Veero becomes Ayesha thus honours
the trauma of this transition – we know the time was traumatic but we do not know
what specifically about it was. In this way I suggest that the film resists assimilating
Ayesha’s story by engaging in telling Ayesha’s story of 1947 while also honouring
the traumatic nature of it through leaving it incomplete (in the sense that traumatic
histories cannot be fully known).

\textbf{National Repetition Compulsion}

The discussion thus far regarding the honouring of silences does not mean to suggest
that there should be silence around women’s experience in general but to understand
the conditions by which silence is necessary for survival in these cases. As outlined,
women’s stories become co-opted by national narratives that seek to use them for the
establishment of the masculinist state. Exposing a woman as abducted can make her
vulnerable to discourses of recovery that do not operate in her best interests. In this
sense, silence around her experience is safety. In terms of national narratives a
repetitive pattern emerges whereby women’s stories are being used in the service of
discourses such as protection and recovery. When Ayesha’s history is exposed,
Rashid does not want to deny it nor move on from it, he and the others want to
control it. The demand made on Ayesha that she must declare her faith publicly
evidences that as a woman and mother she can be understood to carry the role of
what John Armstrong has called a ‘symbolic border guard’: a carrier of culture
(cited in Yuval-Davis 23). Her role as such means that Ayesha transmits cultural
mores to her children; if then she is considered culturally inappropriate or acting in
opposition to the nation then this will also affect Salim and suggest that Salim is a
cultural threat. As Rashid says to him ‘Blood ties are stronger. Your faith may waver
[…] If someone suspects you tomorrow, how can we say that you’re right and they’re
wrong?’ If Ayesha does not declare her faith and thus prove commitment to Pakistan
then Salim’s commitment is also in doubt. In response to Ayesha’s refusal to bend to

\textsuperscript{98} S. Khan’s reading of the film repeatedly suggests that Ayesha was subject to sexual violence
(“Floating” 131, 137, 138, 145), which I think is epistemic violence, as it fills in the film with a
supposition instead of considering what the lacuna might suggest.
the demands that she prove her faith and commitment to Pakistan, Salim tells her she has left him ‘no choice’. To defend her name and prove himself he hunts down Jeswant with a mob who chant ‘bring us the infidel who looks at our women’. As the mob moves through the market towards the Sikh temple, Salim is at the front brandishing a gun. Before the mob move back through the market the motif of the well appears, specifically a sepia shot of the inside of the well, suggesting that Jeswant has been killed. The scene then cuts to the Sikh temple in darkness and silence, then to Salim praying alone at the mosque repeatedly prostrating as though in penance. Hunting down Jeswant ultimately proves his kinship to the nation and consolidates his belonging to the group where that belonging had been in doubt. It is a belonging and kinship that is forged in violence.  

Furthermore, taking control of Ayesha’s past and reframing it in a particular way co-opts her narrative, it is not denied but it is taken control of. Robert Jay Lifton has stated that: ‘recovery from post-traumatic effects, or from survivor conflicts, cannot really occur until that traumatized self is reintegrated’ (Caruth “An Interview” 137). Taking this alongside LaCapra’s assertions regarding the concept of working through, we can understand that working through requires that one be temporally located, or that the traumatised self be reintegrated into time. Broadening this I want to suggest that the traumatised self also needs to be reintegrated into nation-time. That is so say the traumatised self needs to be incorporated into the nation’s history: textbooks and other official narratives, in order for there to be successful working through. As outlined, Ayesha’s flashbacks make a case for her successful temporal location, however the lack of engagement and respect to her story within the collective public suggests that recovery is not being enabled at the site of the nation. This suggests that work needs to be done on integrating women’s experience into the national narrative in a way that does justice to the experience and more effectively commemorates Partition on the national level. As pointed out, if a history is not temporally located and narrativised it has the potential to repeat or ‘act out’, and

Das also discusses how a crowd develops kinship through violence and that ‘brotherhood here is created solely through the obligation to kill’ (106). However, Salim’s entry into this kinship can be seen to be a conflicted one. There is much to say about Salim and his conflict in the film, and what the appeal of nationalism provides him, but that is beyond the scope of this chapter. It is pertinent to note however, that the film complicates how we might understand and engage with religious nationalisms in the film. While the Lahoris are framed in a negative light, Salim is a more complex and sympathetic case. Indeed before the scene where the mob descends on the Sikh temple, we are shown Salim throwing his religious pamphlets into the water and aiming the gun at them. His first instinct is to shoot the pamphlets, not Jeswant.
indeed counter individual working through. Indeed this repetition of the tropes of Partition is shown to emerge across several realms in the film, namely communalism and the associated gendered honour debate, the nation in global context and the intranation space. As argued, Ayesha’s story signifies the systemic gendered violence of a time, and it is this history that the national narrative is repeating, suggesting that it will be compelled to repeat such instances until the story of violence is done justice to. Discourses of protection and recovery are one such example of a gendered discourse repeating itself in a different context.

Veer argues that Partition and independence did not solve the communalism caused by the divide and rule tactics of the colonial state. Instead, the problem ‘is perpetuated under the neo-colonial conditions of late capitalism’ (194). Therefore the repeat of communal violence emphasises the ongoing legacy of colonial influence and the repeat of the concerns of independence - resistance to the imposition of Western modernity. As Veer argues, religious nationalisms come to be the ideal way to resist western enlightenment ideals that the nation state can only be modern when secular (195-6). In this sense it is no surprise that in trying to assert its identity as a nation on the global stage, it returns to religious definition. This in turn stems from colonial divide and rule tactics and the two-nation theory of Pakistan’s conception, both key in developing the communal attitudes we see resurface towards the end of the film. The animosity of Rashid and by association Salim and Zubair, to Sikh pilgrims is evidenced through ‘jokes’ such as ‘which creature loves Sikhs the most? ... Hair lice!’, and Salim’s extreme reaction when Ayesha is seen to be sending the pilgrims sweets. As well as echoing the communal violence of Partition, it is this climate that constructs Ayesha’s past as intolerable. Indeed Ayesha becomes suspect to General Zia’s followers even before her past is uncovered due to her tolerance of those of other religions and her liberal Sufi teachings of Islam. The distinction between her Sufi teachings and the mass male religion is made stark in the cut between a scene where Zubeida and Ayesha pray at the Sufi shrine to the mosque where men punch their fists into the air en masse (see figures 3.6 & 3.7). Throughout the film the politicised men from Lahore comment on how the nation has lost its way, and how a re-commitment to Islam will put it back on the right track. The anxieties that generated Partition, that is the anxieties of forging a territorialised collective identity, are still very present though their contextual framings are distinct.
The language of honour and protection that is being deployed by Rashid and Salim is also reminiscent of 1947. Both function in the service of patriarchal ends and not the needs of women. The demands being made on Ayesha are repetitive: in 1947 we see Ayesha’s father wanting her to jump into the well to save his honour, and then in 1979 Salim wanting her to publicly declare her Muslim faith to save his reputation. The repetition of women’s roles in this paradigm is central and we see the repeat of women as symbols and repositories of community honour. Later into the film comes another significant scene where Rashid, Zubair, Salim and others arrive at the girls’ school with bricks and mortar. With a declaration of how they must protect their women they begin to raise the wall. Each brick is laid slowly and deliberately, one man picks up the brick, another holds the cement, again the show of them building the wall is performance, performance of protection that is in fact their show of masculine might. As the wall is built, a shot reverse shot shows Salim and Zubeida...
making eye contact across the wall (see figures 3.8 & 3.9). Salim then places a brick in his line of sight (see figure 3.10) suggesting the ability for borders to be built through the refusal to look beyond them.

(Figure 3.8: shot of Zubeida...)

(Figure 3.9: ...reverse shot of Salim)

(Figure 3.10: Salim places a brick in his line of sight)
The scene at the school mirrors that of an earlier scene at a wedding where the flimsy curtains between the men’s and women’s sections are easily and playfully transgressed. The boundary between men and women is flimsy (made of fabric) and see-through so does not impede vision as the bricks do at the school (see figure 3.11). Furthermore, at the wedding Mehboob can actually pass through the screen (see figure 3.12) and we see through the screen to both sides dancing. In these scenes we also see Zubeida pulling the screen aside to peek at Salim, expressing the possibility and willingness for the borders to be less solid.

(Figure 3.11: Curtain separating the men’s and women’s areas at the wedding)

(Figure 3.12: Mehboob emerges through the flimsy curtain)

This building of the wall at the school also points toward the repeats in the demarcation of space that are occurring: the borders drawn at Partition that create nation space, to the borders being drawn within Charkhi in 1979. Space continues to be contested, within the nation and of the nation. This also acts symbolically, with

100 Thanks to Ananya Kabir for this insight.
Ayesha being asked not to go to Shabbo’s daughter’s wedding because of the intrigue around her and the suspicion felt towards her by General Zia’s followers. In this case certain spaces become closed off to Ayesha as an individual, representing how she does not fully belong within narrowly defined nation spaces that themselves are being renegotiated, and new forms of allegiance are being requested, as at Partition. Furthermore, her presence in these spaces becomes an issue of safety for the hosts; Amin does not want her at the wedding because of fear due to the effect of the Lahoris on the village. To even associate with someone whose belonging is suspect and history not articulated in authorised ways is thus disciplined. These repetitive patterns of patriarchal national politics are facilitated through the focus on particular interpretations of history that insist on actions of protection and honour as necessary.

**Remembering Partition**

In relation to trauma and recovery Judith Herman has persuasively argued for the conflict between the will to deny traumatic events and the will to declare them out loud (1). The will to deny and declare trauma operates within particular structures that, as evidenced in the film, exist along specifically gendered lines. There is a lot at stake in the telling of these stories as we shall see, and as such the telling can become a site of tension. Certain traumas must be declared and others silenced and how this is divided comes to serve ideological functions.

As Antze and Lambek have pointed out, the right to establish authoritative versions of a story never rests with those telling the story alone as the authority to engage in this telling shifts from communal institutions, to collective memory, market forces and the state (xvii). Complicating this are the ways in which those who relate directly to the story being told do not necessarily hold the authority of its telling. LaCapra has pointed to how history is always a story with many perspectives, and that marginal voices do not disrupt history as such because there has never been one narrative of history (*Writing History* 83). However if we turn our attention from history to historicisation, an argument can be made regarding how certain stories come to be definitive and hold sway over others. In the film I argue that this is done along lines of power and in the service of the dominant narrative, which is that of the nation. Veer engages with this dialectic by discussing national history as the grand narrative of the modern nation-state, within which stories of different groups are incorporated.
and reinterpreted. In this move, Veer argues, stories of terror and bloodshed are reinterpreted as necessary steps toward liberation. The memory of violence is not suppressed; it is instead remembered as part of the teleology of independence. It is a fragment of the main story, which is the story of the nation (186-9). Jenny Edkins’ discussion of sacrifice is pertinent here as she also discusses the ways death is framed in terms of the national narrative. In her argument, death is understood as sacrifice for the nation. In both of these formulations death becomes reified when it upholds a particular idea that the national story is invested in. One significant scene of Khamosh Pani points to Edkins’ framing. In one of the public spaces of the village – a food stand where locals gather to eat - the television plays in the background on which three men discuss Partition:

- Since Partition Pakistan’s existence has angered India.
- Why is that?
- India believes that Pakistan shouldn’t have been created.
- They refuse to accept that Hindus and Muslims are two different nations.

At this point Rashid arrives, agreeing with this sentiment and asking that the volume be turned up. To this one villager says ‘It’s all politics, what’s it to do with us?’ and another adds, ‘Pakistan exists, why harp on about it? Talk about the price of wheat.’ Both of these villagers lived through the 1947 Partition. Rashid is incensed declaring ‘Men shed blood for this country and all you care about is food. You’ll be stuffing your face while they take our women.’ This scene is striking on several levels, but most pertinent here is the language being used regarding death and abduction. Rashid can be seen to be preaching about how men shed blood and women were taken without considering how these images he draws on are actual histories of people who have Partition stories of their own. Instead Rashid uses the images of men shedding blood and women being taken as a rhetorical device for a particular nationalist sentiment. The villagers are more concerned with the everyday, a prioritising that is in tension with Rashid precisely because they take the existence of the nation for granted as a backdrop to their quotidian material concerns, whereas Rashid is fixated on the discursive legitimacy of the nation and its identity.

Visually this scene is striking. Initially the villagers are shown sitting and watching the television as they eat, we then see a close up of the television discussion (see

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101 See in particular the chapter “War Memorials and Remembrance”.
When Rashid and cohort have an altercation with the villagers, they also take the place of the television in the villagers’ line of sight (see figure 3.14). If the television acts as a public form of remembering, in this scene Rashid tries to take over that place as both his attitudes and those on the television cohere and act as examples of the pedagogic assertions of the nation. Furthermore, this demonstrates the tension between the villagers and the attitudes on the television, although they do not interact with it and it exists more in the background than as a focus. Rashid’s entrance makes the discussion a focus and reveals the tensions between the performative and the pedagogic.

(Figure 3.13: Television at a food stand)

(Figure 3.14: Rashid takes the place of the television)

There are two lines of enquiry that come together in relation to this scene – one of banal nationalism and one of public remembering. The two villagers are more concerned with practicalities such as the price of wheat rather than the official story of the past, and as such can be seen to be continuing with everyday life.
Simultaneously there is a desire being expressed to ignore the history of Partition as it has no obvious impact on their daily existences. In this move, the project of history is left to Rashid and pedagogic articulations of the nation. Even though the villagers reject such narratives of history, or more precisely, through rejecting such narratives they produce a counter narrative, which is that the history does not matter. This dismissal of the relevance of history to their quotidian material concerns suggests that the nation is a more consolidated reality to them and they are able to take it for granted. Benei discusses how ‘senses of belonging are “naturalized” in the banality of quotidian processes’ (2). This notion of banal nationalism is taken from Michael Billig who argues that banal nationalism is performed or produced when the existence of the nation is taken for granted. There is an absence of exceptionalism in the production of nationalism, and indeed the ways in which nationalism is produced through mundane actions that do not obviously do nation work. This is the experience of a nationalism that is so integral to people’s lives that it goes unnoticed, and is constructed through routine (Billig 95).

As Sara Ahmed reminds us, ‘the work of the nation is done as much through everyday encounters in public life, as it is done through the political machinery of the nation-state’ (Strange Encounters 98). She goes on to discuss how a shared recognition of belonging to a nation space ‘requires a rehearsal of a public discourse of nationhood’, which can include shared memories, jokes and national achievements (99). It is this rehearsal that we see being played out in the scene at the food stand, where the power dynamic that emerges between Rashid and the villagers means that a particular discursive production of nationhood takes precedence. Rashid’s stance holds more power within it precisely because it is a story that is repeatedly rehearsed within the public domain, and as such acts as a public discourse of nationhood of which Ahmed speaks. For Ahmed, such rehearsal works to distinguish between those who do and do not belong within a particular national identity (99). The villagers in this scene take the existence of Pakistan as a given, it is so stable to them as a concept that it does not need protection or overt attention. In many ways this can be understood as a banal nationalism: a commitment to the existence of the nation that is so integral that it is unnoticed; it is constructed through the routine of farming and the engagements of everyday life. The nationalism of Rashid is an exceptional one,
constructing the nation not through the routine of everyday life but through a story of sacrifice.

Michael Haldrup et al. propose that hegemonic discourse is ‘not only hierarchically translated into everyday life, but also (re)produced through banal, embodied experiences and practices’ (118). In this scene we see Rashid attempting to translate hegemonic discourse into everyday life, or the everyday space of the food stand. Yet the villagers resist this imposition and, rather than reproducing it through their banal interactions, they withstand it. What this reveals instead is a tension between the banal and the hierarchical – or in Bhabha’s terms, the performative and the pedagogic. However, the tension between these two stances does not consider the power discrepancy between the two. Rashid’s performance of nationhood dismisses yet relies on the attitude of the two villagers: he demonstrates a much-rehearsed narrative that the villagers, through not enacting a counter discourse, enable. The bullying and aggressive tactics deployed by Rashid seek to block any counter discourse being expressed with any force. In this sense the scene points to the ways in which banal nationalism can produce the conditions for exceptionalism. The villagers are attempting to take the nation for granted and practice a banal nationalism, but Rashid’s belligerence stands in the way of this.102 As pointed out earlier, General Zia’s Islamification project was intended to provide coherence to the nation, but instead succeeded in creating tensions.

That this scene also centres on a television show is also pertinent as it represents a very particular public remembering and an opinion that focuses on the two-nation theory. The space of the food stand also comes to participate as a public space of remembering, or resisting remembering, national history. In terms of spaces these are distinct as banal performative spaces (food stand) and pedagogical ones (television), and each holds a different level of authority. Referring back to Ananya Kabir’s argument for the public subjectivity and the private subjectivity mentioned in Chapter Two is illuminating here as she argues that this public subject can be

102 Alarcón, Kaplan, and Moallem note the potential of banal everyday practices to resist dominant (masculine) nationalist agendas:

Modern nation-states participate in the institutionalization of women’s subordination by means of regulatory processes, the discursive formations that construct the discipline citizen-subjects. Yet, the quotidian practices that regulate women, nation, and state can be subverted by local community networks and relations out of which emerge a civil arena to counter masculinist nationalist agendas. (12)
understood as the national subject ("Gender, Memory, Trauma" 184). The private subject, marginalised by this public, is not part of the nation and therefore cannot be assimilated into the nation’s story. In terms of my discussion, this clarifies how particular stories cannot be made part of the nation’s story of itself. Where a story cannot be assimilated as heroism, sacrifice or recovery, it has no place in the nation’s story, and so no place in the nation.

The tension in these stories is exemplified by the public spaces of the village and another scene in the barbershop. The scene begins with Mehboob massaging Hadi’s head, as the shot cuts to Rashid drinking tea, the scene is kept in place with the radio playing in the background of both shots. Mehboob is often shown listening to Radio Pakistan, and this is what plays here. In terms of Benedict Anderson’s arguments regarding how the nation is imagined and understood, the simultaneous listening to national radio is an example of imagining the nation and existing in nation time. In the scene this listening, or background sound of the nation, holds the characters together. However the speech of the scene points to the tensions between Mehboob and Rashid. Mehboob refers to himself as a ‘naive’ villager and Rashid as a ‘man of politics’, yet Mehboob is always listening to the radio and in this scene is making jokes regarding General Zia’s avoidance of elections. His awareness of politics is evident, but that he does not consider himself a man of politics is significant as it shows how the realm of politics is seen as something separate – something akin to Bhabha’s pedagogic nation, whereas Mehboob’s is a politically aware performance of the nation. Although Rashid and Mehboob are held together by nation time, their approaches within this are in tension. As in the food stand, these public spaces are full of politics, and what we see in these tensions is a battle for the public space of the village between the pedagogic and the performative. The fact that the spaces here are infused with politics frames this as a battle with and of the telling of the nation.

Rashid and his peers are younger than the villagers they are shown to be in tension with, and it is unlikely that they were alive at Partition. However, with the authority

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103 Anderson argues that cultural products such as the daily newspaper enabled the imagining of the nation as a collective of people tied together through a sense of moving through time at the same pace. The same principle can be applied to the radio; when listening to the radio there is a sense of the rest of the nation listening to the same radio programme, thus enabling the imagining of a community of like people participating in the same temporally situated action. Anderson terms this homogenous empty time.
of a particular national narrative behind him Rashid can hold sway in this conversation. He can demand respect for those who died in Partition whilst disrespecting those who lived through it and live on. The authority of Rashid’s telling rests on a privileging of the past that is constructed in the service of the national narrative, whereby the experience of those who do not adhere to this privileged past is discounted. Honouring Partition as sacrifice is something Rashid is promoting, yet this is also a particular understanding of sacrifice that is also intertwined with notions of heroism. Nearly everyone who lived through Partition’s upheavals sacrificed or lost something, and that is what characterised the time. But this systemic fact cannot be engaged with by Rashid, it needs to be reframed through heroism.

The attitudes purported by Rashid can be understood as emblematic of those being promoted by religious nationalist leaders and General Zia. In another scene in the film Salim, Zubair and Rashid attend a meeting in a mosque in Rawalpindi. There the scholar is preaching to a room of politicised men and declares:

In 1947 we founded this country in the name of Islam. The lines of its borders were drawn in Muslim blood. Today, 33 years later we want to know, where is the land of the Pure? Devilish leaders have plundered my beloved Pakistan...our women roam the streets with their heads uncovered. Who will protect and keep them? Where is the rule of Islam in whose name we made this country? Where’s the young man who’ll die to guide his country to the right path?

The scene closes with a rousing cry of ‘what does Pakistan mean? There is no God but Allah’. Again this speech offers much to be analysed, but what I want to focus on is the use of the imagery of blood, the call to militarism and the equation of Pakistan with Islam. Connecting these two scenes reveals the logic of heroism and sacrifice underpinning the nationalist demands being discussed. Pakistan’s borders, he declares, are marked in the blood of Muslims, and must be maintained through the blood of heroic young men. Therefore any comment on being pragmatic about post-Partition life is disrespectful to these heroic deaths, and demonstrates a lack of commitment to the nation.

Rashid’s adherence to the idea of mass death of the time of Partition as a sacrifice in the service of Pakistan’s creation frames any trauma relating to Partition as a heroic mythology and as such must homogenise these experiences. In this way the national narrative constructs a history that reframes trauma as heroism. To suggest that deaths
were potentially avoidable or lessened if Partition had been more prepared for, better
communicated, and not so urgent because of the escalation of violence, would be to
disrespect these heroic deaths. LaCapra’s arguments for historicising trauma by
working through, and Kaplan and Wang’s suggestion that we look for the ‘why’ of
trauma would in this sense undermine the heroic element of these deaths. They
would be given a historically located reason aside from for the cause of the nation’s
becoming, and this reason would be much less flattering and also desperate and
circumstantial.

It is crucial to note that this appraisal of death is distinctly gendered and avoids any
engagement with the dead as potential perpetrators of violence. Consequently
female survivors of violence cannot be valorised within the national narrative, and it
is only through listening to that which the dominant narrative does not endorse that
we can get beyond the ‘story of the state’ (Veer 190). Although, as has been pointed
out by many (Kabir “Gender, Memory, Trauma” 179), men and women shared
dislocation and refugee status and men and women were both subject to communal
violence, however men’s experience of this violence can be transferred to heroism,
of doing what was required of them in the service of the nation’s formation.
Women’s experiences become assimilated when particular actions are reified in
terms of their sacrifice for the nation, for example Gandhi’s aforementioned praise
for women who jumped into wells (cited in Didur 3). This is violence by women
against themselves in the service of honour, and it is this that is praised. Das also
discusses women’s lives post-Partition, urging us to remember that countless
numbers of people carried on the work of everyday life. Women who jumped into
wells are claimed as heroic yet ‘women who made their peace with those who
abducted them, who resisted being ‘recovered’ and sometimes mourned the loss
of the humanity of their abductors with them rather than against them, are not inscribed
in the stories of heroic sacrifice’ (91).104

Edkins also discusses the sacrifice that is implicit in the founding of the state, and
that the narrative of nation requires that the rupture of trauma is forgotten (95). She

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104 Veena Das has also discussed this and argues that heroic deaths of war facilitate a mourning and
grieving as men died as husbands, sons and brothers. However in the case of Partition those who died
were perpetrators, and those who inflicted violence were not only strangers but also men ‘known and
deeply loved’. For this reason Das proposes there is a silence around Partition (52).
goes on to argue that the nation requires that trauma be remembered as sacrifice, to maintain a triumph for future generations (117). It is the narrative of Pakistan as a nation that justifies the trauma of Partition and frames those who were dislocated and killed as heroes, sacrificed for the cause of the nation’s creation. Trauma becomes reframed within the national narrative, and it becomes assimilated. For Salim and his peers, Pakistani Muslim identity is of paramount importance to them. When discussing Partition and the associated deaths, the young men evoke images of heroism. Vamik Volkan and Norman Itzkowitz argue that:

while a group does not choose to be victimized, it does ‘choose’, consciously as well as unconsciously, to psychologize and mythologize what has occurred and define its identity by referring to the event. (232)

As Pakistani national identity is reliant on Partition, it is constitutive of these younger men’s identities. Their need, then, to create a heroic mythology to go along with Partition is to create one at the root of their identities as Pakistani. Any focus on the trauma of the event must reframe the trauma in terms of heroism and sacrifice so it can be assimilated to the site of the nation. What we see with Salim and indeed Zubair, is that the national narrative fulfils them in terms of identity and purpose. Religious nationalism means they are no longer slackers, in Zubair’s words, and that they are respected. When Salim tries to explain this to a frustrated Zubeida he describes the work for the nation as important, as himself becoming important. This sense that he is ‘someone’ is provided by the national narrative, evidencing again how adherence to particular narratives is not spurious and must be understood in relation to what they offer, and in what ways they are alluring. They provide for people, even if the provision is problematic. LaCapra articulates this as a moment of founding trauma (akin to Wendy Brown’s wound identity discussed in Chapter Two) whereby trauma becomes reified as the basis of identity, rather than an event that poses the problematic question of identity (Writing History 23). What we see here is a gendered split but also a class split and a rural urban split between whether the trauma can be a productive basis or a questioning challenge. In Khamosh Pani we see how Partition is a founding trauma for the nation, but also for the individual subjects. The way the trauma is framed is specifically gendered and valorises the masculine nation over the feminine subject. Founding trauma is typical of myths of origin (LaCapra Writing History 81) and we see here the founding fiction of the

105 For a discussion of how attachments might provide affectively, even when this attachment is problematic, see Berlant Female Complaint.
nation take hold of Salim and Zubair, not only to explain its history but also to generate their commitment for its future.

Larry Ray has argued that ‘the problem is not so much being condemned to relive the past because of failing to remember it – more that the way of remembrance involves a compulsive attachment to unrelieved trauma’ (154). What this suggests is that a compulsive attachment to the past involves a particular kind of remembering. The multiple forms of remembering that emerge are not cohesive and are mostly working in conflict with one another. In Khamosh Pani there is a dominant public remembering of Partition that cannot do justice to narratives such as Ayesha’s. The national narrative that emerges resists working through its history as this would involve acknowledging the narrative of those such as Ayesha into its narrative.

The stories of the villagers are not relevant to proponents of religious nationalism as they do not assimilate their stories into the narrative of the nation. The proposal that blood was shed for the sake of the nation and therefore national politics must be honoured and engaged with is irrelevant to them as it does not impact their material conditions. What incenses the villager is the implication by Rashid that they do not care about the fate of their women. Their story of migration and their associated losses do not warrant time on television or attention by Rashid and Lahori politics, as such it is not important for the nation to acknowledge the story. In contrast, a story such as Ayesha’s – that of conversion and abduction – cannot be disregarded and must be responded to. What we see in the film is senior villagers being disrespected and disregarded, but Ayesha being policed. Her story is one that must be censored because as I will go on to argue, it is this gendered story that most directly offsets the integrity of the nation’s narrative of itself. Didur has argued for the disrupting potential of the silences in women’s narratives that can ‘unsettle’ Partition’s dominant narratives and I consider Khamosh Pani to be a text that participates in this move.

The formulation I have set up is that of a trio of reframing (death), disregarding (mundane loss), and controlling (women’s experience). Each of these actions is instigated through social memory processes. Ray has argued that social memory acts as a homogenising process by ‘maintaining a personal narrative that instantiates and affirms a collective memory continually suppresses the irredeemably plural nature of
modern identities’ (138). In line with this he proposes that national identities are constructed out of commonly shared pasts to create a component of identity and history. National groups thus construct collective memories in order to create a self-sustaining process of remembering and collective identity (Ray 140). The proposal, then, of a group’s collective identity becomes dependent on a particular construction of the past that is based on a manipulation of supposed shared experience. Lost or suppressed through this are individual and diverse experiences as they are subsumed with the one unifying experience.

Personal stories have gaps in them, and their experiences at large are denied by the nation. In terms of Partition we not only have multiple ways in which the event can be narrativised – as liberation, as enfranchisement, as vivisection – but also how the violence and dislocation and multiple losses caused in its wake are commemorated. I have discussed in this section how marginal voices can offset the narrative of the nation, and how women’s voices engage with a particular move of silencing that comes from marginalisation and trauma. As Didur argues,

> The discursive maintenance of a universalizing definition of nationalist identity elides the experience and agency of women in order to contain the threat they pose to a monolithic patriarchal imaginary in the postcolonial modern nation-state. (14)

Women’s place within the national body becomes contingent on whether or not they counter the national narrative. Ayesha’s resistances to the demands of this narrative mean that there is no space for her within it.

The processes of the discourse of recovery can thus be seen to co-opt women’s stories to the demands of national narratives without doing justice to their own stories and their own processes of working through. What we see in Khamosh Pani is Ayesha’s resistance to these demands, and indeed the demands being made on women within the time frames of 1947 and 1979. In 1947 she refuses to jump into the well as her mother and sister do and instead escapes. She is captured yet from this ordeal she makes a life for herself and embeds herself in a community yet later becomes alienated from her son as he makes demands of honour upon her. In many ways the demands of her family members illuminate the demands of the nation. I am not suggesting here that they are allegorised but that the nation exerts itself through the family, so we can understand the demands of the nation through those made by
the family. That Rashid and his cohorts cannot tolerate Ayesha’s Sikh past demonstrates how her experience and subjectivity cannot be assimilated to the narrative of nation they wish to promote. As Das argues, abducted women exist as proof of the failure of the nation to protect its women. I would add here that she also reminds communities of the violence of Partition. To acknowledge Ayesha’s particular story would be to acknowledge the Muslim men who captured her as perpetrators. But it would also be to acknowledge how infinitely complex the process of Partition became in terms of migration and conversion. The narratives of protection and homeland cannot do justice to stories such as Ayesha’s.

**Collective mourning**

What is at stake when national publics do not engage the marginal stories of its past without co-opting them into a narrow nationalist agenda?

Kabir has discussed ‘the possibility of collective mourning for a shared traumatic event’, arguing that the separation of discursive realms has meant that Partition is glossed over in history books while mourned within smaller units, generally of the family. What this produces, argues Kabir, is the absence of a ‘pivot around which children across the nation can be socialized to create a collective awareness of, and responsibility for, the past’ (“Gender, Memory, Trauma” 189). In the absence of this socialisation, the working through of Partition within the public realm and at the site of the nation is precluded. Kabir’s reference to history books here is pertinent as schooling is a prime location for the establishment of citizenship. Where working through Partition’s trauma is not included within curricula it can be understood as not being a condition of citizenship. Indeed the very opposite becomes the case whereby the act of glossing over Partition is an act of citizenship. Further to this the introduction of compulsory Pakistan Studies in curricula by Zulfikar Bhutto and implementation of this programme by General Zia taught a very particular history of Partition. Pakistan Studies privileged the origin myth of Pakistan whereby the nation’s beginnings can be traced back to the arrival of Mohammed bin Qasim in Sindh, a story that was prominent in pre-Partition nation building.\(^{106}\) The narrow engagements within schooling are exacerbated by the silences around women’s experience identified by Didur and Das. The version of Partition and Pakistan’s

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\(^{106}\) See Benei for a detailed discussion of teaching history through schools in Pakistan. See also Jalal “Conjuring Pakistan” for analysis of Islamic history in Pakistan textbooks.
becoming that is proposed by Rashid remains unchallenged due to the unavailability of alternative public discourses that engage directly with marginalised perspectives. This is yet another move where we see the lack of narrative having an effect on Partition being mourned effectively. The narratives of Partition’s public mourning marginalise and erase Ayesha’s story and stories like her. The systemic gendered nature of Partition is thus also not being mourned effectively. As Deepika Bahri argues:

The induced historical amnesia and plangent silence surrounding the traumatic events of Partition continue to this day, the violence largely untheorized, the silence rarely broken. A collective act of reparation will require that there be public validation of the traumatic event. Instead of denial, there must be acknowledgment; instead of amnesia, anamnesis, for in the past festers the future we live as the present. (229)

Unless these elements of Partition’s history are adequately engaged with, Partition cannot be adequately mourned, and as such it cannot be adequately moved on from, and as pointed out its themes will continue to repeat upon the nation’s socio-political articulation. Bahri’s intervention emphasises that the past will continue to have damaging effects on the future unless adequately engaged with, and that this engagement needs to be a public one, and as such a collective one.

As I have posited, the flashbacks refer us, not to Ayesha’s traumatised state but to the traumatised state of the nation. The flashbacks, rather than disrupt Ayesha, disrupt the national frame. Ayesha’s story of 1947 is the nation’s repressed memory, a story it does not want to remember on her terms but through narratives that assimilate it to discourses of recovery. The flashbacks work to highlight how the nation’s past has not been mastered as to do so would require a reconfiguration of its modes of commemoration in order to integrate the traumatic past more effectively.

What we see in Khamosh Pani are the implications when the nation’s collective traumatic memory does not find narrative integration. In this case, Ayesha’s working through of individual traumatic memory becomes unintegrated during the course of the film, due to the erasure enacted by the national meta-narrative. Gabriele Schwab has proposed that when the histories and memories of violence are walled off from ‘a conscious politics of remembrance and public debate, they can no longer be worked through and transformed into a politics of redress’ (84). What I am proposing is subtly different in that histories and memories are not entirely walled off but rather that they are being manipulated in the service of a particular national narrative: the
very nation that needs to do some working through in order that these patterns are escaped. This suggests that the only hope for the nation to do this is through public critique of limited historicisation of the nation, and through listening to stories that are not of the state. In Veer’s terms this move would be ‘listening to the victim’, akin to Didur’s insistence that we should attend to the silence in women’s narratives. If the silence and the gap are indicative of trauma then we need to pay heed to women’s trauma. In short, the question that emerges is how can a past characterised by gendered and communal violence be collectively mourned when certain stories of this past are not effectively being engaged with?

(Figure 3.15: Salim entrusts Ayesha’s locket to Zubeida)

As a final comment I would like to suggest that the end of the film suggests some tentative hope towards the possibility of an effective engagement with the past. When Jeswant returns to Charkhi he brings with him Ayesha’s locket, in which there is a picture of the young Veero. After Ayesha’s death, Salim gives the locket to Zubeida saying ‘keep this, it’s for you’. In this touching move Salim entrusts Zubeida with Ayesha’s memory, which is also the memory of Veero (see figure 3.15). That Salim understands that this is something to be preserved is hopeful in itself, and also suggests towards a more holistic memory of Ayesha: one that also incorporates Veero in it. Salim is aware that he cannot preserve this memory himself, though in giving the locket to Zubeida he demonstrates that he cares that the memory of Ayesha is preserved.107

107 At the start of the film we are shown Salim clearing out his room and sorting his belongings into two piles, one to keep and one to discard. He is deliberate about his choices, thus showing awareness of the importance of the things he has collected. At Ayesha’s death, he collects her things into her suitcase, which he pushes down the river. In the suitcase he places the Qu’ran, a picture of himself, as well as things that belonged to Veero that were connected to her Sikh past, again suggesting that he is
The closing scene of the film is of Zubeida in her flat in Rawalpindi; we see her getting ready to go out and she puts the locket on. As she does so, she has a voiceover that says:

I remember Ayesha Aunty very well. But what’s the point of remembering her? Does it change the price of onions? Sometimes I dream of her. I preserve each and every dream so they never leave me.

This final piece of narrative is a poignant comment on the value of commemoration. The charge that remembering will not affect material conditions such as the price of onions is immediately disregarded, instead leaving us with the importance of honouring Ayesha’s memory. Zubeida, in keeping Ayesha’s locket, demonstrates a refusal to detach from her memory of Ayesha. Zubeida’s attachment to the locket mirrors Ayesha’s attachment to her suitcase discussed earlier. Both the locket and the suitcase are items that can mean that memory can be acknowledged, but simultaneously contained. In this scene Zubeida also turns off the radio with General Musharraf speaking, in order to focus on her memories of Ayesha. In so doing she puts aside the pedagogic nation in order to focus on a personal moment of commemoration. Through turning off the radio Zubeida exerts control over how far she engages with the pedagogic nation. This is repeated in the final scene of the film, which takes place on the street. Zubeida looks through the window of a shop that sells televisions, and Salim is being interviewed on screen (now a minister in General Musharraf’s government) discussing the need for Pakistan to be formally Islamic. After looking for a short while she leaves the window, as with the radio she is in charge of how much she will engage with the pedagogic nation. Furthermore this portrays her as being in the world, while Salim is contained behind the television screen.

**Conclusion**

LaCapra has argued that there is a need to engage with the traumatic moment that occurred in its historical context and not simply engage with it through its contemporary repetitions. He argues that events are moments in themselves and not solely illustrative of an aftermath (Writing History 82). This contributes to his charge that we consider trauma as historical rather than structural, as something more material and less abstract (Writing History 84). Das, on the other hand, urges that we are aware of the significance of what he includes. As he pushes this down the river, he both contains and detaches from what he has lost - Ayesha.
look at the present and not let tropes of trauma invade too soon, that we need to see how people are engaging with their everyday lives and note that the present has something to say about how violence is produced and lived with (205). What both critics are warning against here is a reliance on the tools of trauma that takes us away from material conditions and historical accountability.

In this chapter I have shown how *Khamosh Pani* utilises the tools of trauma to engage both the past and the present in ways that articulate stories of Partition beyond the national narrative. The themes of gendered and honour-based violence, and communalism repeat across the time frames of 1947 and 1979, suggesting that there is a return of the nation’s repressed history. Ayesha’s flashbacks are the tool that inform us that the nation has not dealt with the conditions of its past. To do so would require that the national narrative engage with stories such as Ayesha’s. Where it does not, we can see a resistance to working through the gendered violence of the nation’s formation. The flashback form, while alerting us to the unresolved history of the nation, has the potential to disrupt the master narrative of the nation’s self-historiography. Hayden White (cited in LaCapra *Writing History* 16) has argued in relation to historiography that it would do better to emulate modernist narratives and their resistance to closure rather than rely on realism, representation and emplotment. *Khamosh Pani* shows the potential for trauma form to disrupt historiography and posit an alternative historiography of Pakistan and Partition.

I have argued that the temporal overlap of the film’s structure, alongside the themes of the plot creates a piece of work that uses the fictional medium to make assertions about the ongoing effects of traumatic pasts. The disruption caused by the flashbacks becomes a visual expression of how traumatic events can continue to cause systemic disruption within the present. That is to say, although the narrative is concerned with Ayesha, the story we are told of her is strongly located in the socio-political context of the time. The film’s narrative makes clear that Ayesha is not unique in this tale and in so doing foregrounds the story of the individual to make a claim regarding the wider political implications of a nation born of specifically gendered violence. Temporally flashbacks are deployed to refer to the past. The continuity cut to 2002 at the end of the film jumps forward in time creating 2002 as the film’s present. That there is no indication that time has moved except for a subtitle at the bottom of the screen saying ‘Rawalpindi 2002’, suggests that the film is moving forward without
thought. In this time frame we see similar themes playing out as we saw in 1979, suggesting that patterns will continue to repeat as history has not yet been adequately accounted for. The move to 2002 at the close of the film also has the effect of emphasising how the film participates in a historicisation of 1979 through its focus on that time frame. Ending on 2002 places the period we have directly engaged with through the film’s narrative, as a historical time. In so doing I suggest that the film’s structure is writing women’s narratives back into Pakistan’s national narrative in a way that counters their erasure. It also writes back in the complexity of the religious situation that is often glossed over by contemporary framings of the war on terror and Pakistan as a failed state. As the direct experiences of Partition become a generation removed, this writing in makes a case for how these histories must be accounted for even when there are not the individuals there to make them personal. By situating Zubeida as someone who has moved forward in time, from 1979 to 2002 also points toward the potential futurity for women in the nation, as well as of the nation itself. The Coda will consider in more detail the implications of futurity in relation to how the past is engaged with.
Coda: Noor and the Embodiment of National Haunting

The thesis has focussed on the effects of the Punjab border up to this point to consider the period leading up to it, its occurrence and its afterlife. I have formulated the creation of the Punjab border as traumatic due to the speed with which it was created, the suddenness of the ethnic cleansing, and the completeness of the migration in the region. As such it has not been appropriate to look at the Bengal border in the same context, due to the distinctness of the Partition processes in the province. It is however, crucial for the thesis as a whole to consider the Bengal border to further elucidate the main themes of the thesis but through a different lens, which is that of the second time the territorial parameters of Pakistan were defined and in so doing marked with violence. In terms of Pakistan, I consider the trauma of the Bengal border as occurring in 1971, the date of Bangladesh’s secession, rather than 1947. As such, I include this Coda in order to insist that any discussion of Pakistan and Partition is not complete without engaging with the borders in both Punjab and Bengal. I understand the trauma as emerging from the conditions of 1947; Pakistan was the first modern nation state conceived and founded on the basis of religion, and Bangladesh was the first secession from a postcolonial state due to conflicts that emerged from cultural and linguistic pluralism (Ayres 4). In many ways this secession reveals some of the limitations of nationalism as used within liberation politics, drawing attention to how the construction of nationhood can fail to cohere. My discussion aims to analyse the contradictions of Partition in that Pakistan could not sustain two wings, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. I consider how these contradictions are articulated within the novel Noor, in particular in relation to difference. By considering 1971 to be a repeat of Partition through the recurrence of tools of communal-based warfare: genocide, rape and displacement, this chapter continues and expands on the concerns raised previously in this thesis, in particular regarding the implications for memory that such violence engenders.

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108 Material specific to the Bengal Partition: see Bagchi and Dasgupta (eds) for a consideration of the gendered dimension; see Chatterji for a contextualisation of Partition within the history of Bengal; for fiction see Fraser (ed) for a collection of short stories, and Hyder for a novel. For literature dealing with 1971 see Anam, and also Ghosh.

109 See figure 0.2. The war between East and West Pakistan began in March 1971 with India intervening in December of that year; Pakistan surrendered later that month and Bangladesh was born.
In this coda I analyse Sorayya Khan’s 2003 novel Noor to consider the effects of the Bangladesh war of independence upon Pakistan. Noor is based around a family in Islamabad; the father Ali, his mother Nanijan, adopted daughter Sajida and her husband Hussein, and their three children, of whom Noor is the youngest. Ali served in the Pakistan army during the 1971 Bangladesh war of independence, and during his time there he found five year old Sajida alone and brought her back to Pakistan as his daughter. Noor has an undiagnosed disability that countless trips to the doctors do nothing to clarify. The family find that Noor is calmest when she is drawing, and she creates picture after picture. These pictures start to take on an alarming dimension when she starts to draw her dreams, creating in images moments from Sajida’s childhood and Ali’s time as a soldier in East Pakistan. Sajida’s past is something she does not fully remember, as she was brought to Pakistan at the age of five or six, and Ali’s time in the war is something of which he has never spoken and has tried to forget in order to separate himself from his past. Noor’s communication of the past through visual representation of what she has seen in her dreams prompts an excavation of memory for both Ali and Sajida. As Cara Cilano has argued in her analysis of Noor, the family can be read as an allegory of the nation; the novel lends itself well to such a reading, and my analysis does at times consider it in this way. Underpinning this move is a consideration of the gendered space of the family as the private realm, and part of my motivation for reading the novel as allegory is to insist on the public dimension of what is experienced privately. Further to this I consider the effects of national politics being expressed through how they impact upon the family. As such I engage with the family as both allegory and entity.

My discussion aims to draw together theoretical engagements from the preceding chapters and point towards the conclusion. This coda speaks to each of the preceding

110 There are two interpretations of this history in terms of the respective nations: Pakistan frames the conflict as a civil war, and Bangladesh as a war of liberation. In both cases the nation defines the framework for understanding the war: civil war asserts the struggle to keep both wings as one, whereas war of liberation asserts Bangladesh as a separate entity struggling for emergence. The respective nations thus dictate the terms of understanding the conflict. As Saikia points out, 1971 was also has an international element because of the war between India and Pakistan. I would add that although this can be understood as international, it is significant that the dimension of this was contained within the landscape of the Indian subcontinent.

111 Noor not only lends itself well to such a reading, but encourages it through the parallels drawn between Ali’s memory and history and that of the Pakistani nation. I have resisted allegorising individual and family stories to that of the nation in previous chapters as the texts themselves do not encourage such readings. As such I disagree with Jameson that third world texts are necessarily allegories of nation, and only deploy this approach here because of its suitability to the text under discussion.
chapters; in relation to my analysis of *The Heart Divided*, I consider how the ideas of belonging that generated and consolidated Pakistan can also be seen to challenge it; the notions of difference that became naturalised to create the nation are the very notions that generate division of the nation. As such, the creation of Bangladesh challenged the concept of Pakistan. In relation to *Stories of the Broken Self*, this coda addresses the memory narratives of one of the central characters, Ali, alongside the disruptive art of the past drawn by his granddaughter. These narrative and non-narrative representations of memory draw connections between the past and present, insisting that the past be engaged with in the contemporary moment. Finally, as argued in relation to *Khamosh Pani*, this analysis points to how Pakistan is still engaged and implicated in the conditions of its becoming in 1947, and that 1971 acts as another defining moment for the nation as a time in which its borders were redefined. I engage with *Noor* to interrogate the problems that arise due to perpetration as well as the attempts to forget or disavow the involvement with violence. I consider Noor in relation to her undiagnosed disability and the concept of intergenerational haunting to interrogate how violent pasts continue to affect current generations when the legacy of this violence is not adequately dealt with. I close this coda by considering how the novel can be considered a project of what Marianne Hirsch terms ‘postmemory’, whereby the younger generation seems to ‘remember’ events that happened to the generation before them due to the intensity of their engagement with the stories of the past, to consider the implications of *Noor* being a novel written in 2003 and set in contemporary Pakistan, which is concerned with the ongoing effects of the Bangladesh war. Hirsch argues that there is an urgency connected to the desire to find out about the past in the postmemory generation, and I argue that the novel as a whole insists that the past be uncovered and engaged with. Finally I discuss what the figure of the child suggests in relation to the possibility of reparative futures for Pakistan.

**The Secession of Bangladesh**

Bangladesh’s secession from Pakistan was a time when the 1947 Partition repeated, in the sense that a new nation seceded from an existing one through the discourse of liberation and the campaign for political enfranchisement. This forging of a new nation was again done through tools of warfare that were communal and gendered, and resulted in large-scale displacement. According to official statistics from India and Bangladesh, around 3 million people died, 10 million people became refugees
and 200,000 women were raped, though Pakistan officials insist that these figures are exaggerated (Saikia 182). I propose that Bangladesh’s secession is connected to the 1947 Partition, and argue that the conditions for the secession were put in place by the discourses of Partition and Pakistan. In terms of my usage of the tools of trauma within this thesis, it is also significant to look at Bangladesh in terms of national repetition compulsion. As I argue in relation to *Khamosh Pani*, the failure of the Pakistani nation to effectively memorialise Partition means that its tropes repeat within communities. Here we see the tropes repeat at the level of national politics. I also connect 1971 and 1947 through the repetitive tropes that characterise the nations’ becoming in these time frames. Though there are important distinctions between these two times, it is crucial to acknowledge the similarities. If in each case we see a battle for territory, a territory defined by religion and ethnicity, we can then see genocide and ethnic cleansing as the way in which territory is claimed. If we see gender as key in how territory is claimed, this has very significant and disturbing implications for how we understand any territorially defined ethnic or religious identity, and the power of national discourses to justify such actions.

The genocide in East Pakistan can be understood as an attempt to effectively ethnically cleanse Pakistani Bengal. There is a sense here that the 1947 border through Bengal represented a Partition that had not been fully carried out, so the threat of the Hindu majority in India remained. The prevalent idea in official Pakistani discourse was that, because of mixing between Hindus and Muslims in Bengal, the Muslims there were not pure enough. This meant that the Hindu influence needed to be eliminated, but also the impure Muslims. This construction of the Bengali as other through being non-Muslim or Hindu-like thus justified the violence meted out by the Pakistan army. That the violence that marked the Bangladesh war of independence became a matter of the Pakistani state rather than meted out through riots and communal conflict is significant. The demands of the nation can be understood as based on understandings of ethnic and religious purity, as well as using these understandings to dismiss material concerns regarding political

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112 Bangladesh has dealt with the gendered dynamic of this violence in different ways to how it was treated at Partition, with women survivors of sexual abuse being called ‘birongonas’: heroes of the nation (Visweswaran 118). This framing is reminiscent of Gandhi’s praise for women who jumped in wells at Partition as being brave and keeping the nation strong. In both cases women’s endurance of gendered and honour-based violence is subsumed into a nationalist telling. Kabeer argues that the use of rape as a tool of warfare here also takes on another dimension to that of Partition, as often rape that led to conception was considered a way to improve the genes of the Bengali people (143).
enfranchisement in Pakistani Bengal. As Yasmin Saikia avers, valid claims regarding the distribution of resources, political representation and language politics were downplayed by the Pakistani army as smokescreens engineered by Hindus (181). This conviction of Hindu influence in East Pakistan, and a susceptibility to this influence by Bengali Muslims was used to create the ethnic cleansing in East Pakistan as a necessity to make it, in Naveeda Khan’s words, ‘fall in line’ (19).

Contradictions and Irony

In terms of the founding ideology of Pakistan we see how the concept of a Muslim homeland was not enough to establish unity across two distinct wings that were separated by a large land mass and distinct regional cultures. Indeed, the attempt to assert a unified national identity through a strong military and national language of Urdu can be understood as divisive forces in relation to East Pakistan. Cohen discusses how West Pakistan framed the cries for independence in the East as a betrayal. East Pakistan was framed as not truly Pakistani, so therefore not truly Muslim; the rationale here was that if Bengalis were truly Pakistani and Muslim then there would be no reason for them wanting their own country. For Stephen Cohen the loss of the East wing was thus framed as a moral and religious failure rather than a political one (169). As discussed, the demand for Pakistan stemmed from concerns around Muslim enfranchisement within central government. This was eventually articulated in separatist and nationalist terms in developing a nation that, in 1971, would not recognise a similar call for enfranchisement to that on which it was founded. The economic concerns of East Pakistan were interpreted by West Pakistan as being an issue of a lack of an adequate sense of national belonging, which is in turn understood in ethnic terms. In other words, the desire for national autonomy was understood in affective terms - based on a lack of feeling Pakistani. In relation to Pakistan I want to consider the implications of the violence in East Pakistan being carried out by the army, through official state processes rather than the escalation of

113 The uneven power dynamic that emerged between the two wings meant that the practicalities of even distribution and participation within state mechanisms were not established equally across the East and West, reducing the East wing to the position of a colony (Kabeer 141). Indeed Bengali was considered to be militarily inferior to West Pakistan due to the concentration of the military in the Punjab (Cohen 73-5). Samad elaborates on this uneven power relationship outlining how the profits from the Bengali jute businesses was invested in West Pakistan and Karachi industrialisation did not support East Pakistan (100). In this we can see how economics, language and military might operated to isolate East Pakistan from and within the systems of governance, and created the foundations of the Bangladesh liberation movement. That increased frustrations in East Pakistan were not taken seriously by central government, and the Bengal movement was treated as a counter insurgency created by India, further alienated the Bengali population (Cohen, 73-5).
violence within communities. The irony of this is that Pakistan was the perpetrator of violence upon itself as part of itself was seceding: this was a violence enacted to maintain unification of the nation that ultimately led to secession. Attempts to make East Pakistan ‘Pakistani’ by force (through eradicating dissenters and non-Pakistani influence), instead of creating unity actually (and unsurprisingly) exacerbated the desire of East Pakistan to separate.

This irony is not lost in the novel, and comes up in a frank exchange between Ali and his grandson Adel:

“What did you do there?”
“Oh lots of things. We tried to keep the enemy behind our lines.”
“Lines?”
“The area we occupied, I mean.”
“How can you occupy your own country?” Adel asked. “What were you doing there, anyway?”
“Serving our country.”
“But they didn’t want your help.”
“Right,” Ali said quietly. (200)

The tension in this exchange is telling as Ali explains that he was both serving his country and occupying his country in the same move. The sense of whose country he is referring to and who counts as the enemy is vague and there is a sense that it cannot be defined due to the inherent contradictions that emerge. Ali’s attempt to construct a logic through his responses to Adel can be seen to fail, culminating in his quiet ‘right’, which suggests a level of defeat. Ali’s failure to make West Pakistan’s actions make sense here reflects the failure of Pakistan to exist as a united nation across distinct wings, languages and cultures. In Husain Haqqani’s words ‘Islamic ideology had obviously proved insufficient to keep Bengalis part of Pakistan’ (87).

The division of power between the two wings and the role of language within this division in central to this separation, and further to Haqqani’s statement, not only failed to keep Bengalis in Pakistan, it was central to this failure.

This leads on to a consideration of the irony of the founding vision of Pakistan itself. For Cilano it is no surprise that a nation built on separatism struggled to consolidate the nation post-independence, identifying the foundational instability of a unified Pakistani nationalist identity (31). The moves to national unity, asserted as they were in homogeneity, actually created antipathy between the wings. This tension is reminiscent of the discussion in Chapter Three of General Zia ul-Haq’s Islamisation
project, which attempted to created Islamic unity through homogenisation but instead caused tension with Sufi practitioners. Alyssa Ayres argues that the reasons for Bangladesh’s secession can be understood both materially and ideologically, and connecting the two is the politics of language, discussed at length in Speaking Like a State. According to Ayres Urdu was chosen as the official language of Pakistan because Jinnah thought that Urdu ‘embodies the best that is in Islamic culture and Muslim tradition and is nearest to the language used in other Islamic countries’ (43). She outlines how the Pakistani state attempted to forge a Pakistani ethnicity through the heritage of Urdu, and avers that it was through the incorporation ‘into a unitary Urdu-speaking nation-state could the county recognise itself as a nation’ (6, 13). What Ayres is pointing to here is the fact that the very mechanism by which Pakistan tried to assert itself as a nation with a particular identity, was the mechanism that created antipathy between the West and East wings. Kamala Visweswaran also identifies language as one of the main ways in which Bengali Muslims were denied full recognition within state mechanisms (116). Language came to be central to Bengali nationalism, and initial demonstrations were held to protest the lack of inclusion of Bengali in official languages (Ayres 41-42). Furthermore Ayres argues that language becomes ‘the bearer of religion’, constructing boundaries around previously fluid interactions such as between Hindi and Urdu. These two languages are very similar but are bounded to different religions and therefore hold different ideological positions. In turn this effectively marginalises regional languages of which there are many on the subcontinent (17, 20, 23). The connection of Bengali Hindus and Muslims through language, a language then used as the basis for language rights in state structures can be thus understood as challenging the foundational logic of Pakistan.

The logic of Pakistan can thus be understood as holding within it the loss of its own territory, (the loss of territory for Pakistan occurring simultaneously with the gain of Bangladesh’s independence). The theme of loss can be seen to recur within Noor. Bengali becomes the language that Sajida has long since lost and replaced with Urdu. Along with this she has lost that part of her memory that places her in Bangladesh at the time of the war. This erasure of origins and separation from the past that Ali insists on also enacts the loss of history through his manipulation. The story of how East Pakistan became lost is narrativised in particular ways at the national level (Pakistani government) and also the individual level (Ali’s story of his participation...
in war). Pakistani Bengal becomes that which is lost, and it is images of the landscapes of East Pakistan that Noor begins to draw that provoke Sajida’s remembering of her past, or her origins. The story of what is lost interrupts the dominant story through Noor’s drawings of East Pakistan. Where haunting stems from unresolved or unacknowledged loss, these losses can be seen to inform Noor’s drawings that in turn haunt the family.

**Verbal Memory Narratives and Visual Disruption**

Ali’s memories are presented in several ways in the novel; the third person narration describes his memories, italics represent his own internal memory monologues or self address, and towards the end of the novel he speaks his memories to Sajida. The third person narration clearly draws out the limitations Ali has imposed on his own memory practices. Not only has ‘Ali refused to remember everything’ (75), but, on returning from the war, he locks himself in the bathroom and repeatedly forces his body into scalding hot water to cleanse himself of his experiences and thus separate himself from the past. Each time he submerges himself in the water he takes a memory and locks it away:

[H]e considered the order he’d made inside his head. He imagined his story, the sum of horrible details, so neatly stored away, he’d done away with any reason to retrieve it. Ever.

And that was how Ali had planned to return to life. (77)

For Ali, returning to life entails drawing a line between what he has done and seen and his current self. As he files each of his memories away they are recounted in the third person, revealing a level of detachment from what he is recalling. The narrative refers to things he saw others do, ‘the man pushed her to the floor […] the man pulled the trigger’, and only refers to Ali in a more detached way, ‘[h]e’d been overwhelmed by her breasts, round and beautiful’ and ‘Ali resolved that he had thought of this woman for the final time’ (76-7). This framing of Ali suggests a level of innocence as he is ‘overwhelmed’ by the woman’s breasts; this is in stark comparison to the violence of the man. As Ali separates himself from the past and what he has seen, there is a sense that he is not engaging with the moments in which he might be implicated more negatively. The process of compartmentalising also suggests that the past can be put to rest without considering the effects it might continue to have. Although Ali might refuse to think of the past, I will go on to show how easily his phrasing refers to Bengalis in racist terms; he does not realise that
there is also a separation to be made between himself and the ideological terms of the war.

Noor’s pictures become a catalyst for Ali realising the inadequacy of his attempt to separate himself from this past:

It occurred to Ali that Noor’s drawing was a manifestation of what he’d locked away so carefully in the cabinets of his mind. In the presence of a granddaughter he loved so much and her meticulous drawing of the Sitalakhya114 the day he’d buried a woman, he understood what had happened. His past had arrived. Soon it would be its own gallery, for all to see. However faint, there was a measure of relief in that. Looking at the walls of his house, considering how neatly Noor’s drawings were ordered and hung, he knew he’d been wrong in the scalding bath of his homecoming to think he could pack it all away. (167)

Here Ali realises that the past cannot be so easily packed away, but furthermore that this very private cleansing and individual separation is soon to be undermined by the display of Noor’s drawings for all the family to see. From this point on in the novel the content and address of Ali’s memory narratives shift to implicate him more directly in what had gone on in East Pakistan. The narratives are more explicit and horrific than the third person narration of what he remembers from earlier in the novel: *We washed her wounds, I picked maggots from them, first with my fingers and then with tweezers. [...] Even after she died, her wounds oozed* (154), and

*She was ripped and pried open, the implements used to do this, the scissors, pens, a metal ruler, speckled with blood, lying to her side. [...] I straddled her. She was warm and wet. My penis, soft and small, did nothing and thankfully, I couldn’t enter her.* (183)

Where the third person narration represents Ali’s memories, the italicised first person narratives are Ali’s memories as they are remembered by himself and narrated to himself. As part of his developing awareness of how he is implicated in what is being remembered, these sections engage more directly with the horrors of the war.115 The address of these narratives is also internal, as he poses questions to himself, ‘*did you know that?*’ and ‘*[s]hameless, right?*’ (114), that act as both condemnation of himself and also pleas for understanding. Ali begins to wonder if he has been practicing his stories, attempting to perfect a narrative for when Sajida asked him about the war

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114 A river in Bangladesh.

115 See Cilano for a discussion of how Ali’s memories remain ambiguous regarding how far he is implicated in violence against women while in East Pakistan (57).
His relief that his past might soon be on display is responded to by these internal monologues, which give him the opportunity to practice how he might portray his experiences of 1971 to Sajida. This emphasises the constructed nature of memory, formed in relation to the demands of the present, and the communicable function of narrative memory. Ali is constructing these narratives in order to communicate his experiences of the war to Sajida, and as such his memory narratives have an agenda beyond accessing what he recalls of the past. Whether third person or first person, Ali’s memories can thus be seen to be limited, or constructed in relation to what function he wants them to serve. I will return to the moment when he does actually share a story with Sajida after considering Noor’s drawings as visual disruptions upon narrative, which is to say that her pictures cannot be contained within and by systems of communication, as Ali’s memories are.

When Noor begins drawing, Sajida names her drawings and hangs them up alphabetically in an effort to teach Noor to read and write. Each of her drawings is named; the visual is articulated in one word and hung up alphabetically according to the descriptor that has been given to it. Eventually Sajida realises that ‘Noor’s drawings were no longer simple words to be alphabetized on a wall. They were windows into another world, far away and distant, which might have ceased to exist without Noor’ (140). Noor’s pictures thus act as visual disruptions of narrative memory, in that they can no longer be contained within the narrative of alphabet that they were initially understood (or emplotted) through. Sajida now sees Noor’s paintings as meaning more, of not being reducible to, or contained within, systems of knowledge. Noor’s drawings disrupt these systems by pointing to the gaps within them and constructing unpredictable revelations of the past. As Sajida muses ‘[e]very so often, with a slight hint of concern, she wondered what Noor might drawn next, if she might reveal anything [she] didn’t already know’ (146). Indeed Noor encapsulates in image what Ali has blocked off from his memory, Sajida has forgotten, or of which one or the other was not aware. In addition, being able to ‘see’ the past creates an immediacy that has otherwise been lacking in the remembering that both Sajida and Ali have undertaken up to this point. Through their visual rather than narrative medium meaning can only be ascribed to Noor’s pictures through excavation of memory. As discussed in relation to *Stories of the Broken Self*, there is an affective proximity that can be generated through the visual dimension and through the act of seeing. In terms of memory, Sajida and Ali are not only being
called on to witness the events that Noor shows, but re-witness and thus re-experience their previous acts of witnessing in 1971. This experiential dimension is precisely that which cannot be contained within the singular word previously attributed to the pictures.

It is part of Noor’s exceptionality that means she does not fear or anticipate what she produces on paper, (this can be related to her not feeling pain or temperature), and so her revelation of the past is not something that can be deferred or stopped. Noor’s uncontrollable revelation of the past exists in stark contrast to Ali’s engagement in which we see him deflecting detail, ‘but never mind about that’ (235), and vaguely justifying the details he will not fully articulate with the repeated refrain ‘war is war’ (176, 233, 242). This sentiment is repeated by Nanijan when she and Sajida speculate on Ali’s experiences. Nanijan says “People die. That’s what happens in war” (161). It is as though declaring that war is war can provide avoidance from what actually happened, or how Ali was part of the violence that occurred in 1971. His attempted justifications for his part in the war are articulated to Nanijan with ‘I didn’t do anything to them that they didn’t do to us first’ (176), and then ‘[w]e were fighting for our lives. Not for you. Or this country. For ourselves’ (177). In his explanations Ali pleads survival and retaliation, both justifications used by official Pakistani government narratives in response to the war. These attempts at deferral, justification and understatement of the violence of the war are challenged by Noor’s drawings as they depict moments that Ali has not included in his narrative. More pertinently still, the drawings set the agenda for engagement with the past rather than Ali’s narratives or deferrals. As such we can understand the drawings as cutting across Ali’s narratives, as well as the family’s origin narrative.

Sajida begins to excavate her own memories of how she came to be in Islamabad; these are sketchy yet what she recalls of being in East Pakistan is of the 1970 cyclone in which she lost her family, being taken to a relief camp by aid workers, and being found by Ali. In speaking with Nanijan about the times of year these events took place she realises that there is a gap in her knowledge of her time in East Pakistan. This gap jars with the story Ali has always told, which is also the founding narrative of their family. As in Khamosh Pani, the selective story of origins is a gendered story here as Ali frames himself as having saved Sajida; he first takes her, claims her as his own, then constructs a story of her origins in which he acts as the masculine
protector. When Ali asks her what she remembers from being picked up by him in Dhaka she ‘recited, word for word, almost a poem, what Ali had told her when she was a child. “You saw me. You found me. You took me. Right?”’ (218). The saw me, found me, took me, acts as a well-rehearsed mantra that Ali has created of the family’s beginnings. When Sajida and Ali finally speak about his time in the war he recounts a time in which, unbeknown to either of them until this point connects them. This new understanding is of a mud storm by a pit of corpses where Ali and other soldiers opened fire on a group of Bengali civilians of which Sajida was one. After hearing Ali’s story finally she realises that the ‘story of her beginning [...] was different than the one she’d carried with her since she was the girl of fiveandsix’ (254). Held within this realisation is another, that even if Ali had not found her by the side of the road, they

would have been forever joined by a pit of mud [...]  
Ali, her father, might once have lifted his rifle and blindly aimed in a torrent of rain and rising waves of heated fog - and shot her dead. (254-5)

This offsets the story whereby Ali rescued her from the side of the road, and replaces it with a story of wartime perpetration. As such the novel puts forward a narrative whereby stories of victims and perpetrators cross over in the moment where Sajida recognises herself in Ali’s story of opening fire on civilians.

In terms of the lacuna in Sajida’s memory up to this point, this comes to represent this experience in the monsoon, which is also indicative of the war; the same war that Ali has tried to leave in the past has created a gap in Sajida’s knowledge. Where a gap in knowledge of experience can point to the traumatic dimension of that experience, we see the discrepancy between Ali and Sajida’s relationship to the war through the lens of survivor and perpetrator.116 In relation to these distinct positions, Gabriele Schwab has argued for trauma discourses that

look at the dynamic between victims and perpetrators and see that both of them are suffering from the psychic deformations of violent histories, albeit in different ways and with different responsibilities. (72)

The revelatory exchange between Ali and Sajida introduces this dynamic and also exposes the distinct ways in which they (and their memory processes) have responded to their different relationships to violent pasts. Sajida has a lacuna that

116 I choose survivor rather than victim here to engage with the survival of victims and so emphasise their continuing of life.
points towards the war. Ali on the other hand has tried to put the war behind him, attempting to exercise control over the past, and as we have seen he has considered whether his own memory processes have been an attempt at constructing a narrative to persuade Sajida, again attempting to frame the past on his terms. However, the story he ends up telling her is unexpected; this exchange does not offer the safety of response expected or invested in by a rehearsed narrative. Indeed in this exchange it becomes evident that Ali is surprised or discomfited by what he expresses, perhaps revealing more than he anticipated, when he speaks his ‘chin trembled’ and he thinks about stopping the conversation but is compelled to continue by ‘his daughter’s anticipation’, which is ‘almost a spell’ (243, 242). As such Ali no longer dictates the terms of engaging with the past as Sajida’s anticipation becomes the spell that drives his revelations. The dynamic of who controls the memories of war, and the construction of the family origin story is thus reversed.

While Sajida realises she has a different origin story to the one she thought, Ali also realises the enormity of what he had done and of what he had been part:

But exposing it to Sajida made it perfectly clear: what he had done, what he had seen, what had, in fact, been the war, would go on happening inside him for as long as he lived. (251)

In this realisation Ali acknowledges that the past cannot be left behind, and that pasts of violence continue to exist within the perpetrators of violence; he reaches this through actually sharing his experiences and the guilt of his experiences. Where Ali’s attempt at constructing a narrative can be seen to forcefully fill a gap with his own take on a story, Sajida’s gap in knowledge suggests a lacuna caused by trauma. That Sajida recognises the context of the story Ali tells to her means that in this telling her memory is provoked to fill the gap in her knowledge. Furthermore, her simple statement of ‘I was there’ puts a counter telling into Ali’s narrative.

The enormity of the event in the monsoon comes to light precisely because it is a cross over moment of over- and under-determined memory narratives, and survivor and perpetrator positions. Furthermore, the importance of Ali’s revelations here are that they are done in public, in relation to Sajida. In this sense the novel points towards the public reckoning of pasts of perpetration that is required by both the family and the nation.
**Naturalised Difference**

The idea that Bengalis were not Muslim or Pakistani enough can be seen to underpin the military action in East Pakistan, and East Pakistan’s cultural affinity with Bengali Hindus was seen as un-Islamic (Haqqani 62). As outlined by Naila Kabeer, there was a great deal of suspicion that smaller and darker Bengalis were more recent converts and this made them more like Hindus (141). As discussed, language is a significant marker through which the tensions that led up to the war can be understood, and as Samad points out, linguistically Bengali Hindus and Muslims had the affinity of language (93). In this sense regional languages point to affinities across national lines and against the logic of the two-nation theory which asserted Muslims and Hindus as distinct peoples who represented separate nations. If Urdu represents the insurmountable differences between Hindus and Muslims, Bengali represents the connections that continue to be forged between the two communities. If Urdu upholds the separatist state, then the battle for the recognition of regional languages such as Bengali can be seen to challenge it.\(^ {117} \)

Language becomes one central way in which Bengalis were seen as not Pakistani and not Muslim.\(^ {118} \) Language can be seen to engage directly with the discourse of Partition, where religious identity came to supersede regional affiliations: the partitioning of both Bengal and Punjab stands as testament to this – the demands of new nation states surpassing those of regional unity and integrity. This reminds us of some of the contradictions explored in *The Heart Divided* whereby difference was constructed through the insistence of the separateness of communities. The interaction between communities in Bengal (due to less ‘complete’ migration) and the emphasis on a shared language demonstrates the lack of separateness in the region despite Partition. As such, the splitting of communities by the Radcliffe line can be understood as an incomplete and flawed process.

The racism and ethnic superiority that underpinned the actions of the West Pakistan army is peppered throughout the novel. In one of Ali’s first direct memories he recalls flying over East Pakistan and observing the ‘lush’ and ‘rich fields’. He recalls

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\(^ {117} \) While the same can be said for Punjabi, as I have pointed out in my thesis Introduction the migration in Punjab was much more complete than in Bengal, so the language did not generate anxiety with regard to ‘foreign’ influence as it did in Bengal. Punjab also dominated in terms of the army, so there was less of a battle for political enfranchisement attached to speaking Punjabi. For a discussion of the effect of Partition on Punjabi identity, see Kabir “Musical Recall”.

\(^ {118} \) The dichotomy of this, as Ayres points out, is that only 3% of Pakistanis had Urdu as a first language (43).
‘The land is black like the people, someone had said, only not as lazy’ (113), and ‘I remember thinking that Bengalis may be dim-wits, but they certainly had a lot of water and their fields were damn green’ (152). The frustrations of East Pakistanis are recast as ungratefulness in one of the Bengali jokes that Ali recalls, ‘Bengalis are so stupid they can’t appreciate what they’ve been given’ (157). As well as what Ali and others were told motivated the war, ‘[t]hat Bengalis, dark and stupid, not really Muslims, didn’t deserve their own country, their own leaders’ (214). Not only does this framing assert the inferiority of East Pakistanis, it also takes an imperialist tone through constructing Bengalis as not ‘deserving’ autonomy. The contradictions of the attempts by Pakistani forces to quash the uprising in Bengal emerge again here; Bengalis become the abject but rather than wanting to separate from the abject, Pakistan is determined to keep it as part of itself by force. Ali’s family unit comes to represent this incorporation of difference through Sajida, but moves away from the sense of abjection through her as Bengali being welcomed into the Punjabi family, and Nanijan thinks how she ‘accepted the deep color of her granddaughter’s skin’ (90). On her first night in the house in Islamabad Sajida whispered “alhamdulillah,” giving praise to God. Nanijan’s first though was, Where did she learn that? Before the thought was complete, Nanijan was ashamed. East Pakistanis, Bengalis, were Muslim, too, she knew. But somehow hearing the words spill from the child’s mouth made it true for Nanijan as it hadn’t been before. (84)

Sajida’s presence in the family can be seen as the catalyst for Nanijan reassessing her attitudes towards ethnically understood difference. Nanijan’s ‘where did she learn that’ belies her assumption that Sajida cannot be Muslim because she is Bengali, yet this scene also marks a moment of change for Nanijan as she realises the error of this supposition. In her efforts to make Sajida feel welcome and to console her when she is bullied at school for being dark, Nanijan dyes her hair black to match Sajida’s. Nanijan can be seen as the exception in this as underlying prejudice towards Bengalis is expressed by Hussein’s mother who thinks about ‘how much she had already compromised in giving her son permission to marry a girl much shorter and darker than she would have liked (91).

However, close engagement with Ali in particular reveals that he is not as far away from the logics of the war as he might think he is. In one of Ali’s memory narratives he outlines that ‘[w]e built those roads, you know. More money was spent after Partition building their roads than ours’ (212). Ali’s use of ‘we’, ‘their’ and ‘ours’
here is telling, emphasising as it does the distinction he is invested in between East Pakistanis (them) and West Pakistanis (us), even though both were at the time the same country. That Ali uses this logic to structure his reflections in the present points to how he is still implicated in his past. When asked by Noor to tell a joke, Ali falls back on the jokes of casual racism and explains to Noor how Bengalis were called ‘Bingos’ and tells several jokes ‘effortlessly, as if he’d heard them yesterday’ (155-7). He tells one joke then recalls several others that he does not tell to his granddaughter. The numerous jokes Ali can remember reflect the racism that underpinned the war, and reminds us of the jokes against Sikhs told in Khamosh Pani. That Ali tells one joke without realising the implications of what he is saying, and then explains to Noor how Bengalis were called Bingos without troubling the term suggests that although Ali has separated himself from the horrors of his past, he has not done this in a way that has established a critical distance from, or reflection on, its terms. If we take Ali’s family to be a microcosm of the nation writ large, the distancing of Ali implies that the nation has not engaged with the negativity of its past in constructive ways. This relates closely to the thirtieth anniversary of 1971 when General Musharraf of Pakistan visited the memorial to freedom fighters in Dhakha, describing Bangladeshis as family with a common religious and cultural heritage (Cohen 77). In relation to this visit Cilano argues that despite expressing remorse, General Musharraf did not do anything to resolve disputes between the two countries, such as claims for compensation regarding a destroyed economy in Bangladesh post-71. As such for Cilano, General Musharraf’s visit ‘did not address the direct consequences of the war, in effect isolating the war itself from its own aftermath’ (5). What Cilano is pointing to is that General Musharraf thus took the war out of linearity in terms of cause and effect. Ali’s cleansing bath on return from Bangladesh, enacted to purge his body of his war experience and emerge new was intended to draw a dividing line between himself and his past. This is an action that also isolates the war from its aftermath, that, as well as not engaging with the consequences of the war, does not unpick the prejudicial logics that led to the war.

**Noor, Disability, and Haunting**

Within the family, it is Noor’s drawings that prompt an engagement with the Bangladesh war. Her ability to draw scenes from a past she has never seen and of which she has never been told is connected to her disability in interesting ways. Firstly I want to analyse the distinct ways in which Noor’s parents respond to her
drawings, and secondly to consider what function her disability serves within the novel's narrative in general.

There is a distinction between how Sajida and Hussein engage with Noor and her drawings. Hussein cannot abide Noor’s drawings and rejects her due to his fear of what they might reveal. His fear is based on the belief that the drawings reflected his daughter’s mind, amorphous and unformed, so much so that the ugliness of what she’d spilled onto the paper was the very essence of who she was. (43-4)

For Hussein the drawings are ‘amorphous and unformed’, they cannot be contained and they are not structured through narrative logic, and for this reason they are ‘ugly’. Later in the novel he reflects on this and realises that he was scared of what she might reveal (270). That what she might reveal is ‘unformed’ suggests his fear of the non-narrative, that she might reveal the non-narrative is a fear that she might reveal the trauma. Conversely for Sajida, the pictures reflect something she recognises or remembers and indeed provoke a bodily remembering for her:

she could almost see ripples of water running away from the edge of the beach. She could feel the sweltering days and hear the grind of her father’s fishing boat against the sand banks in the Bay of Bengal as it was pushed on land. (43)

Sajida can detect some meaning and representation in Noor’s non-narrative pictures whereas Hussein cannot. Likewise she can engage with Noor as a person, whereas Hussein only engages with her as a person-effect of a disability. That is to say that the disability becomes centralised, and her personhood is only a feature of the disability rather than vice-versa. In so doing he robs both Noor and her paintings of their content, of their meaning. To Hussein Noor’s exceptionality means she is deficient and unformed, he sees the pictures she draws as reflecting ‘how far [she] had yet to go’ (118); they come to symbolise her lack of development. As a result Hussein withdraws from his wife and daughter completely: he ceases to engage with Noor at all and sleeps on the sofa for many years. However, to Sajida they mean that she has privileged insight:

Sajida knew when Noor was nothing more than a dance inside her that Noor was connected to some other world in a way that no one else was. [...] Noor’s drawings – the depictions of things she shouldn’t have known – were evidence of this. (145-6)

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119 See Bennett for a discussion of the affective impact of visual culture and trauma theory.
The difference between these responses is distinctly gendered: the mother’s compassionate approach against the father’s frustrated and dismissive one. More than this, it is reflective of the distinct national histories of the parents. Sajida can see something in Noor’s drawings, and as in the quotation earlier, what she can see is Bengal. This is something Hussein does not have access to, Bengal is something he does not, or cannot see, whereas Sajida can. That Hussein cannot see Bengal in the paintings means that he reduces the paintings to an effect of Noor’s disability rather than to a reflection of somewhere different in time and space. This inability to see Bengal becomes reflective of a refusal to look at the past, and his fear of the non-narrative points to fear of the trauma that might be uncovered in looking to Bengal. This refusal to look is mirrored in Hussein’s avoidance of looking at Noor, instead he looks through Noor and reduces her to her (undiagnosed) disability. The moment when Hussein begins to try to make amends and re-engage with Noor and Sajida is significantly the moment where he looks at Noor:

Despite the fact that Hussein had mastered being blind to her - Noor stood in front of him in stark relief [...] For the first time and because she was demanding it rather than asking for it, Hussein was unable to refuse. Slowly and tentatively, he allowed his eyes to meet hers […]. (122)

Hussein looks directly at Noor and engages with her as a person, emphasising the import placed on visual engagement in the novel. Where previously he has only been able to engage with her as a failure, or as a not-yet complete individual, his ability to now see her as a person means that neither she nor what she does is reducable to her disability any longer. However ‘there was something about her talent that remained unsettling to him’ (203), suggesting that now it is the fact of the past she draws that he is unnerved by as he can no longer reduce it to something being wrong with Noor.

Clare Barker proposes that ‘Postcolonial literature is replete with exceptional child characters, often with physical or cognitive disabilities, who have privileged access to landmark social and political events; who may possess supernormative forms of knowledge or insight’ (2). Barker continues that disability often acts on both figurative and material levels with the child acting as both a metaphor and a participant. The depiction of disabled characters as embodied agents is largely missing from scholarship because they can be read so well as allegory, especially within postcolonial contexts (3). I argue that although Noor does not have a material approach to disability, this does not make the character of Noor allegorical but the
disability itself. As such, the narrative of the novel suggests that Noor’s disability is the embodied effect of the unresolved past that she draws. Gabriele Schwab argues that psychoanalysis has offered psychic haunting as a way to theorise how children of victims and perpetrators ‘unwittingly live the ghostly legacies and secrets of their parents and the parental generation’ (77). Alongside this Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok in The Shell and the Kernel discuss phantom effects that haunt children – a person can manifest symptoms that do not spring from their own life but from a parent’s or ancestor’s conflicts traumas or secrets. They use the notion of ghosts to address this and suggest that haunting becomes the internalised effect of unresolved trauma. Avery Gordon argues:

What’s distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely. [...] Haunting raises spectres, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future. [...] Haunting is a frightening experience. It always registers the harm inflicted or the loss sustained by a social violence done in the past or in the present. But haunting, unlike trauma, is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done. (xvi)

For Gordon, haunting interacts directly with a social violence and affects temporal linearity - themes that are similar to those associated with trauma. I argue that Noor’s disability is the embodiment of unresolved trauma, and that the effects of this are articulated through drawings. These do indeed lead to the something to be done, which ‘solves’ the problem of her unresolved trauma that is articulated through her disability. Once the family begins to engage with the past more intimately, her disability ceases to be considered, suggesting that she was stunted due to traumatic pasts. What is interesting in the novel is that the disability is never defined, it is a mystery that no doctor can solve, and so we never find out what it is exactly that is

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120 As Barker has pointed to, postcolonial literature and scholarship can erase the material experience of disability (3). See Murray and Barker (eds) for articles that address the intersection of postcoloniality and disability. See Barker for analysis of postcolonial fiction and disability, especially “Cracking India and Partition”. Also see the essays in Parekh (ed), which also interrogate the relationship between gender, disability and postcoloniality.

121 In Hirsch’s discussion of postmemory it seems as if the younger generation ‘remember’ events because they have absorbed them so intimately. Postmemory is not memory itself but it ‘approximates memory in its affective force’ (109). This formulation can be seen to apply to Noor, especially through her affectively powerful dreams of Sajida’s past. However in Hirsch’s formulation postmemory is passed down through the sharing of stories of the older generation, a sharing that does not take place in the novel at all. As such, to understand Noor as engaging (embodying) postmemory would be to undermine the spectral quality of her ability to draw events that there is no way she could have access to. As such, haunting seems a more effective way to approach Noor’s drawings (though as I go on to argue, the novel as a whole can be understood as a project of postmemory).
wrong with Noor. Her disability is like trauma in that it resists definition. Her ability to draw the past leads to the past being engaged with within the family, in turn leading to her disability being forgotten. The unknown disability thus acts as an allegory for the unresolved trauma; unresolved because the violence of 1971 has not been effectively engaged with, nor incorporated into the family’s origin story. Likewise Hussein’s consistent looking through Noor to her disability looks at the effects of trauma without being willing to acknowledge that this is what he is looking at, thus avoiding the acknowledgement of trauma’s ongoing and intergenerational effects. When the past finds articulation within the family through the insistence of the drawings, the disability alongside the trauma is vanquished. In this sense it is the unresolved past which disables her in ways that cannot be defined.

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder discuss narratives that use disability to put a story in motion but once the story has been established then the deficiency is forgotten or ‘left behind’ in what they term ‘narrative rehabilitation’ (56). Mitchell and Snyder are rightly critical of narratives that use disability as a communicative crutch, which they theorise as ‘narrative prosthesis’. Noor’s disability is indeed left behind in the novel, and her rehabilitation is not explained in the narrative, however I do not think we can reduce the use of disability by the novel to narrative prosthesis. Instead I propose that there is something very specific we can deduce from her normalisation, which is that her disability is an effect of her being haunted by the unresolved trauma at the origins of the family.

What is also distinct to Gordon about haunting is the ‘animated state’ through which the unresolved-ness of the social violence makes itself known. I propose that Noor’s dreams and drawings reflect the animated state of haunting, as the unresolved past emerges through them; the haunting can be understood as productive. Furthermore, the visions Sajida had when she was pregnant with Noor suggest that Noor is connected to some other world, and that this other world is the past. The narrative suggests that this connection is not a positive one, rather it is one that evidences the negatively haunting effects of this past world. In this sense, even Sajida’s engagement with Noor’s pictures and her disability does not register their full import. Noor’s talent with drawing is an effect of characterisation that acts as a vehicle for the disability allegory. Throughout the novel these elements are taken together, but at the end of the novel we are invited to engage with Noor as she puts
on make up and engages in play with Sajida. Put simply, as the novel ends Noor is just a child. Her appearance is identical to the vision Sajida had of Noor when she was pregnant, the vision that led Sajida to believe that Noor was other-worldly. In returning to the image of this vision, but this time materially, the novel proposes a new beginning but one where Noor’s spectral quality is simply the effect of bright makeup and hair dye on a teenage girl. The final visual of Noor proposes a normalisation to her as well as a new beginning, or a new beginning through her normalisation.

If we consider the family as a microcosm of the nation, this suggests that Noor (the nation’s future) is disabled by the perpetration of the nation’s past (reflected by Ali), and also its survival through trauma (reflected by Sajida). The realisation of Ali and Sajida of the embeddedness of both perpetration and survival at the origin of the family is what enables Noor to become normalised and facilitates the new beginning the close of the novel signifies. This is key to many of the discussions thus far regarding the ambivalence of national origins that are both survival through trauma and perpetration of violence. As discussed in relation to *Khamosh Pani*, alternate tellings of the nation’s origins are mostly in conflict, limiting the working through of trauma. *Noor* suggests that in order to have a ‘healthy’ future, stories of rescue need to be interrogated and the joint story of survival and perpetration needs to be engaged. Furthermore awareness needs to be established around how the borders of the nation are predicated on violence, and in the case of Pakistan in 1971, consolidated through violence on itself. Frequently in the novel Nanijan talks about how she tried to stop Ali from going to war. The tension that emerges in this is that if Ali had not gone to war, they would not have the family they have now as Ali would not have found Sajida. As such, the war is the reason for the family existing as it does. The family in its current composition, as the nation, was born through war and violence, which is something that cannot be escaped.

**Family, Forgiveness, and the Future**

Barker argues that the ‘trope of child development lends itself persuasively to narratives of nation building’ as metaphor, and that taking an allegorical approach, the damaged child acts as a symbol of the nation emerging from a damaging colonial experience (2-3). But I think Barker’s proposals can be furthered through considering the disabled child in relation to futurity. When we consider Noor in the
sense of children being symbols of futurity, she does not only symbolise the newly born nation, but the future of the nation. As such, the representation of Noor as a disabled child suggests the future is disabled. Noor’s disability being dropped suggests that the future of the nation can be ‘healthy’. While this is not to undermine the important critique that material experiences are sidelined, I think there is more to read in the allegory of disability in this novel.

Before Noor begins drawing and through her drawings insisting on the engagement with the past, Ali considers his family (referred to in the novel as his ‘ready-made’ family), as the way he can move into the future generationally without ever having to face his past. Ali’s family life acts as evidence to [him] of how life should be lived: in the moment, full and whole, everything else cast aside, to pasts or futures, dissolving or as yet unmade.

That was what his ready-made family had done for him. To live, again, where he was sitting, rather than where he’d been. (70)

The family offers Ali a chance to leave the past behind him; it means he can be in the moment, or where he is sitting, rather than in the past. Not only does this make Ali exist in the present but it projects him into the future through the generational development of his family. Yet Ali represses his flawed intentions, although he knows that they underpin the origins of his ready-made family:

At the time, he’d believed his intention was to help the child. But as the years passed and he’d had more and more time to consider his actions, he knew he’d done it, not for her, but for himself. […] Taking the child home, making her his daughter, Ali worried that in pretending to save her he remained what he wanted, so badly, no longer to be. Ali preferred not to focus on this. (221)

That Ali is implicated in the past but chooses not to acknowledge this is key to how he thinks he can put the war behind him, how he can separate himself from the past through his ready made family as that which will move him into the future generationally. Yet it is a troubling of these very origins and a direct engagement with his perpetration that mean that this move into the future can actually happen.

Edelman has critiqued the weight the figure of the child holds as a representation of futurity, and proposes that the child is the 'emblem of futurity’s unquestioned value' (4). While I do not take up his critique here, I am indebted to Edelman’s text for introducing me to the idea of the child as a potential symbol of the future.
The novel’s climax and conclusion happens very quickly, ending with Sajida showing Ali that she has forgiven him or that she wishes their family unit to move into the future together, a mere two pages after realising the full implications of how their distinct positions in the war mean that he could have shot her. Forgiveness becomes central to how Sajida deals with discovering the perpetrator in Ali, with the final two sentences reading ‘Still on the floor Sajida leaned towards her father. Stretching, she locked her arms with his’ (260). The novel does not propose a utopian ending whereby Ali moves beyond racism or completely faces up to his past. This is very much not the case. What it proposes is that there has to be a way to move into the future when the past cannot be fixed. In Saikia’s interviews she charts how few perpetrators she interviewed showed remorse or regret (187). Remorse in Noor is shown to be crucial for a moving forward. When Sajida allows Hussein back into her life ‘she accept[s] him for what he had become, for the remorse he had shown that one single night’ (131). Likewise in relation to Sajida and Ali, she does not engage in forgiveness but a step towards forgiveness: ‘As her father spoke, she appreciated the tenor of what forgiveness might mean and that life’s pain, just like its love, was infinite and uncomprehending’ (132). Here Sajida begins to understand the implications of forgiveness. The violence of the past cannot be undone, the role of violence in forming the contemporary landscape cannot be denied, but there must be space for remorse beyond fetishising the past, which points towards a futurity.

The connection of Ali and Sajida through the relation of perpetrator and survivor means that the implications of the war are intimate and realised through the family. As Cilano has argued, the family’s reconciliation can only come about through reckoning with the past and that this is a stand-in for national integration (43). I agree with Cilano that the family acts as an allegory of the nation, but I think the novel also constructs the family to reflect the personal effects of national policies and actions. The conflict between Pakistan and Bangladesh is not just reflected within the family, but the impact of this conflict is experienced in the family. This is a subtle but crucial difference for understanding the critique the novel makes of nationalist moves that seek to sanitise history through vague refrains like ‘war is war’. According to Cilano, Pakistan’s official narrative of 1971 is very ambivalent regarding the use of violence in East Pakistan (26). Ali’s refrain of ‘war is war’ can be seen as adhering to this story. As a final note on the family and nation, it is worth observing that Ali’s actions in East Pakistan were legitimised by the Pakistani state. By forging a narrative that
begins to critique his actions in the war he diverges from the nation’s official telling, i.e. its history.

Robert Eaglestone argues that events that are witnessed and testimonies that are written act ‘not simply as a chronicle of events but as a wider, literary calling into account’ (127), and I argue that this is what Noor participates in, but more specifically it insists upon and necessitates the intimacy of this calling, because it is intimacy that facilitates Sajida’s willingness to move into the future with Ali. In this way I propose that the novel suggests the possibility for reparative futures, whereby pasts of perpetration and survival can become integrated. Sajida’s willingness here can be understood alongside Veena Das’ discussions of women who suffered violence during Partition. Das argues that some women made their peace with their abductors and ‘mourned the loss of the humanity of their abductors with them rather than against them’ (91). That the novel ends with Sajida’s welcoming of Ali into the play of her and Noor indicates that the potential for forgiveness, as well as calling the past into account, is what is required in order for the family unit to move forward. Rather than positing that moving into the future is a necessarily positive action, the novel suggests that moves into the future in positive ways involve incorporating the past without fixating on the past. Sajida is prepared to continue the life of her family with the new knowledge of Ali’s perpetration, the end of the novel suggesting the continuation that is to come. The continuation is hinted towards earlier in the novel: ‘[w]hen Noor was no longer a child, and the family’s stories were woven into knots and tangles’ (113), suggesting the movement into the future indicated by Noor’s growth out of childhood. In addition this points to the complexity and layers that the family’s stories are to develop, indicating that the incorporation of the past is to become increasingly complex. As Duncan Bell emphasises, ‘the manner in which societies ’remember’ their past is central in determining how they plot their futures’ (15); it is not just that the past be remembered that matters, but how it is remembered. The violence of the past must not be left behind, but it also must not become the fetish of contemporary identities.

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123 Rosello, who argues that narratives can do the imaginative labour required to move towards a viable negotiation of reparations, informs my discussion of reparative futures here. Rosello is specifically looking at the legacies of colonialism and the relationship between France and Algeria in her work.

124 McClintock discusses how nationalism contains a temporal anomaly whereby it veers ‘between nostalgia for the past and the impatient, progressive sloughing off of the past’ (359). This relationship
Conclusion

As in much criticism of postcolonial literature and disability, Noor engages with disability as both metaphor and characterisation. While Hussein attempts to reduce her drawings to an effect of an unnamed and undiagnosed disability, Sajida looks at the images for what they themselves represent in relation to her and Ali’s pasts: individual and national. This looking beyond does two things; firstly it enables the past to begin to be engaged with, and secondly it means she considers Noor as a person rather than as an effect of disability. I have argued that the novel insists that Noor not be reduced to her disability, but also that her ‘narrative rehabilitation’ as the novel draws to a close proposes that her disability was an effect of unresolved trauma. This trauma has now been engaged with and so her disability is ‘cured’. As I have argued, Noor embodies the effects of intergenerational haunting through her disability. The visual and non-narrative style of her pictures emphasises the implications of the unresolved trauma that she communicates through them.

I propose that the narrative of the novel performs the work of postmemory. M. Hirsch argues that

Postmemorial work [...] strives to reactivate and reembody more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression. (111)

It is through the novel’s own narrative that the conflict of 1971 becomes reactivated and reinvested through aestheticising these concerns through the structure of the family. In so doing the novel makes the past immediate. The novel transmits concerns from a contemporary writer whose novel uses tropes of disability and haunting to communicate the urgency of engaging with the past effectively. That the narratives close on forgiveness and family proposes that there is no way to undo the past, and that the most intimate relations are implicated in violent pasts and becomings. We need to not recast these stories as heroism or sacrifice but accept to the past is what I propose generates a fetishisation of the past, whereby origin myths are fixated on through nostalgia (or origin violence reified as sacrifice), and the culpability of the nation in violence is discarded. Anderson also points to the immutability of the nation, in that it ‘loom[s] out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide[s] into a limitless future’ (11-12). Through discussing futurity I do not aim to imply that the impression of the nation as moving into a limitless future that Anderson critiques is in fact a positive move. Rather I am arguing for a reckoning with violent and traumatic legacies, which means that the future is not marked by a compulsive return to the past. My figuration of futurity is to propose a ‘looking forwards’ as a positive move, as opposed to a ‘looking back’. Indeed, the move by which the nation incorporates its past as it moves forward necessitates the nation’s mutability.
how they inform the present. If the child is also the symbol of the future, then the future is haunted and hindered by the past unless it is accounted for. The literal calling into account that Noor enacts can thus be understood as a necessity for the family’s futurity. Finally I have argued that the novel’s engagement with difference is an argument for diversity within the family and the nation, as well as gender parity. Perpetration is one of the main problems in engaging with the past. Rather than looking back to what is lost and reframing this as heroism, the novel insists that there is a realisation of how the nation is born through violence. The novel reflects how the family unit is born of, and underpinned by, perpetration. This is most obvious in relation to the Bangladesh war, effected by the logics of difference from Partition and adding another layer to how Pakistan has been realised through violence. An acknowledgement of this, the novel proposes, enables a looking to the future, which in turn means that the past might not be so compulsively returned to.
Conclusion: Persisting Partition in Narratives of Pakistan

This thesis has attempted to unpick the contradictions and tensions that emerge in the articulation of a nation state realised through both anti-colonial nationalism and colonial bureaucracy; a becoming that was characterised by mass violence and displacement. A central concern of this thesis has been to interrogate what these conditions engender within narratives of Pakistan. What are the implications of legacies of violent histories for the articulation of the nation state and the subjectivities therein? Analysing narratives of Pakistan has enabled a consideration of the emergence, establishment, development and struggle of the nation in a postcolonial context. There is a generic story that emerges, which is one of the challenges of establishing a nation, and this complements the very particular story that emerges, which is that of the withdrawal of colonial rule and Partition. As outlined in the thesis Introduction, Homi Bhabha has argued for the failure of the nation to cohere under a homogenous moniker of identity; this thesis has attempted to address the implications of this failure to cohere in terms of the legacies of violent histories. What is at stake in the varying narratives of nation that are communicated and established? Is the narrative of the postcolonial nation always in opposition to the imperial narrative and what are the implications of moments of complicity?

I have structured this thesis to produce my own narrative of Pakistan, one that begins with the inception of an idea in the 1930s and extends to the contemporary. Within this linear structure the past is constantly present, a presence insisted upon by the cultural production I have analysed. The main focus of my argument has been to propose that there are consequences to the demands of, and erasures enacted by, national narratives; arguing that these consequences are explicitly gendered. The implications of this are that the imposition of borders, mass migration, colonial withdrawal and power transfer are not simple processes and feature multiple articulations of violence. The persistence of the past within cultural production suggests that violent histories cannot be easily detached from, especially when there is an ideological battle over how people’s stories and experiences are used and subsumed within dominant modes of historiography.

What my analysis points to is how the nationalist narrative becomes implicated in hindering the nation, through an insistence on looking back to manipulate the past in
the service of the nation, rather than looking forward through finding ways to effectively integrate marginal voices into its narrative. The texts I have analysed point to the implications of this lack of integration, and the simultaneous insistence on homogeneity, emphasising how the national narrative can become complicit with the imperial narrative through these processes. Through considering the potential for women’s narratives to disrupt the homogenising move of dominant national historiography, or in Khanna’s terms ‘cut’ across national narratives, my analysis emphasises the need to learn from the gendered subaltern, suggesting that listening to and learning from women’s stories can become a way to move towards a futurity for the postcolonial nation.125

Narrative

This thesis has deployed a number of methodological approaches in engaging with texts that construct narratives of Pakistan. In analysis I have unpicked the representation constructed within these narratives, but also considered how the texts themselves operate as a meditation on the function of narrative. In analysis of The Heart Divided I considered how Pakistan is narrated as the vehicle of hope for liberty and enfranchisement for Indian Muslims. Analysis of the novel critiques the ambivalence of the nationalist narrative as that which generates the investments required to bring a nation into being, but in so doing subsumes the violence of Partition into the national story. My reading questioned what is excluded in the service of the national narrative, and challenged the tools used to legitimate the authority of the imperial narrative in defining nationhood through population charts. My argument proposed that there is much at stake in the ways in which nations become established at the intersection of emotive narratives of a glorious past and reasoned narratives of national statehood. Where the imperial narrative constructed a story of successful withdrawal from colonial India, the national narrative becomes complicit in this by denying that the violence of Partition could have been avoided, instead framing loss and dislocation as necessary sacrifices in the service of national realisation.

Through my engagement with the women’s oral history memory narratives of Stories of the Broken Self, I analysed how women struggle to consolidate their memories of violence and loss within a narrative of the nation. While in some cases women

125 Learning to learn from the gendered subaltern is what Morton defines as Spivak’s ethical practice.
succeed in recasting narratives of violence as compensated for through affects of belonging, in others the formation of the nation of Pakistan does not adequately compensate them for the home they have lost. I argued that the structure of the film itself offers an insistence that the memory narrative forges links between contemporary national selves and previous selves; in this framing Partition and Pakistan become connected through memories of loss and violence. How the women narrate Pakistan and remember Partition raises many contradictions and tensions between those who express an attachment to the nation and those who do not, and how they narrate, or fail to narrate, the logics of difference that informed the communal violence of 1947. The narratives converge in the women’s dismay when they discuss gendered violence, emphasising the potential disruption of women’s stories on national narratives

In analysis of *Khamosh Pani*, I argued that competing narratives of Partition are specifically gendered. In the film we see how dominant national narratives reify experiences of loss and violence as sacrifice and heroism in the service of the nation. As these are explicitly gendered, women’s experiences must be controlled for the challenge they pose to the dominant telling. Through an engagement with trauma theory this analysis also considered the need for women’s stories to be articulated within narrative but in a way that honours the trauma of their telling. This raised a consideration of how narratives can compete for the stories they tell of the nation’s founding and within this there is a need to consider how the national narrative has not done justice to women’s stories or experiences. The film’s own play with narrative suggests that cyclical patterns of national politics will continue to repeat unless trauma is adequately accounted for in the nation’s narrative. The national narrative’s insistence on looking back is evidenced here as 1947 sets the terms for tensions in 1979 without considering how the nation will move into the future.

Finally, my analysis of *Noor* suggested that the Pakistani nation is haunted by the tensions and contradictions that emerge across the narratives examined in the preceding discussions. The narratives of a glorious past that promise cohesion for the new nation state become the very tool by which the nation is divided again. This investigation addressed how narratives haunt the present while simultaneously being haunted by the past. By considering how unresolved violence is transmitted across generations I argued for the place of futurity in narratives of nation and family. This
engagement took the notion of narrative full circle by revisiting the narrative terms of the nation’s establishment to implicate it as that which haunts and is haunted; in so doing pointing to how the terms of the foundational narrative generates the conditions for the national narrative’s failure to cohere across difference.

This consideration of how the narratives of Pakistan intersect with narratives of Partition returns us to a central concern as raised in the thesis Introduction: are all narratives of Pakistan necessarily narratives of Partition? Are all narratives of Partition necessarily narratives of Pakistan? These questions have underpinned much of the discussion in this thesis and led to the conclusion that the two cannot be separated. The Heart Divided, in making a case for the affective legitimacy of Pakistan, constructed the necessity of Partition as the means through which Pakistan would be realised. In so doing, the violence and death incurred by Partition are repressed in the service of the needs of the new nation being born. In Stories of the Broken Self we saw the tensions that emerge in how women’s memory narratives of Partition become articulated through the language of the nation of Pakistan. Pakistan is the rationale for the events of Partition, but also the entity that fails to adequately compensate for the violence and loss incurred by its becoming. Khamosh Pani insists that the patterns of violence that characterised the Partition continue to repeat across Pakistan’s political landscape. Nationalist sentiment relies upon a particular telling of Partition that is embedded in themes of heroism and sacrifice, insisting that Partition continues to underpin the development of the Pakistani nation. Noor, in telling the story of Pakistan’s territorial loss in 1971, relies on tropes established by the two-nation theory that led to Partition in 1947. My discussion here considered how interpretations of the Pakistani nation necessitated the Bangladesh war of independence due to the naturalisation of concepts of difference put in place by Partition.

The analysis offered in this thesis suggests that the construction of national narratives, and the challenge posed to these by more marginal narratives, continue to be constrained within the terms of nationhood. Nationhood, referring as it does to the mode of belonging to a nation, is embedded in the terms that engendered the becoming of the nation. Reference to the impact of the departing colonial power has been subtly but consistently made in this thesis and I want to return to it now to draw out the implications of narratives of Pakistan being inseparable from narratives of
Partition. Partition was largely necessitated through the imperial state’s role in the construction and manipulation of inter-communal conflict, the failure of the bureaucratic systems to successfully negotiate between the Indian Congress and Muslim League. The parameters of the new nation states were confirmed and realised through colonial administrators and imperial knowledge production.

Engagement with trauma, memory and gender points to the challenge of narrativising such an event. I have argued that successful narrativisation is crucial for the nation to imagine a futurity for itself, and where the challenges to doing so lie in the articulation of the violence incurred by the partitioning process, this emphasises how structural failures in ensuring a peaceful partitioning process continue to have ramifications for the new nation states produced in this move. In short, the embeddedness of the narratives of Partition and Pakistan in one another has implications for how we might understand the legacy of British colonialism on the subcontinent.

**Trauma and Gender**

Throughout the thesis the centrality of trauma as a way in which Pakistan and Partition are embedded in one another has become increasingly evident. Trauma theory has not only offered a method for analysis of the cultural texts but has become a tool by which the complexity of the negotiation between the nation and its origins can be mediated. My approach to the narratives through trauma has therefore taken a number of different angles. Understanding Freudian accounts that foreground lack of preparedness as central in distinguishing trauma from fright, I have considered Partition as an event that happened too quickly for the enormity of it to be absorbed by the individuals and the administrative units being affected. This framework has meant an engagement with trauma that does not individualise experiences of Partition, but situates individual experiences as connected to collective trauma. That is to say that trauma was experienced en masse, but also that trauma was a condition of the nation’s birth, and as such affects the narrative coherence of the nation. This is key to the tension that emerges between how Partition and Pakistan are inextricably connected. Pakistan relies on Partition as its founding moment, but due to the trauma of this founding moment its national narrative is also offset by inadequate engagement with the trauma of the founding. As such, and as I have shown, the structure of narratives of Partition that operate in the service of the nation prioritise a certain telling of violence that vanquishes its traumatic element. This telling is
masculinist in content through the discursive foregrounding of gendered concepts of heroism, sacrifice and rescue and masculinist in effect as it is prioritised at the expense of marginalised stories of loss, disruption and violence. As such, my approach to discussions of trauma has been to consider it as gendered.

As pointed to in the thesis Introduction, the gendered expectations of nation building have been much discussed, as has the pattern of women being reduced to symbols of nationhood and community in times of sectarian tensions and violence. The desire to engage with women’s narratives to place them as subjects rather than objects of history is not new. Not only did the violence affect women differently and to different degrees, but also the experiences of women at Partition were created by and created a gendered landscape that continues to effect articulations of nationhood and narratives of nation in particularly gendered ways.

Engaging with women’s narratives has been central to this thesis. In *The Heart Divided* we saw how elite women’s political engagements were limited in terms of individualism. The main characters of the novel did not engage with the materiality of lower class women, but instead engaged their emotions for nationalist ends. The novel puts forward the possibilities and limitations of anti-colonial nationalism, showing both to be inextricably connected. The very possibilities of nationalism engender its limitations, in particular where the elite characters do not take the opportunity to learn from the subaltern, or to engage with the subaltern to understand the systems through which they are disenfranchised. In *Stories of the Broken Self*, the necessity of listening to how women remember takes centre stage, as does the contextualisation of gendered violence within a time of communal violence. *Khamosh Pani* provoked an interrogation of what is at stake when women’s stories are not listened to on their own terms, but used in the service of masculinist nation building, and analysis of *Noor* continues the concerns of this line of enquiry by examining the disruption caused by the will to memory insisted upon by the character Noor. My engagement has not aimed to idealise or romanticise women’s narratives, but to consider their stories against the masculinist bias of conventional and mainstream historiography, as well as the ongoing manipulation of women’s narratives in the service of the demands of the nation and the family. In the narrative that has formed through this thesis, discussion has moved from the enfranchisement and agency promised (and frustrated) by nationalist rhetoric, to what women need to
forgive in order to continue the practice of everyday life. The route has gone via a discussion on the emotional labour required by women in order to satisfy familial and national demands, and a consideration of the need to attend to gaps in women’s expression as resistance.

The implications of this can also be understood in terms of content and effect. Both Khamosh Pani and Noor interrogate how traumatic histories continue to repeat across the political landscape of the nation. The tools of trauma have enabled a consideration of what is at stake in this repetitive cycle, returning us again to the question of narrative and the failure of dominant national narratives to adequately integrate gendered violent histories. Furthermore, I have framed this repetition as not only existing within the borders of the nation, but also producing borders of the nation through the secession of Bangladesh; again a time marked by genocide and gendered violence. Both of these discussions reflected on the cycle of national politics and determination, as well as critiquing that manipulation of the past, of people’s memories and experiences in the service of the particular national narrative. The tools of trauma in terms of repetition, narrative integration and aporia emphasise the ambivalence discussed in relation to The Heart Divided and Stories of the Broken Self where the contradictions of nations and nationalism began to be explored. Looking back to The Heart Divided in particular frames the hope of the Pakistan movement as a particularly ‘cruel optimism’, to use Lauren Berlant’s phrase. Here I argued that while nationalism can offer hope in sense of investment in abstract ‘better’ futures, the articulation of the nation that this hope engenders becomes one that necessitates loss of this hope.

**Contradictions of Partition**

Analysing narratives of Pakistan has led to an interrogation of the Partition project, and how far partitioning land can be considered a solution to ethnic tensions and the challenges of power transfer. As we saw in the national narrative of The Heart Divided, the difference between religious communities is proposed as so insurmountable that the only answer is Partition along religious lines. As Joe Cleary persuasively outlines, partitioning existing administrative units was generally a compromise by political leaders, made when the preferred political goals could not be realised. Joe Cleary posits that the logic underpinning partitions is that ethnically homogenous states will be more stable than heterogeneous ones, and as such
minorities become a problem that needs to be solved (22). *Khamosh Pani* echoes this tension and suggests that when a nation is predicated on such an understanding of difference then the nation nurtures a homogenous outlook meaning that it is less tolerant to minorities within its borders. As Cleary points out, even after large scale population transfers, significant numbers of minorities have been left on the ‘wrong’ side of the newly established national borders (22), and due to the insistence on difference that generated Partition these minorities become a threat. This is most obvious in the discussion of *Noor* where Hindus in East Pakistan are seen as a threat to national cohesion, due to their presence but also their influence on Muslims. In order to ensure national homogeneity the region was ethnically cleansed through warfare. Partition provides the rationale for understanding that the nation should be homogenous. It also underpins the desire of Pakistan to prevent the autonomy of Bangladesh in order to maintain the formation put in place at Partition, and to ensure that the national homogeneity insisted upon by the logic of Partition could be completed. Allowing secession was understood to effectively undermine the rationale for Pakistan through confirmation of its inability to maintain itself as a coherent nation. According to the White Paper on the Crisis in East Pakistan, the Pakistan army was sent in to prevent the autonomy of Bangladesh through quashing the rebellion because allowing Bangladesh to secede would ‘have been the end of Pakistan as created by the father of the Nation [Jinnah]’ (cited in Cilano 19). In order to insist on East Pakistan belonging to Pakistan, the region needed to be ethnically cleansed on Hindus and Muslims influenced by Hindus to ensure national homogeneity and complete the unfinished business of Partition. Reflecting back on *The Heart Divided* after analysing *Noor* reminds us that the naturalisation of difference that Partition was predicated upon has lasting ramifications beyond achieving national autonomy in the first instance. Furthermore we must consider that Partition proves not to be the solution it claims be. It is through looking at narratives of Pakistan that this limitation becomes most evident, as we must attend to the ways in which Partition constructs minorities as a problem to be solved. The channeling of minorities into a nation instills an anxiety around the existence of the nation, as the nation becomes the only avenue for articulation of enfranchisement. In turn this means that the nation must continue to assert itself regardless of the inherent contradictions.
As well as contradictions we must also consider the frustrations. If we look to Kashmir, the desire for distinct borders is something that can be seen to mark the Indian subcontinent post-Partition and is an area for discussion that this thesis points to. With Kashmir in mind, the project of Partition is exposed as incomplete. The dispute between India and Pakistan as to which country Kashmir should have been awarded to, alongside Kashmiri struggles for national sovereignty, emphasise the problems of national cohesion that Partition far from solving actually created. In relation to Pakistan, Bangladesh was a desperate attempt to hold itself together as a coherent whole. In relation to Kashmir, Pakistan has never actually been a coherent whole.126

In this sense, looking at Partition and Pakistan together upholds critiques of the nation as a primary mode of collective identification and belonging. The process of national becoming that I outline in relation to The Heart Divided is very much the story of the pitfalls of the nation (singular) being generated from the idea of a collective of individuals (Indian Muslims). In this shift, the heterogeneity of the collective becomes homogenous as a nation, via the affective vehicle of belonging. The move from heterogenous to homogenous underpins the entire thesis through the question of what it means for a singular identity to propose to speak for a heterogenous group. This proposal is not easily asserted, nor it is simply accepted, as the analysis in this thesis shows. The narratives of women in particular offset the masculine national voice that seeks to define the nation’s present, thus moulding its future, through a particular narrativisation of the past. In my formulation and analyses, it is the past that is at the centre of this production of narrative, and therefore it is the past that is central to any understanding of the present and of the future. As such, constructions of the past continue to have effects in the present. My methodological approach has pointed to how the individual cannot be separated from the collective in the texts I have studied, as the experiences of the individual are always contextual. What the narrativisation of Pakistan points to is the limitations of any approach whereby the one or the few stand in for the many, which leads to reductive homogenisation. This critique of homogenisation and of insurmountable difference is a critique of the very terms that led to Partition being reached as a

126 For critical material see Kabir “Cartographic Irresolution”, and Territory of Desire; for reporting see A. Whitehead A Mission and also Peer; for fiction see Waheed, and also Mattoo; for poetry see Ali. It has been one of the limitations of this thesis to have not had the capacity to engage with Kashmir in any detail.
logical solution. It is a critique from within the nation of the very terms that brought the nation into being. As such, any discussion of Pakistan that seeks to communicate a move towards a future in which heterogeneity is valued, and dominant narration does not operate through cynical usage of marginal narrative, is a discussion that seeks to move away from the traumatic conditions of the nation’s birth. In this sense then it is no surprise that texts that narrativise Pakistan performatively evoke the terms and themes of Partition. Partition becomes the dynamic by which the texts make sense of Pakistan’s current condition.

That the narratives do not look backward suggests that the existence of the nation is not one to be challenged, the task is to engage in narratives that show a movement into the future. While this is a move that is informed by the past, it is not trying to reclaim the past. This is the agenda of dominant nationalist narratives that wish to return to a mythical Islamic past and so are stuck in grappling over the past without being concerned about moves into the future. What my readings of the texts suggest is that the move into the future is one that can only be undertaken ethically once the past is accounted for. For the nation to move into the future there is a need to break out of the nation’s cyclical politics. The insistence on looking back has put in place the tools used in the Islamification of Pakistan that asserted the authenticity of Pakistan as having long claims to existence but dormant from 712 to 1947 when it emerged into the world of nation-states (Ayres 105-6). While 1947 continues to be called upon by national memory, Partition was already harking back to the Mughal period, demonstrating how a looking back is always being called upon in the service of developing and consolidating identities. This national trajectory centralises religion for the nation; as Husain Haqqani outlines, ‘the communal basis of Partition, coupled with the religious frenzy generated by it, made religion more central to the new state of Pakistan than Jinnah may have originally envisaged’ (10). The processes of a nation’s becoming are as central as the discourses that underpin it.

Pakistan is currently understood as a failed nation, as one being torn apart by communal conflict and foreign influence. This thesis has begun to analyse material in order to emphasise the wealth of cultural production from Pakistan, as well as the

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127 Pakistan is considered as a failed nation in terms of the U.N. index of failed states, but also in relation to Jinnah’s founding vision.
work done in these texts on imagining how the nation might integrate its past in moving into the future. As in Kamila Shamsie’s novel *Burnt Shadows*, structured around three time frames that deal with the nuclear attack on Hiroshima, the 1947 Partition, and the post 9/11 ‘war on terror’, there is an insistence that the dimensions of global politics be considered in relation to one another. As in 1947, global spheres of influence inform the ways in which nations move into the future. The commemoration of Partition recasts much of the violence of Partition in order to support a particular narrative of the nation state. Not only does this co-opt the experiences of women for the sake of this national narrative, it erases how colonial forces and knowledge production were implicated in what unfolded. Naveeda Khan has considered Pakistan’s attachment to Islam as problematic as its relationship to nationalism and foreign influence (25), suggesting that they need to be taken together.

Partition’s speed and the resultant lack of organisation around its future make up has had consequences for how the country has developed, something that the cultural production I analyse has grappled with – how to consider the present of Pakistan as separate to, but embedded in, its founding. This needs further unpicking, considering how the ‘war on terror’ and more contemporary geo-politics is impacting on how artists attempt to narrate the nation. The critique being made in my thesis needs to be extended to further emphasise the focus on historicisation, global politics and memory, through consideration of the position of Pakistan in the globalised world. Returning us to the idea that the national narrative upholds the imperial narrative, it is crucial to remember the critiques of Arif Dirlik who has pointed to the failure of postcolonial studies to adequately address the neocolonial dimensions of the so-called ‘post’colonial world. In considering Pakistan as a postcolonial nation, it is also crucial to consider it in relation to neocolonial power dynamics. As pointed out, the ongoing conflict in Kashmir is testament to how the impact of 1947 continues to be felt across the subcontinent. How this conflict is articulated within and through narratives of Pakistan, or indeed through the struggle for Kashmiri nationhood to narrate itself, is another area of study pointed towards in this thesis.
Concluding Remarks

This thesis has offered a critique of Pakistan through analysis of cultural production that constructs and challenges dominant national narratives. This has been to interrogate what texts from and of Pakistan problematise when engaging with national politics, through quotidian experience. In my analysis I have pointed to the distinct narrativisation the texts offer in terms of how Pakistan and those within it might move into the future and away from a traumatic repeat of its past, or more pertinently, its founding moment. As discussed in the thesis Introduction, Pakistan holds within it the reminder of Partition, and Pakistan as a nation acts as a site of commemoration of Partition. This has meant that the struggle is not over whether Partition is remembered, for the remembering of Partition is inscribed into the very existence of Pakistan. Rather tensions emerge over how it is remembered, in the service of the needs of the present.

The Heart Divided freezes us in a moment of victory at the achievement of Pakistan being confirmed as a nation, the celebration of the nation’s becoming, although claiming to go towards this vision, stops, thus not allowing movement into the future. Stories of the Broken Self suggests that any move into the future must ethically engage with its past, precisely because Partition connects Pakistan to its past. This is not to say there is a need to look back, for looking back to insist on the founding narratives of sacrifice and heroism can create an attachment to an identity of victimhood. Rather than in the service of looking backwards, the past must be integrated for the nation to look forwards, to embrace a futurity that does not keep returning to, or repeating, its past. As in Khamosh Pani, effective narrative integration of the past is required, rather than subsuming marginal stories into a dominant narrative, as the way the life of the nation can move into the future. The texts insist that until the past is adequately accounted for, and especially in terms of gender, violent patterns will repeat. The insistence, most clear in Noor, is that histories of perpetration need to be accounted for alongside histories of suffering, and that past and future must be imagined and engaged together. This indeed may be the biggest challenge in moving towards more reparative futures. The power of what is represented and produced through narratives of cultural production is that these texts can become the way to imagine reparative futures alongside what the challenges of these might hold. I have maintained the framework of the nation for

128 See Das (214), and Brown’s discussion of wounded attachments.
this movement because an insistence that it is the end of the nation as an entity of authority will not eliminate the past, nor should it. Rather than dismissing the nation, the texts I have analysed insist that we still need to grapple with the site of the nation; what it claims to offer and what it constrains. This project has argued that we must think of it in geographical and temporal context, in relation to the spheres of influence and histories that affect how nations are narrated.
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218


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