



## Residential Encounters with Historical Narratives: Traumatic Remembrances in Salt and Saffron

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received: November 11, 2023

Revised: December 27, 2023

Accepted: December 28, 2023

Available Online: December 29, 2023

#### Keywords:

Historical Narrative

Traumatic Remembrance

Partition

Agency

Identity

Collective Memory

#### Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### ABSTRACT

Kamila Shamsie's literary contribution as her 2nd renowned work of an art emerges as a historical narrative which emphasizes in shaping our understanding of the traumatic past and its impact on the present. It provides a framework for interpreting partition events, constructing collective memory, and shaping national identity as well. It explores the role of female agency in memorizing and passing down these reminiscences to the next generation by storytelling and portrays them as inheritors of the legacy pigeonholed by courage, bravery, and audacity to keep these traumatic memories. The present study aims to scrutinize identity, trauma, and memory as the three main themes, with the goal of understanding and illuminating the complex interactions between them. The novel deals with these three themes from a whole different perspective as Aliya shows some aspects of her identity as a postcolonial comeback and her dadi who experiences the partition by herself which becomes a traumatic episode of her life and eventually the memory that is quite prominent in the novel by every character. Maurice Halbwachs' philosophy of collective memory stands out as a crucial element that has a significant influence on how historical and sociological processes happen. He argues that the memory of individual develops while having a deeper interaction with the community and shapes according to the larger events beyond the capacity of that particular individual. Furthermore, it bridges the gap between imaginary presents and historical realities, as they conjure up alternative interpretations of the past while being grounded in the factual framework of historical events.

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## 1. Introduction

Historical narratives shape our understanding of the past and its impact on the present. They offer a framework for interpreting events, building communal memory, and establishing national identity. Individuals can recognise the importance of historical events and create flashbacks through various forms of intercommunication by examining historical narratives. These anecdotes serve as a means of exchanging recollections of major events; they also help to bridge the historical gap, restore memorization, and address historical (mis)representations or misconceptions. Narrative assessments also assist readers to explore the intricacies of their own and social history. By engaging with historical narratives, people are able to dispute the narratives presented by national historiography and debunk historical myths. They can include their own subjective memories and experiences into the larger historical narrative, contesting and changing the mainstream paradigm. Their narratives are distinguished by exchanges of

ideas between the general meaning of a specific experience and subjective interpretation or commemoration. Furthermore, these tales bridge the gap between fictional present and historical reality by conjuring up different interpretations of the past while being based in the factual framework of historical events. *Salt and Saffron* elaborates the theme of identity, trauma, and memory in a much broader way as Dadi's plot is dependent on memory in one way or the other. It explores the traumatic remembrances of the protagonist Aliya about Maryam Apa and Dadi's about Taimur in general. The interactions depicted within the narrative engender a compelling engagement with *memory studies*, as the reader is enticed to inquire deeper into the exploration of mnemonic processes and their significance. The *memory studies* in the field of literature have three major sources:

- Maurice Halbwachs
- Frederick Bartlett
- Aby Warburg

Halbwachs; French philosopher and sociologist, (the theorist of this present study) argues that the memory of individual develops while having a deeper interaction with the community and shapes according to the larger events beyond the capacity of that particular individual. It refers to the shared memories and representations that are widely accepted and propagated within a society. These memories are often related to significant historical events, traditions, and cultural narratives that are passed down from generation to generation. In addition to the larger society, individuals also belong to smaller groups which are including their family, their friend circle and some groups belong to religious associations. These social groups have their own collective memories, which are specific to their experiences and interactions. Halbwachs' theory of *collective memory* emphasizes the interconnectedness between individual and social memory processes. It underscores the significance of social context and cultural milieu in shaping how individuals remember and understand the past. His work has had a profound influence on the study of memory and the understanding of how societies construct their historical narratives.

In 1932, Bartlett demonstrates that when a person remembers things from the past, he or she does it in chunks, which Bartlett refers to as 'schemes'; sometimes one changes the flow of events while recalling them, and sometimes one adds new ones. It is also related to a person's current situation in terms of how current events shape his or her memories; for example, in the novel, Aliya remembers what her dadi said before partition; she simply imagines based on her own state of mind and assumes what her dadi says while things are still going on. Warburg's theories on memory studies are similar to Bartlett's schemes, which literature students are familiar with. Warburg's concept of the "Mnemosyne Atlas," a visual collection of images, exemplifies his belief in images' recall power and ability to awaken historical memories and emotions. He sees images as cultural memory bearers that may convey meaning over time and place. Furthermore, Warburg's concept of the "Pathos formel" or "Pathos formula" emphasises the enduring presence of specific visual motifs and symbols throughout history. According to his theory, shared emotional resonances connect the present and the past, and these archetypal forms are anchored in profound psychological and cultural experiences.

Shamsie's characters are deeply influenced by their past memories, which shape their identities and influence their choices and actions in the present. The protagonist, Aliya, is particularly affected by the past memories of her family and their heritage. She is constantly reminiscing about her ancestors and their stories, seeking validation and a sense of belonging in her own history. Her curiosity about Maryam apa's belonging leads to the truth of Dadi and Taimur. Aliya's attachment to the past is a coping mechanism for her present reality, as she struggles with her own identity and the pressure of societal expectations. Her memories of her grandmother, Dadi, and her stories about the Partition of India and Pakistan play a significant role in Aliya's understanding of her own place in the world. These past memories not only shape her worldview but also influence her relationships with others. For example, Aliya's memories of her grandmother's strong-willed and independent nature and Maryam ap's as well inspire her to challenge societal norms and assert her own agency. Maryam's resistance against class distinction leads Aliya to get the love of her life against all odds, which could become a

hindrance for both of them. Furthermore, the sociocultural meanings of these conflictive memories emanate from the relationships with place depicted. Throughout the novel, the characters in *Salt and Saffron* are deeply connected to their ancestral homeland of Pakistan and the memories associated with it. Aliya and Dadi's identities and perceptions of self are deeply influenced by their shared memories and experiences as part of their Pakistani diasporic community. Aliya, the protagonist of the novel, constantly grapples with her identity as a member of the diaspora and her longing for a sense of belonging to her homeland. She struggles with the tension between her personal memories and experiences, and the collective memory and narratives of her community. For example, in one scene, Aliya recalls a childhood memory of celebrating Eid with her family in Pakistan. This memory is deeply rooted in her individual experiences, but it is also a part of the collective memory of her community, as Eid is a significant cultural and religious event for Pakistani Muslims. Their sense of self and identity are significantly shaped by Aliya and Dadi's memories. The foundation of who they are and how they view their role in the world is built on their memories of family tales, customs, and experiences. Their memories are entangled with the collective memory of their family and the more extensive cultural narratives of their neighborhood. The novel dives deeply into the family history tying them to important historical individuals and events. Their views and choices are impacted by the recollections of their forebears and the legacy of terrible experiences from the past.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

The current study explores the intricate interactions between residential encounters and historical narratives in *Salt and Saffron*. This literary work's setting makes painful memories a prominent issue that begs for scientific inquiry into how historical traumas are shaped, recalled, and passed down within the family milieu. The struggles the protagonist Aliya and other characters such as Dadi have with their ancestry and cultural background serve to highlight the enormous influence that historical events have had on both individual and group identities.

### **1.2. Research Objectives**

1. To explore the themes of memory, identity, and trauma delve into the novel and to investigate the characters' interpretation about the family history and cultural heritage
2. To find out the role of women in preserving and passing down historical narratives and traumatic memories within the familial and cultural context portrayed in *Salt and Saffron*

### **1.3. Research Questions**

1. How do the themes of memory, identity, and trauma intersect in *Salt and Saffron* and how do they shape the characters' perceptions of their family history and cultural heritage?
2. What role do women play in preserving and passing down historical narratives and traumatic memories within the familial and cultural context portrayed in *Salt and Saffron*?

### **1.4. Significance of Research**

A detailed perspective of how historical events affect individual and group identities is provided by the study's examination of the characters' reactions to and surviving mechanism in the face of generational trauma. The present investigation adds to the larger, interdisciplinary body of work on trauma studies (and memory studies as well) and how it manifests in literature. It paves the way for future researchers to contribute in this contemporary field of research by adding their views regarding memory studies along with the significance of historical narratives.

### **1.5. Delimitations**

The research is limited to analyzing the novel *Salt and Saffron* as the primary source of investigation. There may be other literary works or historical events that address related topics, in order to retain coherence and depth of analysis, this research focuses entirely on the selected novel. This study is primarily conducted from a literary standpoint, concentrating on the narrative strategies used by the Shamsie to depict historical trauma. Beyond the scope of

the narrative the research does not explore the historical events (emergence of Pakistan) themselves.

## 2. Literature Review

This section of study is rendered to the scholarly reviews regarding *Salt and Saffron* while having the proper sequence of academic years as it shows the academic progress of this particular work of art by Shamsie. Shirazi (2014) in her article, *Tradition and modernity in Kamila Shamsie's Salt and Saffron (2000)* scrutinizes that the past traditions of traditional Pakistani family in exclusive and overall Pakistani society in common have replaced with modernity considering the reality of globalization and post colonialism. The validity of family claims is questioned, bias and class distinctions are criticized, and the relationship between feminism and patriarchal power is examined. Two sets of characters can be distinguished: the older generation, which consists of grandparents, mothers, fathers, and great-grandfathers, and the younger generation, which consists of grandchildren and their friends. The older generation takes great pride in their family history, reinforcing it with family trees, lineage maps, mementos, photos, and oral histories. The younger generation, in contrast, doubts the veracity of the past and retells the events to reach other conclusions. As Nyman (2009) suggests that Shamsie portrays this story of Dard e Dil family in an enriched manner which haunted the younger generation by the very specific historical event of 1947 Partition. Partition is in itself a hot debate of this particular novel; hence past is always present in present (1998). The Dard-e Dil family, whose members boast a royal pedigree and court affiliation with the Mughals, is the focus of the story. Aliya, the protagonist, points out the contradictions in their assertions. She asserts sceptically that the Dard-e Dil kingdom was fictitious and that their alleged ties to the Mughal ruling class were overblown. Unlike the Mughals, they may trace their ancestry back to the Timurid line, but they never created a kingdom. Instead, they relied their claims of superiority on family legend and titles bestowed after death. Through tales, the story also dismantles the family's assertions of superiority. In one tale, Babur, the man who started the Mughal dynasty, and Zain, the head of the Dard-e Dil family, engage in combat. Due to Zain's incapacity and favouritism, the family's competency and authority are called into question. Hence, the modernity questions over the superiority of Dard e Dil family besides deconstructs those norms which support some sort of mythical existence of events and characters as well.

Riaz and Babae (2015) in their article *Inner Alienation: Diasporic Consciousness in Kamila Shamsie's Salt and Saffron* argue that the diaspora identities always seem to struggle to have a stable identity; they are always in a survival mode to be seen by the foreign norms and be appreciated. They are constantly in a skirmish of remembering their tradition and caught in memories which shape their present day individuality among the clan. They name this kind of situation as 'cross-roads of culture' where they develop their consciousness depending on their surroundings. They are pushed by the memory of past and pulled by the current state of affairs where they are residing whether with family members or with the friend in US as in the case of Aliya. According to (Blunt & Rose, 1994) this is called 'aesthetic enthusiasm' as Aliya remembers, "...trees and houses and electricity poles silhouetted against the sky...the rustle of the leaves was a benediction. Karachi's nights remind you that you can love a place, and for me that's always been a reason to rejoice" (Shamsie, 2000). Hence, inner alienation is continuously visible in the diaspora identities and this constant phase of struggle is beautifully portrayed by Shamsie in the novel. So the idea of displacement; C. (2006) suggests that, this particular idea of displacement always has a deep concern with those people who have been displaced and have identity issues right now. As Rushdie (1983) argues that, diaspora people always float upwards from history, memory and even from time; since they feel some sort of emotional association toward their roots and homes (Clifford, 1994).

Zahoor (2017) in her work *Analysis of Kamila Shamsie's Salt and Saffron: A Postcolonial Discourse of Displacement* throws light on another hot debate while discussing the novel and its characters. She delves into the deeper discussion about post-colonial stance that all of its characters revolve around the change which is rooted in the partition of subcontinent. She, then, proves that this piece of art is a post-colonial discourse which suggests that the impact of the cultural and linguistic changes that came into the lives of an established Indian Muslim family are worth discussing as they provide different strategies for survivance. Their original

names were changed as a result of the introduction of an English governess who was trained in English mannerism. A case of cultural alienation can be witnessed here. In his letter, Taimur also discusses the harmful effects of English education on his command of Urdu, which led to linguistic alienation. Due to the partition the Dard-e-Dil family was further divided. Due to political disagreement over the subject of partition, Akbar and his family were uprooted from their native land, hence, resulted in alienation.

Osman (2020) in his article *The Struggle of Memory against Forgetting in Kamila Shamsie's Salt and Saffron* urges to remember the famous saying,

*The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.*  
— Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

Connerton (2017) argues that sometimes it is necessary to forget the things which are constantly haunting us; it is useful; since memories always accumulate (Marshall, 2007). Aliya narrates Dadi's (real) story as, "she almost waited sixty years" to listen this story by Salman after having the constant struggle to forget about Taimur's actions. Many events are exaggerated in a way in order to make sure the involvement of the reader in the novel as the class distinction and the fear of being married to a man who belongs to the lower strata of society by the older members of the generation; as history and culture are two main things in shaping our memory system (Bowker). For instance, the prospect of a life with a male from Liaquatabad, the impoverished area of Karachi, is inconceivable up to a certain point, even for a girl with Western education like Aliya who is otherwise imbued with modern literary and theoretical concepts. She comes to the conclusion that "our lives... are crippled by memories" after reflecting on the restricting nature of her experiences as a member of the royal family. The older Dard-e-Dils posthumously transmit these incapacitating memories to the younger Dard-e-Dils. In the context of the Indian subcontinent, particularly the Partition, scholars of Partition Studies like Saint (2019), Sukeshi Kamra (2015), and Ananya Jahanara Kabir (2014) have used the term "postmemory," which was first used by Marianne Hirsch to describe the intergenerational transmission of traumatic memories of the Holocaust.

Ms.Noushaba and Dr.Arokya Shylaja (2021) in their article; *Myths, Female Identity and Class Structure: Deconstructing the Family History in Kamila Shamsie's Salt and Saffron* reveal some of the notions regarding 'not-quite twins' myth, portrayal of strong and independent women in the name of Aliya, Mehr Dadi, and Maryam apa, and class hierarchy described by Khalil and Masood. They scrutinize the strong female characters by adding to their freedom of choice ignoring the fact that they belong to the higher strata of society and are unable to choose the partners from the lower class of the society, nevertheless, Shamsie lets them to go against the class hierarchy and traditional norms which are prevailed in the Pakistani society and marry her characters to their choice. In *Broken Verses*, she does the same where poet is indulged with the protagonist regardless of their hell different social strata of society. Maryam apa's stubbornness is portrayed as her strongest weapon against the set traditional rules of the existing society, and Aliya's admiration for Maryam apa is the indication for readers that she is going to follow her rule of law by choosing the partner belongs to *Liaqtabad*. Though she comprehends the hug of Maryam apa and Masood as "the hug across class and gender" (Shamsie, 2000) nevertheless, the rebel grows within herself as well, as she follows Maryam apa's footsteps to record her protest against the class distinction of Pakistani society in general. These reviews provide intensive knowledge while looking it from different yet unique perspectives or literary lenses including diaspora, post colonialism, deconstruction of myths, the clash between modernity and old tradition, class distinction and love affairs about this particular literary work by shamsie, nevertheless, this particular literary lens of looking this masterpiece as 'Residential Encounter with Historical Narratives along with Traumatic Remembrances' has remained unexplored. Thus, there is notable gap in academic research concerning this perspective; hence, the present article investigates aforementioned gap through a painstaking examination of narrative analysis.

### **3. Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

The present study is qualitative in nature and the text of *Salt and Saffron* is used for analysis. French psychologist and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs' theory of 'collective memory'

is used for its theoretical framework. Maurice Halbwachs was a French sociologist who lived from 1877 to 1945. He is known for his significant contributions to the fields of sociology and social psychology. Halbwachs is one of the key figures in the development of the theory of collective memory. His theory of collective memory emphasizes that memory is not an individualistic process but rather a social one. According to Halbwachs, individuals' memories are strongly influenced and shaped by the social groups they belong to and the societies in which they live. He argued that memory is a collective phenomenon, and individuals draw upon their social interactions and shared experiences with others to construct and reconstruct their memories. Halbwachs proposes that there are two main types of collective memory:

- Collective Memory of a Society; refers to the shared memories and representations that are widely accepted and propagated within a society. These memories are often related to significant historical events, traditions, and cultural narratives that are passed down from generation to generation.
- Collective Memory of a Social Group; In addition to the larger society, individuals also belong to smaller groups which is including their family, their friend circle and some groups belong to religious associations. These social groups have their own collective memories, which are specific to their experiences and interactions.

Halbwachs also highlights the role of "memory frameworks" or "social frameworks" in shaping how individuals remember and interpret events. These frameworks are the mental structures provided by the society and social groups, influencing what is remembered, forgotten, or distorted. The social frameworks act as guides for individuals to organize and make sense of their memories. Halbwachs' theory of *collective memory* emphasizes the interconnectedness between individual and social memory processes. It underscores the significance of social context and cultural milieu in shaping how individuals remember and understand the past. His work has had a profound influence on the study of memory and the understanding of how societies construct their historical narratives. *The collective Memory 1980* discusses Halbwachs' school of thought as that various groups leave their mark on the physical environment, and their collective memories are retrieved within the spatial boundaries they define. The representation of space varies depending on the group, and different aspects of space, such as ownership rights, economic goods, and sacred places, are used to create frameworks for enclosing and preserving their remembrances. He shifts his narrative to the idea of personal memory as well, emphasizing that even when recalling distant memories, individuals remain anchored in familiar spatial contexts. Despite attempts to strip away the spatial context, the stability of spatial images gives an illusion of continuity and allows memory retrieval. However, it is pointed out that the belief that we remember solely by transcending space is incorrect. On the contrary, it is the stability of spatial images that enables us to feel unchanged through time and retrieve the past in the present. Memory, by definition, relies on spatial stability, as space endures without aging or losing its parts. The discussion highlights the role of spatial representation in shaping collective and personal memory. Spatial frameworks created by various groups serve as containers for preserving collective remembrances. Moreover, personal memories remain connected to familiar spatial contexts, and stability in spatial representation allows individuals to retrieve memories over time.

*On Collective Memory* scrutinizes Halbwachs' philosophy suggesting the influence of individual memory on personal identity and social integration within the society. He posits that memory, as a dynamic process, is not simply an isolated cognitive function but rather a socially mediated phenomenon. Halbwachs contends that "*memory is subject to societal pressures and that it actively reconstructs itself in response to the norms, values, and collective experiences of the social groups to which individuals belong*" (Halbwachs, 1992). Within this framework, he presents two interwoven worlds: the present society in which individuals interact and the society immersed in thought where memories are stored and shaped. He highlights the agency individuals possess in managing their memories, allowing them to influence their thought-immersed society. This interplay between memory and society contributes to the construction of individual identities and the navigation of social interactions. Halbwachs further explores how "*personal memory affects family life and, in turn, transcends familial lines to include experiences from other cultures.*" (Halbwachs, 1992). Memories not only shape the actions and choices of individuals within their families but also influence the collective identity

of family units. Moreover, Halbwachs argues that shared memories can create cohesion among groups of people with similar recollections, fostering a sense of belonging and shared history. While families may share memories, Halbwachs acknowledges the existence of distinct variations in memories between individual families or social groups. These variations underline the nuanced nature of collective memory and the diverse perspectives that different groups contribute to the broader societal tapestry. *On Collective Memory* expounds upon the intricate interplay between individual memory, social dynamics, and the formation of personal identity. By acknowledging memory's malleability under societal influences and its role in shaping group cohesion, Halbwachs provides valuable insights into the complex relationship between memory and society. This theory of *Collective Memory* is apt for present study as Aliya and Dadi's memories contribute to the construction of their individual identities as Halbwachs suggests, while having the interaction with the society; their character development is given more depth by examining the impact of historical narratives and traumatic memories, which also sheds insight on the complex interaction between memory and the social context in which people live.

#### 4. Analysis and Discussion

The novel examines the intricate psyche of the protagonist and narrator as she grapples with the complexities of traumatic remembrance intertwined with the broader historical narrative. Shamsie compellingly explores the profound and intimate connection between the protagonist's residential experiences and their familial lineage, which, in turn, bears significant associations with the grand tapestry of the sub-continent's history. Aliya's interpretation of these intertwined themes of memory, identity and trauma adds depth and nuance to the narrative, fostering a thought-provoking exploration of personal and *collective memory* within the context of the region's historical evolution. Within the realm of Pakistan's Anglophone fiction, the portrayal of family stories serves as a potent vehicle for encapsulating the nation's history, effectively unfolding a mini-narrative that finds its place within the overarching grand narrative. This distinctive literary approach entails a profound exploration of the country's past, uniquely intertwined with the personal sagas of individual families. By delving into these microcosmic familial accounts, authors of Pakistan's Anglophone fiction deftly navigate the broader socio-political and cultural currents that have shaped the nation's trajectory. Hence, Shamsie, here, artistically explores such themes in this particular novel *Salt and Saffron* with the help of female characters such as Aliya and Dadi who play a vital role in preserving family history and passing down historical narratives with traumatic remembrances within the cultural milieu and the domain of their own lives.

The complex yet slight relationship between grief, lament, and mourning along with the hustle of 1947 partition is explicitly portrayed by Shamsie via eldest and youngest women of Dard e Dil family as Shamsie writes, "*there is no escape from wounding memories*" (Shamsie, 2000). In an abrupt turn of thought, the protagonist reflects upon the multifaceted scenario of both the partition of the Indian subcontinent and the partition of her own family. This cognitive shift prompts her to contemplate the intricate intertwining of historical events and personal experiences, wherein the macrocosm of national division mirrors the microcosm of familial disintegration. The confluence of these reflections offers a poignant moment of contemplation, inviting a deeper exploration of the complex dynamics between broader historical processes and the private, intimate realm of familial relationships. Thus, the assertion made by Halbwachs finds complete validation within the context of the present investigation; since Aliya's individual memory is not individual at all. Set in the backdrop of partition, her individual memory is made by *collective memory*; the terminology proposed by Halbwachs. She questions to herself that, "*how had they sustained, for so long, the bitterness brought on by the events of 1947?*" (p.33). This haunting memory which is not hers even is constantly haunting her and she later convinces herself to change the subject of her thoughts and her cousin Samia warns her too as she says, "*just don't say anything that could start a conversation about partition. And do not even begin to start to think about somehow indirectly referring to your grandparents*" (p.33). Dominick LaCapra argues, "*In post-traumatic acting out one is haunted or possessed by the past and performativity caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes ...*" (LaCapra, 2014). In working through, as opposed to acting out, one is able to "*distinguish between past and present*" instead of being entangled in the loop of melancholic past (p. 22).

The comparison of the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 to the partition of three brothers in *salt and saffron* implies that the division was not only a splitting of land and people, but also caused deep divisions and bitterness between the communities involved, similar to how the separation of three brothers led to conflict and resentment between them. This metaphor highlights the emotional and psychological impact of the partition, as well as the long-lasting consequences it had on the relationships and dynamics between different members of the family particularly dadi. Moreover, the comparison suggests that the partition was not a smooth and harmonious process, but rather a contentious and divisive one, similar to the conflicts that arose between the three brothers in the story; Akbar, Sulaiman and Taimur. This residential encounter with historical narrative suggests the macrocosm view of Shamise's artistic excellence as she uses the metaphor of partition for three brothers. Their story which Aliya started at the very beginning of the novel resolves in the ending chapter of *Salt and Saffron* by Salman. Before the mid- to late-1990s, when oral historians began to record stories, the only way that memories could be channeled and passed on was through family. Because of this, Tarun Saint argues that families are crucial in the context of Partition because "*family memory in South Asia became the primary vehicle for the inscription and transmission of memory due to the long absence/suppression of an archive of first generation survivor testimony*" (Saint, 2019). Hence, dadi's traumatic remembrances make the story alive in Aliya's consciousness.

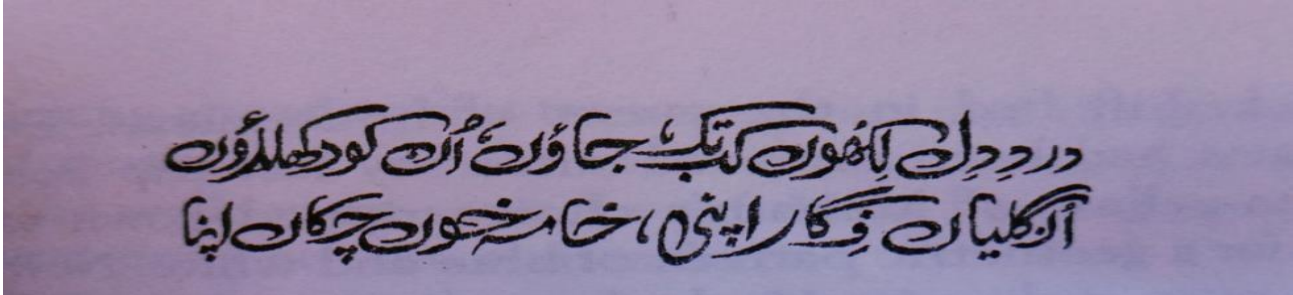
To add another evidence which manifests itself in Dadi's rigorous efforts to suppress the memories of her past surrounding the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Within the narrative, Dadi exhibits a deliberate attempt to repress or disengage from recollections associated with that tumultuous historical event. This aspect of her character serves as a notable illustration of the psychological impact of partition trauma, wherein individuals may employ various coping mechanisms, such as selective forgetting, to shield themselves from the painful and distressing aspects of their past experiences. Dadi's survival strategies in response to the partition gain valuable insights into the complexities of *collective memory* and the profound ramifications of historical upheaval on individual psyches. Her struggle against traumatic remembrance can be witnessed when she goes to another part of the world as soon as the monsoon season begins in Pakistan. Aliya narrates her adaptive strategy as, "*In avoiding the monsoons Dadi was avoiding those particular remembrances which do belong to her youth in Dard e Dil*" (Shamsie, 2000). It becomes the part of her identity to avoid those things which makes her uncomfortable whether it is about season which reminds her sub-continent or Taimur or it is about people as Maryam; the daughter of Taimur. The observable attitude which Dadi displays towards Maryam serves as a prominent manifestation of her own intrinsic insecurities. Since Maryam's mother and her relationship with Taimur remain unknown to others, Maryam chooses to remain silent about these substances and only confides to Masood. Aliya takes courage from Maryam apa to hold on her decision and stays bold about how she feels, particularly regarding Khalil. In stark contrast to Dadi's deliberate attempts to suppress her past recollections, the protagonist exhibits a propensity for retaining her memories without any intensive efforts to forget. While Dadi endeavors to distance herself from the painful aspects of her history, Aliya demonstrates a more introspective approach, wherein she embraces the remembrances of her past experiences. This disproportion in surviving strategies highlights the divergent psychological responses individuals may adopt when confronted with distressing or traumatic events. The protagonist's inclination towards remembrance, in contrast to Dadi's inclination towards forgetting, accentuates the intricacies of individual memory processes and underscores the significance of memory in shaping one's perception of personal history as Aliya suggests, "*Memory does not preserve. How horrifying that morning when you wake up and your first thought is not of the person who has left*" (Shamsie, 2000).

Halbwachs philosophy suggests that, it is the stability of spatial images that enables us to feel unchanged through time and retrieve the past in the present. Memory, by definition, relies on spatial stability, as space endures without aging or losing its parts. Hence, according to this, the setting of the places where characters use to reside is quite having a momentous prominence. Dard e Dil family in *Salt and Saffron* sticks to its past while having deep connection with images, old photographs and paintings of Urdu calligraphy which facilitates the retrieval and recollection of traumatic memories which is deeply rooted in the historical event of partition. The setting in which these memories are embedded serves as a potent trigger,



assisting individuals in accessing and recalling the distressing events they have experienced. As Aliya did not directly undergo the experience of partition whether the partition of Akbar, Sulaiman and Taimur or the partition of Pakistan and India, her empathetic capacity allows her to vicariously sense and resonate with the emotional upheavals of the ongoing situation. As Shamsie elaborates her emotional peak in her own words as she plays the role of narrator, "memory conjured up a picture of Maryam apa's room as it used to be. On the walls, Sadequain's pictorial rendition of one of Ghalib's verses. The accompanying couplet was one I could recite at the age of three:

**Figure 1**



*How long shall I write of my aching heart? Come! I will show my Beloved/ My Wounded fingers, my pen dripping blood" (Shamsie, 2000).* Chapter five presents yet another noteworthy instance of residential encounter along with the presence of historical narrative. It contributes to a deeper understanding of Halbwachs' theory of *collective memory* which shapes individuals through broader reality of life. Aliya remembers that how Dadi used to memorize her past in sub-continent even though she is blamed by Baji for splitting the family after partition. Aliya articulates as, "Dadi had cried when she missed the chance to meet the mysterious profrock relative from India. She had cried. Slipped down on the marble floor.... My Dadi sat on that cold, hard floor and though I was only a child I knew the tears she was weeping were old, old tears" (p.40). Subsequently, the role of women becomes apparent within the context of memory and historical facts. The observation of female agency and the participation in the processes of memory making and historical transmission constitutes a striking facet under scrutiny. It is the vibrant narration of Aliya which makes alive the story of Dadi while having a deep connection with partition history (1947) itself.

The novel portrays women as inheritors of the legacy pigeonholed by courage, bravery, and audacity to keep these traumatic memories while maintaining their significant role of preserving the memories and passing them down to the next generation as well which grants them ample audacity to preserve these memories steadfastly. In this novel, it is women who stand for themselves despite of having traumas in their lives; the trauma of missing Khaleel is evident in the case of Aliya, dadi misses Taimur but what actually is appreciating is Maryam's courage to choose. To choose what she thinks is best for her. Instead of living in a house where she is treated as a third person, she chose to live with a servant in freedom and independence. The rebellious yet bold enough character of Maryam gives Aliya the courage to hold the hands of her love of life as she writes, "Maryam's farewell gift to me : the courage to take Khaleel's hand in mine and say to my parents, say to dadi, say to Sameer and Samia and all the rest of them, just because a thing has always been so, it does not always have to be so" (Shamsie, 2000). Through an examination of the intricate interplay between traumatic events within the context of grand historical narrative and identity construction, this scrutiny elucidates the profound and enduring effects of trauma on an individual's personal narrative, shedding light on the intricate relationship between lived experiences and the shaping of one's identity; thus making Dadi's identity and Aliya's likewise. As Aliya expresses, "when we tell our stories our stories tell on us; they reveal what is and what is not explicable in our lives" (p.242).

## **5. Conclusion**

The exhaustive perception of how historical events affect individual and group identities is provided by the novel's extensive examination of the characters' reactions to and surviving apparatus in the face of generational trauma. Maurice Halbwachs' philosophy of *collective*

*memory* stands out as a crucial element that has a significant influence on how historical and sociological processes happen. He emphasizes that memory is not an individualistic process but rather a social one. According to Halbwachs, individuals' memories are strongly influenced and shaped by the social groups they belong to and the societies in which they live; and it is proved with the help of Dadi and Aliya's characters in *Salt and Saffron*. The present investigation adds to the larger, interdisciplinary body of work on memory or trauma studies and how it manifests in literature. Through an examination of the intricate interplay between traumatic events of Dadi and Aliya within the context of grand historical narrative of partition (1947) and identity construction, this scrutiny elucidates the profound and enduring effects of trauma on an individual's personal narrative, shedding light on the intricate relationship between lived experiences and the shaping of one's identity. As Aliya did not directly undergo the experience of partition whether the partition of Akbar, Sulaiman and Taimur or the partition of Pakistan and India, her empathetic capacity allows her to vicariously sense and resonate with the emotional upheavals of the ongoing situation. The protagonist's inclination towards remembrance, in contrast to Dadi's inclination towards forgetting, emphasizes the complexities of individual memory processes and underscores the significance of memory in shaping one's perception of personal history as well. Consequently, the residential encounter with historical narrative suggests the macrocosm view of Shamsie's artistic excellence as she uses the metaphor of partition for three brothers; Akbar, Sulaiman and Taimur proposing an equivalence between familial events and national events.

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