Revisiting Exile: A Case of Waziristan

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyse *Cheegha: The Call from Waziristan, The Last Outpost* by Ghulam Qadir with reference to the continuous war in Waziristan. Waziristan has been at the centre of the conflict since the arrival of the Russian invasion and then after the incident of 9/11. The USA launched drone strikes after the 9/11 incident to seek out the terrorists who are thought to have found a safe haven in Pakistan. The constant bombardment of drones has destroyed the customs and traditional folkways. This cultural genocide generated feelings of homelessness and alienation in the people of Waziristan which made them exiled to their land. The notion of exile has already been discussed in relation to the experience of migration or expulsion from the homeland. However, this paper appropriates the concept of exile to include the category of those people who have become exilic from within. It seeks to analyse the effects of continuous war via the projection of displaced feelings of the people of Waziristan. By integrating the theoretical perspective on exile developed by Avatar Brah, Bill Ashcroft, William Safran, Paul Gilroy, and Edward Said, and cultural genocide as theorised by Raphael Lemkin, Elisa Novice, and Lawrence Davidson, I attempt to highlight that the exiled are not necessarily migrants from another country but rather it is possible to be exiled within the boundaries of their homeland due to the loss of culture, folkways, and traditions.

***Key Terms**: exile, Waziristan, cultural genocide, homeland.*

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Introduction

Waziristan has become a war-torn land "due to post 9/11 events beginning with the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States in October 2001 and following deployment and military operations by Pakistan's security forces since 2002-2003" (Bajwa xi). Continuous series of military operations have not just resulted in massive killings but also ended up deteriorating traditional customs and folkways of the targeted region. This cultural genocide leads them to become exiled to their own home as it generates the feelings of homelessness and alienation in the people of Waziristan. In focusing on the problem of exile, I am suggesting that the tribal people of Waziristan should not be seen simply as a scattered community or immigrants. Instead, my concern here is to highlight how these people have become exiled entities within their own homes due to the erosion of their cultural institutions. This displacement is due to the diminution of their cultural practices which characterised their code of honour, Pashtunwali.

I argue that the trauma of both cultural genocide and the loss of their original land defines the experience of the tribal people of Waziristan. Dominick LaCapra has traced the relationship between traumatic events and the sense of loss. In his postulation, trauma is produced as a result of genocidal events like the holocaust which ultimately generates a sense of loss (LaCapra 49). It is important to note herein that loss entails the loss of both "the lives and the culture of the affected group" (LaCapra 49). In the case of the tribal people of Waziristan, it is the transmutation of the cultural patterns that make them feel diasporic and exiled in their homeland. While Diaspora generally refers to the concept of dispersion, dislocation, and the movement from the original homeland (Butler 189; Ashcroft et al. 61; Brah 178), the connotations attached to the concept of exile range from the meanings of the self-imposed separation to that of forced expulsion (Naficy 28; Wettstein 2). In both conditions, feelings of displacement are evident. Resa Mohabbat-Kar has drawn an analogy between exile and diaspora. For him, "one concept central to both categories is that of displacement - of being uprooted from one's home" (Mohabbat-Kar 9). Bearing this in mind, I use both terms interchangeably for this research.

In his recent debut, *Cheegha: The Call from Waziristan*, Ghulam Qadir Khan has traced the history of Waziristan and shows us both sides of the picture, before and after the war. He began his account by introducing the *Riwaj,* or the ways of fathers of the tribal community of Waziristan. It includes *hujra*, *melmastia* (hospitality), *badal* (revenge), dignity in serving, faith, and many more. He has also introduced the village of Waziristan and narrated its numerous festivals and ceremonies, including the festivals of spring, *De Gullono Nandara* (festival of flowers), *Bullodukky* (Thanksgiving), festival related to Dum and Dhole, *Tiga*, *Badragga* (escort), *Nanawaty* (unconditional surrender), *Panah* (asylum), their wedding ceremonies and the custom of storytelling. By narrating these incidents, Khan aims to show the real Waziristan, the Waziristan before the war. He contrasts this with Waziristan after the drone war and demonstrates the effect of the transformation of the native land on the tribal

communities of Waziristan. For the tribal people, Land is not only the place of belonging rather, "land is where their ancestors are buried and where sacred places are visited and revered" ("State of the World's Indigenous' People" 53). Attachment to the land is a marker of their cultural identity that has been disrupted by the war. Waziristan is no longer the old ancestral land that its native inhabitants knew, and as a result, they feel exiled in their homeland.

Waziristan and the Tribal Structure

Waziristan is a tribal area famous for its tribal ethos. Its foundation is set by the elders in *Jirga* - an institution common to central Asian tribes that consists of a public meeting of the notables of the community (Ginsburg 97) and is expressed through Pashtunwali. This practice of holding public consultation meetings in the form of *Jirga* is negatively affected during drone surveillance because people are too afraid to gather in one place, as one of the interviewees has mentioned in his interview with the author of the report "Living Under Drones" that, "they're always surveying us, they're always over us, and you never know when they're going to strike and attack" (81). Another interviewee also expressed a similar idea, stating, "[e]veryone is scared all the time. When we're sitting together to have a meeting, we're scared there might be a strike. When you hear the drone circling in the sky, you think it might strike you. We're always scared. We always have this fear in our head" (81). *Jirga* and *Hujra* are considered the first learning institutions for the young Pashtuns, where they learn all the tribal ethos, including hospitality and respectability for the elders. Targeting *hujra* and *Jirga* means targeting the tribal society's sanctuaries, which has also led to the cultural genocide of Pashtunwali.

Pashtunwali is the tribal code of life practised by Pashtuns all over the world. It is the name of a particular culture and civilization of Pashtuns which revolves around justice, hospitality, bravery, loyalty, righteousness, steadfastness, dignity, and revenge (Barfield 5; Glatzer 4; Amato 19). Although Pashtuns are primarily clustered in Afghanistan, with 9 million Pashtuns constituting 42% of its population, and in Pakistan, where an additional 25.6 million Pashtuns live and, in each country, they express complex divisions of tribes, subtribes, and clans, they all share a common code of honour, Pashtunwali. The traditional Pashtunwali has been seriously disrupted by continuous foreign intervention in the land of Pashtuns. Khan protests this in his text *Cheegha*, "besides the destruction of the physical infrastructure and the cost of lost opportunities, the Pukhtun nation is undergoing irreparable damage, losing the ways of the fathers" (316). Continuous war not only causes irreparable damage to the human lives of any society but also disrupts the very code of civilisation of that society. This seeks to prompt serious discussion regarding the strategy of counterterrorism and its contribution to the policy of the cultural genocide of the tribal people of Waziristan.

Cultural Genocide and Tribalism

The concept of genocide, specifically cultural genocide, offers a critical lens for understanding the devastating impact of drone warfare in Waziristan. Elisa Novic has introduced and defined certain elements of cultural genocide, and these are Linguicide (Elimination of language), Libricide (destruction of books, etc.), Eliticide (killing of leadership), Indiginicide (killing Indigenous people) (Novic 6-7). These multiple conditions that define the phenomenon of cultural genocide are evident in the selected fiction about Waziristan. In foregrounding these, I put forward an argument that all social institutions and cultural practices that are the markers of tribal people's identity are becoming moribund due to the constant war in Waziristan.

Linguicide, meaning "elimination of one or several languages" (Novic 7), is one of the most important features of genocide or cultural death. Barry Sautman takes linguicide and religious decline as the central element of cultural genocide (2). The US-led war in Waziristan has adversely affected the language of that area, which is Pashto. Language occupies a significant space in the lives of Pashtuns. Pashto language is not only a vehicle of communication but also a tool for the promotion of culture. In the novel *Cheegha*, Khan has invited us to consider the ways language is being appropriated as one of the devastating effects of the war on terror. The foreign security forces, which have been there since the time of the Russian invasion, are influential powers. These security forces have been there for their interest, as summed up by Khan,

> Every nation involved has its own interest. The Americans want to stay here; probably they don't want China to use Pakistan as a trading route or to keep a watch on Iran. The Russians want to bleed the Americans, Iran wants to entangle America, India wants to destabilize Pakistan, our leadership wants strategic depth in Afghanistan and the Arabs want their fighters to stay committed here. So, it's in the interest of all countries, including ours that this war keeps on dragging. (313)

Due to the presence of these nations, the native inhabitants have witnessed the creolizing effect on the Pashto language. They noticed a change in the original Pashto dialect due to frequent contact with foreigners. They did this consciously to camouflage their Pukhtun identity and be confused with the Arab forces who were funded by America in the war against Russia as they "don't have any national or international entity to fund or support [them]" (Khan 318). In general terms, it is described as glottophobia, which is linguistic discrimination or prejudice against one's native language. In *Cheegha,* Gul Dodi is mentioned as a victim of foreign influences and his glottophobia is evident from the "Arabicized Pashto" that he speaks (317). Khan mourns this situation by saying that "their [Pashtuns'] pride in Pukhto gone and forgotten" (320). Sautman envisages this situation as a necessary condition for Ethnocide. He points out that ethnocide is "not necessarily tied to the killing" but in the ultimate destruction of the ways of life and the denial of the culture and language of the indigenous people" (Sautman 10).

Language always carries the burden of one's identity. The enfeebling of language leads to the weakening of one's cultural and individual identity. This concern is highlighted by the researchers of FRC (FATA Research Center) in their study named "Impact of War on Terror on Pashto Language". They observe that the ongoing war has changed the pattern of the Pashto language because of the impact of foreign languages on it. It has become "more corrupted since common people got involved in the ongoing conflict" (8). New words like "terror, violence, insecurity, uncertainty, drone attacks and suicide bombings have been added to the Pashto language due to hard realities of war on terror" ("Impact of War on Terror on the Pashto Language" 2). It seems that the phenomenon of linguicide is especially acute while exposing the impacts of the war on terror. While advocating the importance of native languages, Ghanni Khan Khattak noted that "Language provides and determines the foundation of identity among people" ("Impact of War on Terror on Pashto Language" 3). Bearing this in mind, it could be claimed that linguicide is a direct attack on the cultural and individual identity of the tribal people.

In addition to language, religion is considered yet another important feature of harmony and unity in tribal culture. It remained "intact in its true spirit in the tribal society because of its isolation from external influences and strong support of Pukhtunwali" (Khan 81). Tribal people always take religion as an extension of their code of Pashtunwali. Elements such as helping each other, hospitality, serving the community, and promoting friendships are not only considered as Islamic injunctions, but they are also taken as sacred codes of living for tribal people. Therefore, the "tribal society is nearest to the Islamic way of life" (Khan 81). During the Soviet invasion, Mujahideen were trained to fight the communist Russian army, and millions of dollars were spent on the construction of splendid madrassas in the tribal areas of Waziristan "to produce zillions of Jihadis" (Khan 304).

The preaching of these Jihadis created a lifetime problem for the tribal people as their new generation was unable to comprehend the difference between the religion of their forefathers and the one introduced by foreign forces that had infiltrated the region in the name of *Jihad*. Students at madrassas were provided with textbooks replete with images of Kalashnikovs (Riaz 20) and posed the usual mathematics sums such as "[t]he speed of a Kalashnikov bullet is 800 meters per second. If a Russian is at a distance of 3200 meters from a mujahid, and that mujahid aims at the Russian's head, calculate how many seconds it will take for the bullet to strike the Russian in the forehead?" (Riaz 21). These children were misguided and indoctrinated with the politics of hatred. Khan complained that children were "trained in death and destruction, total annihilation without any remorse giving them a hundred justifications for their acts against anyone and everyone" (305). The religion of peace, which was previously in practice in Waziristan, has undergone the worst possible change. Khan, in his novel, raised this point that "new jihadi religion was propagated in the training camps different from the religion we knew" (306). The lifestyle of the madrassa students is replaced with repetitive rituals that have no connection with the true spirit of their religion. Furthermore, the true spirit of Jihad was never advocated to them as "madrassas were the

recruiting agency for militancy" (Khan 304). With the domination of the Arab lifestyle, tribal people begin to celebrate their Eid and Ramadan with Saudi Arabia. Subordination of these indigenous values has been ensured through the introduction of new interpretations of faith that are "alien" to the culture of Pashtunwali and the fine blend of religion, and as such Pukhtunwali has been disturbed (Khan 310).

Besides language and religion, which are the most important structural elements of the tribal society, the role of leaders equally plays its role in maintaining unity in a society. Leaders in the tribal areas are known as *Mashar* (elders). *Mashar* is the one who "maintains an overall discipline, advises the young on all affairs, keeps the family together, and ensures everyone in the family is treated fair and given equal opportunity" (Khan 92). They have immense responsibility of maintaining group identity and promoting cultural ethos. US-engineered killing practices have contributed to the policy of Eliticide that emphasized "the killing of the leadership, the educated, and the clergy of a group" (Novic 6). This point has been flagged up in the report generated by researchers of Amnesty International. They have reported that the US drone program has a direct impact on the people by highlighting certain incidents that involve the killing of the elder members of society in Waziristan. One of those incidents is the killing of Mamana Bibi who used to gather vegetables for her grandchildren ("US Drone Strikes in Pakistan" 7). They also documented "a series of drone strikes on 17 March 2011 that killed between 26 and 42 people in Datta Khel, North Waziristan, during a Jirga, or tribal council" ("Amnesty International" 14). Besides killing young children and women, drone strikes choose elder members of Indigenous communities as their major target. Iftikhar Firdous states in his article "Drone Attack Orphaned Whole Village" that "[m]y father was at a Jirga to settle a dispute of a chromite mine. The problem was almost resolved, but during this time, there was a drone attack, and he was killed. Our whole village was orphaned because all the elders were killed" (2011). Firdous' dilemma is important both in exposing the policy of Eliticide and cultural genocide. He is mourning over the loss of elders along with the loss of culture.

Ways of Father or the Cultural Ethos of Waziristan include important elements of Pashtunwali that are particularly threatened by war. Among these elements, *Hujra* and *Jirga,* considered the first training schools for tribal youth, were affected in the first place. As a result, *Melmestia* (hospitality), a defining feature of Pashtunwali, is also affected. *Hujra* is the place where all the programs, feasts, festivals, and ceremonies are held and is considered the "first training school of the tribal youth" (Khan 61-62). All the important affairs, including "learning [...] how to greet people," offering "hospitality" (Khan 62-63), and many more, are part of daily life at *Hujra*. *Hujra* is not just a "community place," but rather, it is a place of "guidance" and "learning" in tribal society. *Jirga* is also an essential part of *hujra,* where all the problems are discussed and resolved. *Melmastia,* or hospitality, which is an important element of Pashtunwali, is also the most prominent feature of *Hujra*. Children are taught to serve the guests from a very tender age. It is made imperative "to show hospitality and sincere respect to all the visitors irrespective of tribe, religion or the social status" (Khan 98). He pointed out,

"[h]ujra is the first training school of the tribal youth" (Khan 62) that no longer remains a part of our daily affairs.

Many other activities play a role in the unity and integrity of tribal life. These cultural activities are meant to bring harmony and peace into the tribal society. People assemble in such activities to socialise with their neighbours. Activities central to the beat of *dhole* (drum) are "integral and the vital part of Pukhtun life" (Khan 74); these are "as important to them as religion" (Khan 74). Ceremonies related to childbirth, marriage, death, and even revenge are initiated on the beat of the drum. The role of *dum* (the one who strikes the drum) is vital in this regard. His role is "central to the tribal life" (Khan 75). *Dum* is the one who makes announcements both at the time of "happiness" and "sorrow" (Khan 75). Besides this, festivals including *Bulloducky* (Thanksgiving)[1], *Gulluno nandara* (Festival of Flowers), and *Gowasht* (Harvest festivals) are also defining features of the everyday life of the tribal people in Waziristan. Tribal people believe in practising their instruments of administration to maintain peace and harmony in their community. Some of these are *Nikkat*, *Nanawaty* (unconditional surrender), *Badal* (revenge), and *Panah* (giving protection). *Nikkat* is a "share of the tribe or family, in profit and loss in the affairs of the tribes" (Khan 89). *Nanawaty* (unconditional surrender) is yet another defining feature of Pashtunwali that takes place when a person causes a minor harm to somebody and, as reparation, the elder of the family slaughters sheep or any other animal in the *hujra* of the aggrieved party. Slaughtering sheep is parallel to offering a feast basically, and in this way, it is considered a sign of surrendering on behalf of the group who is guilty. However, major crimes like intentional killing, rape, or kidnapping are not covered by *Nanawaty* (Khan 112). To deal with these crimes, a law named Badal (Revenge) is in practice. *Badal* (revenge) is essential in maintaining peace and is considered a debt that should not be left unpaid. Same as in the law of *Qisas* in Islamic culture, in Badal, a penalty is prescribed for the family who is guilty of a major crime like killing. *Panah* is the instrument in which protection is given to anybody who asks for it, even when the applicant is from the oppositional group. *Panah* cannot be refused at any cost. If a family is giving *Panah*, it means they are protecting the aspirants from harm and danger. These elements are considered the most essential ways of administration in Waziristan.

These codes of Pashtunwali have no longer remained a part of the tribal society of Waziristan due to continuous foreign intervention and drone warfare. All the festivals have ceased to exist in present Waziristan. Davidson asserts that if "natural localness is a starting point for group identity and cultural solidarity" of feared out-groups, then powerful groups may see it "logical to attempt to destroy the foundation of localness of these enemies" (19). Here, natural localness is reflective of those cultural elements that are necessary to keep the legacy of forefathers alive. It is a form of the "group orientation" and the "paradigm that flows

[1] Bullodukky is the ceremony of the thanksgiving and praise on any happy occasion e.g.; childbirth, marriage, arrival of somebody after ages and so forth. It is different from the thanksgiving ceremony celebrated in European countries as it is not limited to the harvesting period. Thanksgiving ceremony celebrated in European countries is usually at the end of the harvesting period.

from the customs and traditions of local and the regional venues" (Davidson 5). This very natural localness embedded in the cultural ethos of Waziristan was badly affected during the drone war.

In *Cheegha*, Khan is mourning over the fact that "the prolong war of the last decade has played havoc with our lives" (331). He has used the metaphor of "paradise destroyed" (Khan 331) for Waziristan ravaged by drone strikes. Festivals like *Bullodukky* (Thanksgiving), *Gulluno nandara* (Festivals of Flowers), and *Dum and Dhole* have ceased altogether. Khan's narrative captures this destroyed paradise by highlighting the details of the eradication of cultural ethos, "there is no bulloducky" (347), "gulluno nandara is prohibited" (346), "there is no festival of flowers anymore" (346) "dhole and dance are gone" (346). As mentioned, these festivals were the focal point of the tribal people's socialization. With the continuous bombardment of drones, these cultural festivals are no longer in practice. It has already been mentioned that the prime purpose of these festivals is maintaining harmony in the local tribal environment. Targeting these festivals means targeting the natural localness of the people of Waziristan that "takes place in the cultural context" (Davidson 4).

Similarly, the administrative system through which "tribesmen manage their affairs and achieve their objectives" (Khan 87) is constantly under threat. Khan mentions that "jirgas and marakas are banned" (351), "nikkat has been proscribed" (352), and "there is no panah" (352). Khan also mentions that "Pukhtunwali without panah is not Pukhtunwali" (352). *Milmestia* (hospitality) and *Panah* (giving protection) are considered the cornerstones of Pashtunwali that have been lost. Lemkin poses a significant definition of cultural genocide in this regard. For him, cultural genocide signifies a "rigid control on all the cultural activities" (84). He outlines this by using the example of the German occupants who strictly controlled every cultural institution of the Jews. While previously, wars were waged against monarchies and states, Hitler's war was waged against people. That is the reason that Lemkin terms this a cultural genocide based on the destruction of the cultural pattern of some groups (81). Destruction includes the policy of shutting down all the possibilities that help define the racial identity of a group. Considering the notion of cultural genocide in that way opens the possibility that some groups are targeted for systematic destruction. In the case of Waziristan, this thing is evident as all the institutions of their culture are being targeted simultaneously. They have been deprived of both cultural and artistic endeavours.

Libricide is another element of cultural genocide, meaning the "destruction of books and libraries" (Novic 7). Libricide includes all those strategies through which a targeted group's learning products and institutions are destroyed. In the era of drone warfare, tribal people face hurdles in the way of learning as the learning institutions are mostly under target by the members of the TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan). Many of the schools have been taken over by Pak security forces for the use of barracks and camps ("Dreams Turned into Nightmares"). Schools, training centres, and different educational institutions are being attacked to forbid the tribal people from receiving education, as mentioned by Khan in his novel: "There are no schools, they have mostly been blown off" (336). Chris Woods notes

one such incident in this regard. He mentions that "[i]t is one of the worst incidents of the entire drones campaign, yet one of the least reported. A CIA strike on a madrassa or religious school in 2006 killed up to 69 children, among 80 civilians" (Woods 2011). Michele Langevine Leiby and Saleem Mehsud have also expressed their concern over the disintegration of educational institutions. In the article "Conflict Makes Education Difficult in Pakistan," they mention that the Pakistani Taliban, as well as other insurgents, have bombed many schools ("The Washington Post"). Targeting books or educational institutions is another form of cultural genocide because books are rich sources of information about any society and educational institutions help transmit cultural values to the next generation. In the words of Rebecca Knuth, "books and libraries are the living tissue of culture; the burning of books . . . thus violates ideals of truth, beauty, and progress—and civilization itself" (1).

Tribal people in Waziristan consider *hujra* and schools as the two main sources of learning from where the tribal youth can receive education. Unfortunately, during drone warfare, both these institutions have been under attack, which undermines the tribal people's sense of civilization. Khan has complaints about the cruel nature of the war as its central focus is on the destruction of the culture and cultural heritage. He expresses his agony by mentioning that "there are no school-going children," as many of them have been blown off (336).

Khan believes that the cultural genocide of Pashtunwali would prove threatening to tribal people's existence. He puts it, "[w]e are not scared of war; the world knows that war brings the best out of us. It's the destruction of our culture, customs, and traditions, which took thousands of years to evolve that we are concerned about. Our way of life is under attack. Our very existence is threatened" (Khan 323). Khan seems to be worried about the destruction of natural localness and the cultural ethos. He adds, "It is not only the instruments of Pukhtunwali that are lost, the language, respect and honor have all been lost. Pakhto, a complete code of life is lost altogether" (353). Within this context, I argue that constant war in Waziristan has resulted in cultural genocide of the local culture of the tribal people, leading to the transformation of the original land and, consequently, making tribal communities feel exiled and displaced in their hometowns.

Tribal People and the Transfiguration of the Indigenous Land

Exiled identities refer to a group of people who are facing displacement and homelessness. Since the time of the Russian invasion, Waziristan has been facing hard times and bearing the loss of countless unregistered casualties. Conditions worsened significantly after 9/11 with the arrival of the American drones. It is important to note that the native people's relationship with their land is not limited to owning the plots; for them, this relationship is, in fact, "closely linked to their oral expressions and traditions, their customs and languages, their arts and rituals, their knowledge and practices in connection with nature, culinary art, customary law, dress, philosophy, and values" (Guerrero et al. 1). Constant military operations have destroyed the ancestral land of tribal people. This metamorphosis of

the ancestral land generates feelings of homelessness and alienation among the people which makes them feel exiled and displaced in their own homes. As described by Khan as "displaced persons, homeless in their own country" (Khan 322).

Khan's characters are not physically exiled, but they face exile within the borders of their homeland upon the alteration of their ancestral homeland and the extinction of their cultural mores. Their longing for the original land fuels their traumatic memories, and they become nostalgic about their ancestral land. A nearly similar notion is adopted by Edward Said in his essay, "Reflections on Exile," as he describes the state of exile as the "unhealable rift forced between human beings and a native place" (137). While considering this, my focus is primarily on transforming the original land, which is "ancestral land" for the tribal people. I argue that the original land's transformation is the source of the traumatic memories; they become nostalgic and look back to the land of their desire. Two things are evident here: nostalgia that breeds the traumatic memories of the past and the idealization of the ancestral land. This undying dilemma categorizes them into the exilic community.

In the chapter "Paradise Destroyed," Khan revives the past days and narrates the trauma of lost land. In his novel, he constructs a fractured and discontinuous relationship with the memories. For him, the green fields of Waziristan "lay brown, barren and thirsty" (333). The environment, once surrounded by green plants and green fields full of different varieties of fruits, now offers nothing but dust (Khan 333). All the "beautiful sights, the sweet smells, and soothing sounds are taken over by dust and dirt; there is a deep silence, a silence experienced before a storm" (Khan 333). These reminiscences breed the trauma that makes the tribal people feel nostalgic about the old ancestral land. Here, the trauma is symptomatic of "problematic engagement with the past" (Legg 103) and the inability of the tribal people to deal effectively with the past incidents. On this spot, the traumatic memories involve the remembrance of the old good days - the days before the war.

These traumatic memories nostalgically resurrect a pre-war Waziristan in the minds of the tribal people. Their dispersed position reminds them of their old ancestral home. They long to connect with the land of their origin via the scraps of nostalgia. Barbara Cassin's *When Are We Ever At Home* probes into the question of nostalgia. She defines nostalgia as the space of "all-foundings" and "re-founding" (Cassin 30). Similarly, Khan tells us that he "missed the crazy driving, saluting people enroute, playing music at full blast" (342). He mentioned that spring, which used to be the most beautiful time in Waziristan, is no longer to be witnessed. His constant flashbacks are irredeemably marked by his reflective nostalgia. He is trying to re-find and revive his ancestral space through repetitive nostalgic flashbacks. To borrow some terms from Paul Gilroy's "Black Atlantic," the people of Waziristan are creating "routes" through their sensate experience in order to connect themselves with their "roots," that is, with their forefathers' land (Gilroy 19). These experiences predominantly include the sense of sight and hearing. For instance, tribal people's witnessing of "barren and quiet" land reminds them of "lush green fields" (Khan 338), which is central to the experience of sight. Their encounter with the "smelled" (Khan 40) stricken environment revives the memory of the smell of "fresh

grasses or wildflowers" (Khan 333). Similarly, the sound of the "bomb blasts" (Khan 335) brings back the memory of the singing of birds. Such sensory flashbacks are central to the diasporic imagination, as observed by Avatar Brah, who states that "home is the lived experience of the locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, sombre grey skies" (189). Similarly, Khan's retrospective power is the "performative of the past" (30) that constructs his narrative in the present.

We see that the displaced tribal people also retain the collective memory of their past homeland. This situation can further be seen under the lens of William Safran's theorization about diasporic desires. For Safran, diaspora "retains a [...] memory, vision or myth about their original homeland, its physical location, history, and achievement" (83). This collective memory and vision of the original land is also very obvious when Khan talks about the forest of Waziristan. He is worried that now he would "never get a chance to see the oak and chalghoza (pine) forests as they all are gone, right up to the Shawal valley, all forests are gone" (Khan 332). It would not be wrong to mention here a comment by Salman Rushdie, who says, "exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back" (10) to the original land from where they were uprooted. These tribal people, who have been made to undergo the trauma of existence, are also haunted by the sense of loss, the loss of the past land. Their nostalgia, time and again, brings them back to their glorious past which overlaps with Rushdie's conceptualization of the "imaginary homeland" (10). To him, home becomes, primarily, a mental construct built from the incomplete odds and ends of memories that survive from the past. It exists in a fractured, discontinuous relationship with the present (McLeod 211). In light of this statement, it would be safe to argue that the selected narrative centres upon this question of an "imaginary homeland" that now exists in the memories of Waziristan's tribal people only.

Along with nostalgia, another fibre of exile is what Cohen called the "idealization of the supposed ancestral land" (185). Khan highlights another pivotal moment in the life of victims of war. When people encounter their land after the war, they feel "uninvited" (342). They feel excluded from their ancestral land. They face constant difficulty in thinking of this changed Waziristan in terms of home. They keep on wondering about family, relatives, and children. This strong idealization reminds them of those "days [that] started with the sweet melodies of birds and ended with flocks of crows cawing on treetops announcing nightfalls" (Khan 334). Cohen explains this idealization as "highly romantic fantasies" (185) of the old land. This highly romantic vision of the old land is knitted in the words of Khan. Khan, in his novel, claims that they are "proud" of the ways of his father. It is something they "romanced" about in their entire life (345). In Khan's account, the tribal people can also be seen as an emerging exilic community as their old land has also been transformed into a new land, which is entirely strange to them. Khan narrates with grief-stricken notes,

> The Bulbul has stopped singing, for it sings when there is peace and quiet, serenity and contentment. Today there is no peace and no quiet, no serenity or contentment; they

> are replaced by bomb blasts and bullet bursts, by pain and panic, so, what options are there for the poor Bulbul. It has to sing for that's what a Bulbul does and if it can't sing it will perish. Alas, it couldn't sing and perish, it did. (334-335)

Said calls this condition the state of exile. The essence of his argument is expanded by Bill Ashcroft as, "[e]xile is not necessarily the total separation from a place of origin but is rather a life in an interstitial space, where one never abandons the old but neither completely accepts the new" (182-183). Brah maintains, "[h]ome is the mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin" (188). Considering this lead, I argue that the home of the tribal people, which has been lost during the drone war has now become a place of "no return" (Brah 188) and thus, it only exists in the memory of tribal people and that there is "no return" to the previous state of existence.

The case of Waziristan invites us to consider the ways through which the tribal people have emerged as the new category of exile. This exile should not be seen as an immigrant from another country, but rather, they should be taken as those exile/ exilic communities who have become "displaced and homeless in [their] own country" (Khan 322). This has been done through the transformation of their ancestral land into the new land. Their ancestral land, which is characterized by multiple institutions of culture, has been replaced with the land that is central to bomb blasts and drones. In exploring this new category of exile, I hope to illuminate the relationship between cultural genocide and exile. Many critics have explored exile as an immigrant and an outsider. This paper offers the new category of exile that emerged from the experience of cultural genocide. In forming the connection between these two phenomena, I bring to light the case of Waziristan, whose inhabitants are the constant sufferers of drone war. I have given an elaborate account of those cultural practices that have deteriorated due to constant war. I have also examined the situation after the cultural genocide of the tribal people under the critical lens of the theory of exile. I maintain that the decades of war have destroyed the customs and traditional folkways. This cultural genocide generates feelings of homelessness and alienation in the people of Waziristan. As a result, their situation is no different from those who are bearing the traumatic experience of being exiled.

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