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**Affective Geographies and the Spatial Poetics of Exile in
Siddhartha Gigoo's *A Long Season of Ashes***

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Abstract: This paper explores the affective reconfiguration of space in Siddhartha Gigoo's *A Long Season of Ashes: A Memoir*, situating the narrative within contemporary discourses of exile, memory and displacement. Moving beyond historiographic and testimonial readings of the Kashmiri Pandit exodus, the study reconceptualises space as an effectively saturated construct constituted through memory, loss and the spectral persistence of absence. Domestic and cultural spaces, once sites of belonging, are reimagined as fractures and inaccessible while exilic environments acquire dense emotional significance. Through fragmented narration and evocative imagery, the text produces what may be termed "affective geographies" wherein space becomes a repository of trauma and a medium through which identity is continually negotiated. In doing so, the novel complicated the fixed notions of home and belonging, revealing exile as an ongoing, embodied experience rather than a singular historical rupture. The novel's spatial imagination also reveals how memory operates not as a static recollection of the past but as a force that constantly reshapes the present. While existing scholarship on Kashmiri Pandit narratives largely focuses on testimonial and political frameworks, this paper contributes a nuanced perspective by examining how emotional and spatial dimensions intersect to reconfigure the experience of displacement.

Keywords: *Affective Geographies, Exile, Displacement, Memory, Trauma, Spatiality, Kashmiri Pandit Narratives*

The experience of displacement, particularly shaped by histories of violence, loss and exile, has persistently demanded new critical vocabularies within literary studies. As Sandra V. Rozo and Guy Grossman posit, forced displacement “refers to the involuntary or coerced movement of individuals driven by circumstances such as generalised violence, persecution, conflict, natural disasters, or human rights violations” (5). While initial scholarships privileged historiographic reconstruction or testimonial authenticity, recent approaches increasingly foreground the affective and spatial dimensions through which displacement is lived, remembered and articulated. In this evolving critical landscape, the relationship between space and subjectivity has been coming into view as a pivotal site of inquiry, specifically in narratives that grapple with forced migration and afterlives of trauma. In such texts, space is not a neutral backdrop but is actively reconstituted through memory, emotion and conspicuous ‘absence’. This complicates, in a critical way, the conventional understandings of the concept of home, belonging and identity. It is within this theoretical and literary juncture where Siddhartha Gigoo’s *A Long Season of Ashes: A Memoir* deserves a relook.

Siddhartha Gigoo is a prominent contemporary Indian writer, novelist, poet and filmmaker who grew up in the Khankah-e-Sokhta neighbourhood of Downtown Srinagar between Safakadal and Nawakadal in a well-educated and culturally refined Pandit family (Parray et al. 1037). He characterises his writings as an “act of preservation” (Sinha) and has emerged as a significant literary voice articulating the lived realities of exile and displacement through a deeply affective and introspective narrative mode. Born in Srinagar and displaced during the exodus of 1990, his writings are pregnant with intimate engagement with memory, loss, and the fractured experience of belonging. His works, including *The Garden of Solitude* and the short film *The Last Day*, along with *A Long Season of Ashes*, are often within the broader corpus of post-exilic literature that seeks to negotiate the complexities of identity through recollection and narrative reconstruction. *A Long Season of Ashes*, in particular, can be analysed as a text that inhabits a liminal space where personal memory intertwines with collective history. The text’s fragmented structure and lyrical prose elucidate the instability of remembrance while evoking what is generally referred to as the ‘haunting persistence of loss’ in post-displacement narratives.

The Kashmiri Pandit exodus of the late 20th century serves as the historical backdrop of Gigoo’s memoir. Though the event triggered a significant body of literary and cultural production, much of this corpus has significantly centred on issues of political violence, historical documentation and testimonial representation. Nonetheless, these approaches have been indispensable in accentuating the gravity and urgency of the displacement; they often risk fixing the exile as a single, event-like rupture that occurred somewhere in the past. Such frameworks may unwittingly limit the interpretive possibility of texts that attempt to capture an elusive, ongoing and affectively charged aspect of

displacement where “memory became unmemory, space became unspace and time became untime” (Gigoo xiv). To the contrary, recent developments in trauma and memory studies have emphasised the necessity of moving beyond purely event-centred readings and instead attending to the ways in which trauma persists, transforms, and rearticulates itself across time and space. This study situates itself within this critical shift by exploring the affective reconfiguration of space in *A Long Season of Ashes*. It proposes that the narrative’s most important intervention is not to narrate exile but to nuance the very possibility of spatial experience. Space in Gigoo’s memoir is neither static nor purely geographical; it is deeply imbricated with memory, loss and shadowy residues of what can no longer be accessed. The lost homeland is not simply remembered, it is continually reconstructed through fragments, sensations and absences that resist closure. The spaces of exile are not depicted as empty or transitional zones, yet they are imbued with deep emotional textures shaped by the ongoing negotiation of identity and belonging.

Fundamental to the study is the concept of “affective geographies”, a term that captures the ways in which space gets overrun with emotional and mnemonic significance. In Gigoo’s narrative, domestic spaces once associated with intimacy, stability and security become inaccessible. It is fractured by the violence of displacement, as it is an “odyssey from paradise to hell” (Gigoo xvi) for him. The ‘home’ is thus not merely lost; it becomes simultaneously a site of haunting, structured by absence as much as by presence. This transformation challenges the conventional binary between home and exile, suggesting a more complex spatial continuum in which belonging is eternally deferred. As Gigoo himself says, “Imagine living in a camp for twenty-four years ... there can never be either a sense of belonging or a sense of identity” (xiv). The memoir’s narrative strategies play a crucial role in producing these affective geographies. Its fragmented, non-linear structure marked by discontinuities, temporal shifts and evocative imagery mirrors the unsettling consequences of displacement and trauma. These choices work against linearity and coherent reconstruction, completely aligning with theoretical perspectives that understand trauma as an experience that disrupts conventional modes of representation. The text doesn’t seek to provide an authoritative account of the past; rather, it foregrounds the instability of memory itself. This dimension of the narrative highlights memory’s role in shaping rather than simply reflecting lived experiences. In this sense memory is not just a passive repository but an active force that continuously reconfigures spatial and emotional realities. Furthermore, the memoir complicates the notion of exile as a temporary or transitional condition. Instead, it is depicted as an ongoing, embodied experience that permeates everyday life. It is an ordeal that extends far beyond the initial moment of displacement. This conceptualisation challenges dominant narratives that frame exile in terms of eventual return or resolution. In Gigoo’s memoir, or in other Pandit narratives for that matter, return is not only physically unattainable but also conceptually unstable, as the remembered homeland

has been irrevocably transformed by time, distance and trauma. Hence, the impossibility of ‘return’ becomes a defining feature of the Pandits’ exilic condition, reinforcing the need to understand displacement as a continuous process rather than as a completed event. Gigoo adds, “I’m still trying to discover life...knowing that the process is ongoing – it could take a lifetime. Maybe one lifetime is not enough” (366). By focusing on the intersection between space, memory, and affect, the paper aims to extend the deliberations on the Kashmiri Pandit literature in new ways. The paper demonstrates how the analysis of affective geographies enables a nuanced understanding of how trauma is lived and negotiated within literary texts. It also provides an opportunity to expand a broader methodological framework for engaging with other similar narratives of displacement and exile.

The present study is grounded within an interdisciplinary theoretical realm that engages with spatial theory, trauma studies, memory studies and effective theory to develop a nuanced analytical lens to examine Siddhartha Gigoo’s *A Long Season of Ashes*. The text’s resistance to singular interpretive models necessitate such a synthesis. That is, the memoir’s engagement with displacement cannot be adequately understood through historical or testimonial paradigms alone. Henri Lefebvre’s proposition, “(Social) space is a (social) product” (26), offers a powerful conceptual framework for examining affective and spatial dimensions of exile. Lefebvre, instead of treating space as a neutral, pre-existing container, redefines it as something that is actively produced by social relations, historical processes and power structures. This theoretical turn indicates a productive attempt at reading narratives of displacement, where exile is not simply a physical movement from one geographical point to another but a radical rupture in the lived production of space. Memory, affect and narrative space are reconstituted to create an affective geography of exile. This can be seen as exemplified by Gigoo’s memoir.

In *A Long Season of Ashes*, the loss of homeland is not merely articulated in territorial terms. It is reimagined through the disintegration of a lived spatial order. Kashmir, as remembered in the narrative, represents a socially produced space saturated with cultural practices, interpersonal relations and affective attachments.

Gigoo presents countless instances of it:

Our lives in Kashmir were full of outings and picnics. With every change of season, we would visit different places. We would travel to the holy springs of Verinag, the meadows in Gulmarg and Pahalgam, the hanging gardens in Nishat and Shalimar, the almond grove in Badamwari, the saffron fields of Pampore, the orchards in Ladhoo and Khrew and the waterfalls in Aharbal. We would spend days sitting in gardens under the shade of a Chinar ... We considered ourselves to be the luckiest people alive, for our

happiness and contentment was boundless ... such was our life in Kashmir. Full of beauty, joy and time. Time moved slowly there. (117)

He recollects Babuji as follows:

He doesn't have any friends. The only people he knows apart from his patients are Habib, Ahmed, Saleema and a tailor in the neighbourhood. He's quite close to them. Sometimes he sits at Shamboo Nath's shop ... He also spends some time at Bohri Uncle's shop while returning home from his laboratory ... but despite all this roaming and sitting at shopfronts, he is always back home on time. He is never late, not even by a minute." (151)

Gigoo remembers Babi with a unique feel of Kashmir:

In her heart, Babi didn't want to die. She wanted to live. She was a lover of life. The greatest lover I have ever known. All she wanted was her Kashmir. The Kashmir which, for her, stood for eternal seasons, for love, for mirth, for life, for happiness, for togetherness, for warmth, for laughter, for sunshine, and for all the things that are beautiful and desirable. (297)

Lefebvre's assertion on space becomes crucial here, as Gigoo's recollections foreground the intimate textures of everyday life – domestic routines and communal interactions – that collectively constitute the meaning of “home”. The violence of exile, then, is the annihilation of this complex, comfortable social fabric. This suggests what is lost is a mode of being in space, not simply a place. The memoir further illustrates Lefebvre's claim that socially produced space takes on a “reality of its own” (26) comparable to commodities or capital. The homeland persists as an autonomous presence within memory and exerts constant influence on the subject even in the absence. This persistence, in a sense, complicates any straight distinction between presence and absence. The remembered space becomes as real, affectively, as material conditions of exile. Meanwhile, the refugee camp, where most of the exile life unfolds, emerges as another produced space, shaped by political forces and marked by deprivation (of several kinds), poverty, surveillance and control. Gigoo recalls this contrast of home and exilic space as follows:

Staying inside tents means being exposed to the risk of snakebites, suffocation, and depression. Stepping out of the tent and spending time outside could give you heatstrokes and sunstrokes. A wretched barrenness prevails ... the summer heat has been atrocious this year; it is unbearable. (280)

I am back in the camp. I keep returning for reasons I don't quite understand yet ... I dislike here some days, but there are days when I find myself trapped in the most surreal and bizarre situations. Life is not normal here. Things happen here the way they are not supposed to. (275)

Our ancestors never used soap to wash their hands. Instead, they preferred soil and ashes from their courtyards and ovens – for them, the soil and the ashes were the most sacred and purifying things ever. In the camps, people longed for a fistful of soil and ashes from their courtyards and ovens. (132)

Of the times gone by and the years spent in exile, especially the 'camp years', I remember many people who, towards the end, lost their memory. They remembered nothing, neither bad nor good times. But they remembered things, places, and people that no one else did. Those things didn't exist. They transcended time, memory, reality and dreams. (366, 367)

His contention that space serves as a means of domination is particularly resonant here: the camp regulates movement, restructures social relations, and imposes new forms of spatial discipline. Yet this apparent spatial rigidity is never absolute. Lefebvre insists that space cannot be entirely dominated by the forces that produce it, allowing one to recognise how such imposed structures are continuously unsettled. Gigoos's narrative of memory and storytelling resists the totalising control of such imposed spaces, allowing alternative spatial meanings to persist. It is in this conflict between dominance and excess that Lefebvre's concept of spatial multiplicity is most enlightening. Space is not solitary. But it consists of overlapping and varied layers. The memoir portrays this complexity through the relationship between the remembered land, the lived realities of exile and the narrative space of recall. These spatial registers do not develop in a linear manner but live in a dynamic and frequently fraught connection in which the past constantly interrupts the present, even as the present reframes memory. This simultaneity deconstructs linear temporality and generates a spatial sense of layers, in which presence and absence interact. "Time, in the book, also acts as a parallel to space, the experience of being displaced and lost through history, geography, and the resulting identities (or a lack thereof) channeling through an experience of being displaced and lost through time. Time replaces space. Space replaces time. Both fragmented" (Mukherjee). This can be seen as a way of apprehending place as affective geography, as space that is composed of emotional intensities, nostalgia, sadness, desire, and dislocation that cut across and between these geographical levels. Gigoos says, "we will continue to divide our time between a real and an imagined home" (437). The motherland is near in its affective presence, but far in its physical absence. The camp is far in its affective absence and near in its material

presence. “And then came a day when an elderly man, fed up with this ‘time checking’ ritual, sighed. ‘This is a refugee camp. Time has no time for us’” (Gigoo 379). In this sense, memory and narrative are spatial activities that reanimate lost places and contest the homogenising logic of imposed settings. The existence of these other spatial meanings indicates that space, even when defined by institutions of power, is open and disputed and not reducible to unitary, monolithic logic. Building on Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of space as socially produced, this study extends its analytical framework by incorporating insights from Sara Ahmed, emphasising the circulation of emotional intensities within spatial formations. Ahmed’s claim that “feelings do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation” (8) provides a crucial lens for understanding literary spaces, in particular in stories of forced migration, which are filled with affect. Spaces are not just passive backdrops but active sites where emotions are generated, transmitted and reshaped through lived experience. “We were told that one should never get to leave one’s home. Home meant everything to elders. They never wanted to go away, even for a day. Such was their emotional dependence on their homes” (Gigoo 379). Gigoo’s story exemplifies this affective aspect of spatiality since it goes beyond simple location recall. Moments of silence, emptiness, and sensory recall are often woven with emotional states. Such moments, whether articulated through the silence of abandoned houses, the absence ascribed in domestic interiors, or the evocative power of remembered sounds and smells, can be read as sites of affective circulation. Space thus becomes a container of experiences and emotions that is constantly reformed through the interplay of memory and feeling. To further complicate the analysis, trauma theory is incorporated, which disrupts any simple temporality of space, memory and narrative. In the memoir, the past doesn’t remain confined to the historical moment of the exodus; it continues to inhabit the present, channelled through recurring images, affective intensities, and narrative returns. This temporal dislocation is central to trauma theory. Caruth conceptualises trauma not merely as the memory of a painful event but as an experience that is incompletely assimilated at the time it occurs and thus returns belatedly. The form, intrusive, repetitive and often involuntary. Her well-known description, “That trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (4), is particularly productive for reading Gigoo’s memoir. The wound’s cry does not symbolise suffering as a metaphor. It suggests the constancy of an event that demands recognition without becoming fully available to conscious mastery. Gigoo recounts his experience of leaving Kashmir at a formative age and the long-drawn-out circumstances of refugee life in the afterlife of displacement. The temporal movement of the text thus reflects the function of trauma itself; the past is not safely past, not entirely retrievable. Such fragmentation demands a reading sensitive to rupture rather than continuity. The memoir’s spatial memories do not reconstruct Kashmir as a complete, stable

or transparently accessible homeland. Instead, domestic interiors, neighbourhoods, streets and landscapes emerge through partial recollections, fleeting visual impressions and emotionally charged absences.

In *A Long Season of Ashes*, the notion of home is radically rethought: it appears as a deferred and often unachievable construct, not as a fixed locus of identity. While earlier discussions established the broader relationship between space, affect and memory, the engagement with domestic space in the memoir requires a more specific investigation into how the idea of belonging itself is disturbed by displacement. Gigoo's narrative interrogates the conditions under which "home" can be known, remembered, or inhabited after rupture. The text's account of the Pandit exodus and prolonged experience of camp life makes domestic space inseparable from the political conditions that determine who may stay, who must leave and who is allowed to claim belonging. The text thus indicates that the fate of home is entangled with questions of minority identity, territorial sovereignty, communal violence and unequal distribution of security. The memoir continually unsettles the assumption that home means permanence. Rather, it portrays home as contingent, fragile, and subject to historical forces beyond the control of the individual. The destabilisation is not enacted through theoretical exposition but through the cumulative effect of narrative fragments that evoke the erosion of domestic familiarity. The home is no longer a place of guaranteed coherence but a shifting referent, constantly reimagined yet never fully recovered. Domestic space is shown to be political, the home not simply a private refuge but a site through which larger histories become visible. A central strategy for expressing this instability is the emphasis on absence within the domestic space. Gigoo's descriptions frequently foreground what is no longer there: the emptied rooms, silenced voices, interrupted routines. The home is then built through a poetics of subtraction, where meaning derives from what has been lost, not what remains. This absence is not merely physical but deeply affective, producing a sense of estrangement that permeates even the act of remembering. Significantly, these images are more than signs of nostalgia. They reveal that the domestic space has become intelligible through loss, as a structure marked by subtraction. Its remembered details acquire significance because they are no longer available to ordinary habitation. This suggests an index of historical rupture, and it records a point at which everyday ceased to be continuous. Loss of home, the memoir suggests, extends beyond the instance of displacement and continues to develop through the persistent failure to live in the memory without reaching its boundaries. Scholarship on displacement similarly describes this relation as a form of "inner displacement", in which forced migration reorganises the subject's psychological and relational world rather than changing his or her geographical location. The inner displacement is given a literary form in the story of Gigoo, in the subject's splitting between the remembered spatial order of Kashmir and the material realities of exile.

Importantly, the text resists romanticising the lost home as a site of unproblematic belonging. There is the element of nostalgia to it, but it is tempered by an awareness of its own constructedness. Memories of domestic life are often mediated through fragments, isolated images, sensory impressions, and fleeting recollections that do not easily coalesce into a coherent whole. This fragmentation undermines the possibility of reconstructing home as a complete or stable entity. Instead, home appears as an assemblage of partial memories, each marked by the very absence it seeks to overcome. This dynamic requires a distinction between nostalgia and what Avtar Brah calls ‘homing desire’ – the affective yearning for belonging that does not necessarily involve returning to a physical homeland, but instead reflects a complex, often ambivalent engagement with identity and the politics of place” (Le Cui and Lin Song). Gigoo substantiates this argument by narrating an incident on his revisit to Kashmir after years of exile.

In 2009, when I went to Kashmir, I didn’t tell her about the trip, thinking she might get worried. But when Pa informed her that I was in Kashmir, she insisted on speaking to me on the phone. She called me and said, ‘You didn’t tell me that you were going home.’ Even after years of being in exile, *home* was still Kashmir. (302)

The desire for home is not necessarily identical with a desire to return to a recoverable origin. It may instead express the search for emotional and political belonging after the loss of an earlier location. The Kashmir remembered in Gogoo’s memoir, then, is neither a straightforward object of sentimental longing nor a fully available destination. It is reconstructed in the narrative, but all acts of reconstruction are haunted by the knowledge that both the remembered world and the subject who remembers have changed. Home is an object of desire, its importance partly lying in its remoteness from the present. The memoir’s fragmented recollection intensifies this transformation. Here, home being remembered as a series of impressions rather than a coherent whole is relevant because the fragment is not just an incomplete memory; it formally reproduces the incompleteness of belonging after displacement. This suggests that the home in Gigoo’s memoir functions as a haunted space. By ‘haunting’, I do not mean a supernatural condition but rather the presence of what has been excluded from the present. This haunting is particularly evident in the spaces that are recalled and imbued with emotional intensity. The inability to return, whether physically or imaginatively, transforms the home into a paradoxical space that remains intimately known yet irretrievably distant and lost. It is there as non-being, a liminal reality. Gigoo recounts his return visit to his old home in Kashmir “for the first time in eighteen years” (343), framing it as a moment of tense confrontation between memory and present reality.

I move from one room to another. Finally, Babuji and Babi's room. From the window, I look towards Eid Gah and the Tibetan refugee settlement. The drawing room...the almirah...still intact...the same almirah in which we kept Baijee's books – the books were looted in 1990. Everything is still the same ... And at last, my room. The room now belongs to the girl. The woman opens the door and leaves me there all by myself ... familiar signs are still glowing on the walls of my room. My name is still visible on the door of the room ... Everything is where it belongs. All my things are here. As if I never left and were merely waking up from a very long dream. (344, 345)

Haunting also disrupts the idea that the displacement has a beginning and an end. The moment of departure may be historically locatable, but the loss of home continues to unfold through camp life, adulthood, narration and transmission of memory. Displacement is therefore an event and an enduring condition. Studies on trauma and displacement show that traumatic experiences can cause inner displacement and a reorganisation of mental life. The emphasis here is on traumatic complexes. Gigoo's attention to domestic loss consequently expands the meaning of exile from geographical departure to the political negation of ordinary inhabitation.

The memoir also complicates the relationship between home and identity by demonstrating how displacement deranges the continuity of selfhood. If home traditionally serves as a foundation for identity formation; its loss creates a corresponding sense of fragmentation within the subject. But rather than depicting this disorientation as a negative state of affairs, the text suggests that it opens up new modes of self-understanding. The lack of a fixed home compels a re-evaluation of belonging, prompting the subject to negotiate in ways that are no longer rooted in a single spatial origin. This negotiation is there in the tension between memory and present experience. The remembered home exerts a powerful affective pull, yet it cannot fully account for the realities of displacement. As a result, the subject inhabits a liminal space between past and present where belonging is neither entirely lost nor fully reconstituted. This liminality is central to the memoir's exploration of the domestic space, highlighting the impossibility of resolving the tension between attachment and loss. At the same time the memoir does not portray the displaced individual as entirely passive. The loss of certainty in everything produces fragmentation, but it also forces new kinds of self-articulation. Once belonging can no longer be guaranteed by an inherited place, it must be negotiated through language, memory and narrative. Writing becomes a practice of reinhabitation. It is not a replacement for the lost home or a symbolic solution for exile; rather, it serves as a means of giving form to an existence that has been spatially interrupted. In this context, home becomes an ongoing process of negotiation. It is continually produced through acts of remembering, imagining and narrating, remaining resistant to closure. Consequently, 'home' in the text survives in altered forms – as memory, absence, longing, narrative

and ethical claim, and each form reveals its incompleteness. The memoir's key insight is that belonging cannot be restored by returning to a past image, since the past itself is ruptured by displacement. Gigoo's fractured homes, consequently, challenge the binary between home and exile: home is the site from where exile becomes intelligible, while exile becomes the condition through which home is retrospectively produced as an effective and historical question.

This paper has argued that Siddhartha Gigoo's *A Long Season of Ashes* reconfigures displacement as both an affective and spatial process through which home, memory and identity are continuously negotiated. The memoir's treatment of domestic space, exilic landscapes and narrative form shows that space is never a neutral container for experience. It is an active participant in the construction of meaning, shaped by loss, longing and political conditions that decide who may belong where. At the heart of this reconfiguration is the understanding of memory as a spatial practice. Memory in Gigoo's memoir is not a passive archive of the past. It is a dynamic, generative force that reconstructs lost spaces, invests them with emotional and symbolic significance and constantly reshapes the subject's relation to place. The duality of reconstruction, of presence and absence, simultaneously speaks to the complexity of forced migration as both loss and reconfiguration. As affective geographies are spaces created by the confluence of affect, memory and narrative representation, the concept itself provides a productive way of understanding the dynamic. In Gigoo's impactful retelling of the events, such geographies are evidently delineated through the transformation of domestic spaces into sites of haunting and the reclamation of exilic environments as emotionally charged landscapes. The text shows that the camp, the road of exile, and the remembered home are affectively saturated spaces, or affective geographies, through which the subject confers belonging, loss, and identity. This perspective challenges the static notions of home and belonging. By situating the text within contemporary theoretical frameworks of trauma, hauntology, affect theory, and the spatial turn, this study demonstrates that space functions as an active participant in the construction of meaning. This perspective not only enriches our understanding of Kashmiri Pandit narratives but also contributes to broader discussions on exile, memory and identity in literary studies. The reality of displacement thus becomes a relation between subject and space, where once-familiar places acquire the intensity of absence, while the spaces of exile become charged with the contradictory effects of alienation and attachment. Ultimately, *A Long Season of Ashes* invites us to attend to the interplay between affect, memory and spatiality to fully grasp the complexities of displacement as an ongoing embodied experience. The tension between attachment and loss remains unresolved in the memoir. It allows that tension to remain open, exposing the complex and unresolved nature of belonging after displacement. In doing so, the narrative offers a critical thinking of domestic space and exile, one that moves from

the conventional binaries to reveal the fragile, evolving and deeply human processes through which home is continually produced and lost.

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