

REPPRESSED AND SILENCED HISTORY OF 1971 IN KAMILA SHAMSIE'S *KARTOGRAPHY*

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‘Pakistan is split in two, but undivided. This world is out of date’ (Shamsie 1). The disintegration of Bangladesh or East Pakistan, as it was known as at the time, from West Pakistan, is an event in Pakistan’s history that had a deep effect on the consciousness of the nation. The way defeat faced in the war, which also saw the involvement of Pakistan’s staunchest enemy and its erstwhile conjoined twin, India, is painfully accepted or rather unaccepted by the Pakistanis has deep bearing on the psychology of the nation as a whole.

Kartography is a story of how wars and political turbulences, far from just affecting the countries’ borders, carry with them the oblivious germs of changing the intricacies of relationships and thus, have a far reaching, extremely complex and percolating effect on human aspects. It is a story of personal-political entanglement, narrating how a nation’s history has impact on personal equations, the way it alters life and creates permanent fissures.

A warm and layered study of friendship, love, and attachment to roots, it focuses on the interrelationships of a group of privileged elite residents of Karachi, specifically on Kareem and Raheen who, though, live a life sheltered from the ugly violence raging on the streets, still cannot completely cut themselves off from such a large scale disturbance escalating rapidly in the country’s major port city. The story develops as Raheen and Karim, thirteen year old when the story opens, begin to explore the reasons their parents - Ali and Maheen; Zafar and Yasmeen - had swapped partners before the wedding. The story behind the exchange of fiancées, revealed as an intimate personal story, has wider implications, since it is tied to the ethnic unrest of 1971, when civil war broke out between East and West Pakistan, and Bangladesh came into being. The novel, thus, also opens up a much repressed and silenced chapter in Pakistan’s history which had great repercussions on the country’s relationship with Bangladesh and India; and put question marks on the viability of religion as a binding force which was the *raison d’être* of Bangladesh being a part of Pakistan as M.J. Akbar recounts on similar lines: “Muslims who fought