

Ecological Memory Consciousness: A Sense of Place Attachment in Uzma Aslam Khan's *The Story of Noble Rot*

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Abstract

In recent years, ecological memory studies have experienced a turning towards place attachment as a significant concern of human consciousness. This growing field of eco-memory studies has notably enriched “our understanding of how memories of ecological change promote a stronger sense of connectedness”¹ with place attachment. This attachment functions as the basis for place-based narratives, but these narratives comprise eco-consciousness with nature attachment. Ecological memory refers to a community's collective knowledge and experiences about its environment, including the natural and cultural elements. Moreover, it highlights significant nomadic cultural practices that uphold cultural unity and produce rural images of places to preserve a shared sense of place value despite being settled far from it. This memory is essential in maintaining the ecological balance of an area and preserving its cultural heritage. In this article we apply ecological memory as a theoretical framework to examine Uzma Aslam Khan's *The Story of Noble Rot* (2009), using an ecocritical lens. We affirm that the novel's progressive moments endorse biodiversity conservation, environmental sustainability, and present a novel depiction of the Cholistan Desert in Pakistan as a place of eco-memory, eco-nostalgia, and eco-trauma, illustrating this canopy location.

Keywords: Attachment; ecocriticism; ecological; memory studies; migration.

Introduction

Ecological memory consciousness is a crucial component of comprehending personhood and an excellent term to start with when reconceptualising human cognition. Being eco-conscious critics makes us receptive to nature and the outside world. It is something that ties us to land and nature. Focusing on ‘place attachment’, this study examines alternative narrative surroundings of “ecological memory”² consciousness in Pakistani writings in English. Consciousness is a state of awareness of one's surroundings, thoughts, and emotions. In the context of ‘ecological memory’, consciousness is seen as the product of the interactions between the environment and the individual. The environment shapes the individual's experiences, which in turn shapes their consciousness and worldview. The concept of “place attachment is a complex phenomenon that incorporates several aspects of people-place bonding.”³ In literature, sundry books from various eras and genres portray natural landscapes

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¹ Olli Hellmann, ‘Collective Memory of Environmental Change and Connectedness with Nature: Survey Evidence from Aotearoa New Zealand’, *Memory Studies* (2022). At: <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980221114077>.

² Janine Natalya Clark ‘Re-thinking Memory and Transitional Justice: A Novel Application of Ecological Memory,’ *Memory Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4 (2021), pp. 695–712.

³ Irwin Altman and Setha M. Low, *Place Attachment* (Cham: Springer, 2012), p. 4.

as locations overwritten with the stories of humans who called them home. Such geographic representations in literature are made possible by the use of more nuanced concepts and language than the overused phrase ‘place attachment’. The sense of place attachment refers to an individual’s emotional connection with a particular place. This attachment is not solely based on physical attributes but also on cultural, social, and psychological factors. Individual experiences, memories, and beliefs about the place influence a sense of place attachment. It is an important factor in shaping identity and has been linked to a range of positive psychological and social outcomes. A number of crises define the current literary moment of twenty-first-century writings. Environmental change is more clearly felt than ever, encouraging ecological memory studies and place attachment in literature as ecocritical research. The contemporary standpoint focus on ecological issues has to be located in a particular “historical knowledge involves a dialogic process, in which the evidence presented in our created landscapes, urban environments, artistic creations, . . . as well as what we know from our personal and collective memories.”⁴

Uzma Aslam Khan’s debut novel, *The Story of Noble Rot*, first published in Penguin Books India in 2001 and reissued in 2009 by Rupa & Co., reinterprets the ecological memories of natural exploitation, material greed, and the characters’ hopelessness, thereby revealing the connections between nature and human consciousness. The novel is set in Karachi and the Cholistan Desert and follows the lives of several characters who are connected to the land and its people. The primary plot is set in Karachi, whereas the setting of dreams and thoughts is in the desert of Cholistan. The desert is a vital biome of natural resources, and the well-being of nomads within the region depends upon its natural products. The characters’ experiences highlight the role of ecological memory in shaping human consciousness and sense of place attachment. This novel is about a nomadic family who moved from the desert to a city and “lived in a part of Karachi.”⁵ Mrs Masood, whose husband owns a carpet factory, was a member of a nomadic tribe in the Cholistan Desert and their eco-consciousness belief system was deeply ingrained in her. Malika, wife of the carpenter Chaudry who works as a maid, and Mrs Masood, the wife of an industrialist, are the two women who attempt to flee their husbands’ defined lives in various ways and switch roles in the narrative.

On the narrative level, *The Story of Noble Rot* invites a broad spectrum of ecocritical readings that describe in cooperation, realistically and imaginatively, the Cholistan Desert and various “landscape[s]”⁶ of Pakistan, which have a significant textual presence in the novel. Through the characters’ experiences, the novel highlights the role of ecological memory in shaping human consciousness and sense of place attachment. The Cholistan Desert also plays a substantial role in the characters’ daily lives, clearly asserting nature’s influence on the human world: the Masoods’ plans for an extensive garden “had been inspired by a picture of Versailles Mrs Masood had seen in a book called *All The World Loves France*.”⁷ The novel emphasises the dangers and vulnerabilities faced by the region’s nomads, who have “lived for generations”⁸ there, and also the poor people of South Asia, from the broader perspectives of “environmental degradation” and “resource extraction.”⁹ This study focuses on the unique weaknesses of nomads, the importance of their unpaid labour, and the transforming impact of their resistance. The product of extensive research, this novel describes how global development has changed

⁴ Parita Mukta and David Hardiman, ‘The Political Ecology of Nostalgia, Capitalism Nature Socialism’, *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2009), pp. 113–133.

⁵ Uzma Aslam Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot* (India: Rupa & Co., 2009), p. 9.

⁶ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, pp. 107–08.

⁷ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 21.

⁸ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 108.

⁹ Nibedita Bandyopadhyay, ‘*The Green Sleuth: An Analysis of the Environmentalism in the Selected Detective Fictions of Sunil Gangopadhyay*’, *Green Letters*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2018), pp. 67–77.

the mindset of the common generation to exploit natural resources without caring for the well-being of a sustainable environment.

Khan's *The Story of Noble Rot* gives interesting images of childhood memories in the Cholistan Desert. The novel's protagonist Mrs Hinna Masood is an actively nostalgic character. In the desert of Cholistan there have been a number of industrial set-ups, like the noise of the "industrial centre,"¹⁰ "apartment complexes," and a "KMC sports complex."¹¹ Moreover, such abrupt "transformation of the local landscape, and later with the arrival of construction equipment"¹² has caused the further violent deforestation of the Cholistan environment. This physiographical transformation is witnessed by Mrs Masood, who belongs to a community of "desert nomads"¹³ and spent her childhood in the Cholistan Desert. Due to the migration of her family to Karachi, "She thanked him (Mr Masood) for bringing her to the city. Here life was secure and plentiful, unlike her impoverished, nomadic youth in the desert, dominated solely by the rains."¹⁴ Climate change and rising desert temperatures are the major factors pushing aboriginal people to migrate to neighboring areas in search of water and fodder. Khan emphasises that the rise in human population has become one of the most pressing concerns, and one of the most dangerous sources of environmental deterioration. The growing human population in the Cholistan Desert puts pressure on the dry region's limited resources, causing widespread destruction of vegetation, animals, and trees. It is true that the increase in human population has become a significant concern for the environment, and it can lead to various ecological imbalances. The problem is particularly acute in regions such as the Cholistan Desert, where the limited resources are already under pressure due to natural conditions.

The novel tackles the problems of the rising human population and urbanisation causing ecological imbalances. This message is especially crucial in today's world, where population growth and urbanisation continue to pose significant challenges to the planet's ecological balance. Chaudry, the carpenter, believes that "skill is greater than education."¹⁵ He forbids his son Momin from pursuing further studies, though his mother continues to support him and wants to send him to school. Chaudry would "say this while hacking dead wood, blowing splinters off its surface, smoothening edges adeptly with sandpaper, and stepping back to admire the emerging product."¹⁶ Karachi is a developing city in Pakistan that has a large number of new buildings and industries being constructed. Mrs Masood witnesses such a view of the landscape beyond the greasy windows "swiftly altering from congested streets flanked by drab apartment complexes to capacious boulevards flanked by coconut trees."¹⁷ The text does not serve as a transparent mirror of the novelist's intentions, which would only support the notion that nature is passive, inert, and receptive. Khan may not have ever visited the Cholistan Desert; therefore, it is possible that her opinions of the natural environment do not represent it accurately. Nevertheless, her portrayal challenges ecological memories and ultimately drives them to find new theoretical foundations by destabilising the line separating memories concerning memory, culture, and nature.

¹⁰ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 136.

¹¹ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 16.

¹² Justyna Poray-Wybranowska, *Climate Change, Ecological Catastrophe, and the Contemporary Postcolonial Novel* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), p. 193.

¹³ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 121.

¹⁴ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 11.

¹⁵ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 13.

¹⁶ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 13.

¹⁷ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 16.

Eco-Nostalgia: A Sense of Place Attachment

The term ‘eco-nostalgia’ has become common in “ecological modernisation” and has sought to internalise current “environmental issues”¹⁸ that have been affected by climate change and the destruction of the ecosystem. It makes us reconsider the connection between space, memory, and place. The concept of eco-nostalgia is rooted in the idea that humans have an innate connection to the natural environment that surrounds them. When people are separated from nature through urbanization, industrialization, or environmental degradation, they may experience a sense of loss, grief, or nostalgia for the natural world. The terminology of “nostalgia as a regret for a lost home, conveying the sense of a spatial impossibility to return, is well-known.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, with these significant geographic transformations and the associated subjective effusions, the spatial definition of nostalgia has been replaced by a metaphorical one based on temporality; rather than just being a longing for a past place, nostalgia has come to refer to a long-gone era. Nostalgia “helps to put together broken parts, builds a bridge between past and present, increases self-esteem and life satisfaction, and reinforces social ties.”²⁰ Place attachment is a “bond between an individual or group and a place that can vary in terms of spatial level, degree of specificity, and social or physical features of the place, and is manifested through affective, cognitive and behavioral psychological processes.”²¹ This analysis of this novel encourages readers to consider the changes that the early twentieth-first-century Pakistani society underwent, and the moral standards lost in contemporary culture. Mrs Masood spends a significant portion of her early story detailing the village where she was born and raised in Cholistan. She recalls how as a child “grandmother would tell me stories.”²² Her sense of identity and self-worth is tied to her memory of the community and the significance of “memory as an enabler of place attachment.”²³ Malika tells a story to her son Momin about her grandmother, “you won’t go back to sleep tonight after such a righteous dream, or you might forget it in the morning.”²⁴

Addressing eco-nostalgia brings back its spatial components and builds connections to the past, for wide-ranging people and places. In the twenty-first century, human migration is growing on a scale unprecedented before, and the threat of catastrophic environmental disasters has stoked eco-nostalgia. The character Malika, while narrating to Momin, says that she is “dreaming of her desert past, and imagining her grandmother beside her.”²⁵ Due to recent disasters, the Cholistan Desert people have been compelled to leave their now hostile home. Malika’s experiences in the novel illustrate the emotional impact of ecological degradation on individuals and communities. Malika’s sense of place attachment is rooted in her personal experiences but also in her cultural heritage. She is deeply connected to her people’s old stories, songs, and traditions, which are inextricably linked to the land and natural environment. Many people are likely to become nostalgic as a result of future community expulsions brought on

¹⁸ Timothy Clark, ‘Some Climate Change Ironies: Deconstruction, Environmental Politics and the Closure of Ecocriticism’, *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2010), pp. 131–49.

¹⁹ Olivia Angé and David Berliner, *Ecological Nostalgias: Memory, Affect and Creativity in Times of Ecological Upheavals* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2020), p. 4.

²⁰ Lynne C. Manzo and Patrick Devine-Wright, *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 53.

²¹ Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford, ‘Defining Place Attachment: A Tripartite Organizing Framework’, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2010), pp 1–10.

²² Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 63.

²³ Manzo and Devine-Wright, *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications*, p. 49.

²⁴ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 128.

²⁵ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 195.

by global warming, which has created severe issues and international tensions. Malika recalls her grandmother's tales, a lady with a strong connection to Cholistan:

A surge of sweet nostalgia overcame her as she thought of her grandmother in the shifting sands of Cholistan. But, like a drunkard who tried to keep a clear head, she urgently shook herself, realising that she experienced was mere nostalgia for nostalgia. She suddenly felt hopelessly barren.²⁶

Moreover, eco-nostalgia covers more horrific events that do not necessarily involve being disembodied. Under capitalism, our surroundings experience extensive and dramatic exosystemic transformation in a short time. Without physically moving away from it, the nomadic inhabitants of the Cholistan Desert lose their hostile places. A familiar area might become alien due to the invasion of “water, gardens, dew-swept grass, and rosewater.”²⁷ The main subject of this novel addresses the social and cultural identities formed around the emergence of eco-nostalgia. Nevertheless, this study contends that purely human-centered viewpoints fall short of explaining the significance of these desires, especially in the present perspective of “climate change and ecological catastrophes.”²⁸ Mrs Masood finds that “it was early November, normally still warm, but this year an ominous chill hung in the air. She would see to the quilt first thing in the morning.”²⁹ Nowadays, these areas are extended sites of extraction, “through the effect of ubiquitous ecological upheavals.”³⁰ The growing number of climate-affected refugees causes significant worries and international conflicts, and the eviction of communities due to global warming will undoubtedly lead to a large number of nostalgic people in the future.

When Mrs Masood returns to her homeland, she finds that the natural environment has been degraded and that the culture and traditions of her people are disappearing. In this context, her attachment to the land becomes both a source of strength and a potential source of conflict, highlighting the complex ways in which place attachment can interact with other forms of identity and belonging. This loss of cultural heritage, identity, and natural environment leads to a sense of grief and nostalgia. As Glenn Albrecht puts it, environmental damage connects the concept of nostalgia as “linked to a diagnosable illness associated with the melancholia of homesickness for people who were distant from their home.”³¹ The paradigm that has long pervaded Pakistani culture—that humans and nature are seen as an interconnected system—is replicated in this novel. This is significant because social actors may be guided towards creative self-organisation by their memories of such a worldview. Throughout the novel, Khan weaves together threads of history, culture, and ecology, to paint a vivid and complex portrait of place. One of the most powerful aspects of Khan's portrayal of place attachment is the way in which she shows the deep emotional resonance that can exist between individuals and the land.

Eco-memory: A Sense of Nature Attachment

In contemporary environmental writings, eco-memory frequently appears as a topic of literary studies. It considers how memory has been treated and in what ways we frugally refer to as ‘eco-memory studies’, which is how critics have understood cultural adaptation. However, the study of ecological memory is “founded upon similar principles of seeing the material and

²⁶ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 29.

²⁷ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 81.

²⁸ Poray-Wybranowska, *Climate Change, Ecological Catastrophe, and the Contemporary Postcolonial Novel*, p. 14.

²⁹ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 40.

³⁰ Angé and Berliner, *Ecological Nostalgias: Memory, Affect and Creativity in Times of Ecological Upheavals*, p. 4.

³¹ Glenn Albrecht, “‘Solastalgia’: A new concept in health and identity,” *PAN: Philosophy Activism Nature*, vol. 3 (2005), pp. 44-59.

cultural environment in consort with cognition and emotion availed through it to illuminate the emergence of remembering and forgetting.”³² In the context of this novel, ecological memory may be understood as the selective use of memories “to prevent you from forgetting” by the research to construct robust and evocative valuing scenarios that influence how nomadic individuals to store, represent and use ecological memory. The Latin word *memoria*, which means ‘mindful’ or ‘remembering,’ is where the term ‘memory’ originates. The role of memory “is not just to provide lessons for the present, but also to offer a corrective for past injustice and present misconceptions, responding to the duty to do justice through memories to others.”³³ Ecological memory refers to the ability of ecosystems to retain information about past events and use it to shape future events. This memory is not limited to the physical environment but also includes the ecosystem’s cultural, social, and psychological aspects.

The phantom of memory first appeared in literature in the writings of Rousseau, Goethe, and the well-known romantic poet William Wordsworth, who explored the potential of memory to maintain the tortured selves. We refer to this as eco-memories, a collection of memories and their ecological build-up. The description of the nomad’s story in the novel starts after shifting from the Cholistan Desert to Karachi:

Mrs Masood rejoiced at the sound of water flowing freely from the garden hose. To be closer to the melody, she opened the windows of her living room. The gardeners were digging trenches and pits, and did not need the water. But she enjoyed the waste. It made the memory herself as a little girl—watching the desert sand frolic like fireflies, turn into itself, and abruptly change its course so that it blew furiously into her eyes—seem very, very far way.³⁴

To establish childhood memories in ecology, this study connects “the individual and the collective is through affording greater attention to the environment in which remembering and forgetting take place.”³⁵ Mrs Masood remembered the old time when “her dreams were sweet.”³⁶ This study confronts Khan’s novel with a specific mode of eco-consciousness concerned with human beings inevitably inhabiting the world of legacy.

The issue of cultural memory and ecology sheds light on the mysterious aspects of *The Story of Noble Rot*, to inflect human attitudes toward the natural world. As Malika imagines in several passages of the novel, the present world does not have genuine gardens. Mrs Masood continues in her dreams to be inspired by gardens even when they may not exist:

Her husband explains the rug’s floral design, how it was reminiscent of seventeenth-century Mughal patterns, which were in turn modeled after the gardens of Persia. The rectangular walled gardens, irrigated by pools and shaded by trees, were meant to represent paradise. It had been after she discovered this bit of carpet history that Mrs Masood had named her house the Masood Paradise. . . Mr Masood had also said that Mughal patterns were often naturalistic.³⁷

In Khan’s *The Story of Noble Rot*, the recurring image is of the Persian gardens moving in contrast to the desolate wastes of “post-apocalyptic reality.”³⁸ No living gardens are left; the novel constantly highlights that “the memory unsettled her.”³⁹

³² Andrew Hoskins, ‘Memory Ecologies’, *Memory Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2016), pp. 348-57.

³³ Lourdes Lopez-Ropero, ‘Remembering Jonestown Through the Camp and the Postcolony: A Multidirectional Reading of Fred D’Aguiar’s *Children of Paradise*’, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 56, no. 3 (2020), pp. 310-23.

³⁴ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 52.

³⁵ Hoskins, ‘Memory Ecologies’, pp. 348-57.

³⁶ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 98.

³⁷ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 53.

³⁸ Ben De Bruyn, ‘Borrowed Time, Borrowed World and Borrowed Eyes: Care, Ruin and Vision in McCarthy’s *The Road* and Harrison’s Ecocriticism’, *English Studies*, vol. 91, no.7 (2010), pp. 776-189.

³⁹ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 136.

Throughout the novel, there are references to both the destruction of nature itself, and the destruction caused by human administration, whether purposeful or unintended. The nomadic inhabitants of the Cholistan Desert are attempting to re-establish their memory of place and relationship with a vacant and devastated land after losing their hostile connection to nature. Cultural adaptations can be seen in the objective process through which certain practices allow one individual, group, or population to survive better than another. Environmental management decisions are inexorably founded on both individual and communal memories. Mrs Masood believed that she was “back in the Cholistan Desert, carrying water from a toba that was quickly drying. She and her family would have to move again.”⁴⁰ Hence, as the culture-environment idea has been revised through time, it has become increasingly apparent how people’s collective and low-energy first responses to environmental issues might become mimetic cultural memories. Ecological memory is a dynamic and complex system that involves feedback loops between the physical environment and the organisms that inhabit it. These feedback loops ensure that the ecosystem adapts to changes and remains resilient in the face of environmental stressors.

Eco-trauma: A Sense of Traumatized Attachment

The concept of eco-trauma was first proposed by psychologist Tina Amorok who reminds us of the human and the non-human world suffering because of our destructive actions toward the ecological world. He says that the structure of eco-trauma theory defends “ourselves from this fearsome side of inter-connectedness through separation ideologies and practices” to psychological defence mechanisms, and “an array of debilitating behaviors and responses that bear the signature of trauma.”⁴¹ Eco-trauma refers to the psychological distress and emotional pain experienced as a result of environmental degradation and the destruction of ecosystems. Individuals feel a sense of traumatized attachment towards the natural world, including a deep sense of grief, despair, anxiety and hopelessness. Eco-trauma can also include a feeling of disconnection from the natural world, a loss of meaning and purpose, and a sense of guilt or responsibility for environmental harm. Geoffrey Hartman, in “On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies,” says that the role of trauma theory in literature is defined as a theory that “emerges focusing on the relationship of words and trauma and helping us to read the wound with the aid of literature.”⁴² In the novel, this can be portrayed through descriptions of characters’ relationships with the natural world and their reactions to environmental degradation.

Humans and the so-called natural world are intertwined in this viewpoint. Humans, particularly in the Cholistan Desert, serve their link with the land through their behaviours. To address eco-trauma, it is important to acknowledge and validate the emotional responses of individuals who experience it, and to provide support and resources to help them cope with their feelings of distress. The character Momin, a six year old boy working in a carpet factory, suffers “mental as well as physical trauma.”⁴³ The negative consequences of this violent behaviour by humans stand in for the original trauma or the eco-trauma of existence. It is also important to take action to address the root causes of eco-trauma, such as reducing carbon emissions and protecting natural habitats and species. The desert of Cholistan is the setting for Momin’s mother’s tale. An influential American psychiatrist, Judith Herman, in her book *Trauma and Recovery*, argues that “traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily

⁴⁰ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 68.

⁴¹ Geoffrey H. Hartmann, ‘On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies’, *New Literary History*, vol. 26, no. 3 (1995), pp. 537-63.

⁴² Poray-Wybranowska, *Climate Change, Ecological Catastrophe, and the Contemporary Postcolonial Novel*.

⁴³ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 73.

integrity or a close personal encounter with violence and death.”⁴⁴ In this novel, we observe that Khan’s characters experience recurrent dreams about ecological violence, and the flashbacks are the daily reminder of the tragic events in the Cholistan Desert. The term ‘eco-trauma’ describes a profound sense of loss in the human psyche as well as a degraded and polluted environment:

But he (Chaudry) continued, ‘No one knows where the Maharani found him, since the mammal is no longer known in the Old World. It was rumoured that she (the Maharani) had it smuggled across the ocean. Or that the mammal had once existed in the Cholistan Desert, and that this was an indigenous specimen, the last of its line’.⁴⁵

Hence, learning these ecological integration processes leads to the loss of self and the transition of a generally stable self into a dangerous, damaging ecological world. The ideal experience is one of ecological integration, a time when people are deeply attached to nature due to a collective trauma; unfortunately, people rarely engage with the environment selflessly and relationally.

Malika and her family first encounter various difficulties in the Cholistan Desert due to the loss of water and other food supplies. Then, after relocating to Karachi, their family again encountered challenges as a result of the extreme heat and water-borne illnesses brought on by the metropolis’ urbanised harsh climate. The narrative characterisation describes Malika’s life “the bubble encapsulated the dearth, stench and struggle of her life in Karachi, yet it also held the warmth of her past with Chaudry, the memory of her sons, and her plans for Momin.”⁴⁶ The horrifying portrayal in this novel shows how human meddling with the natural ecosystem not only messes with evolution’s workings but also sets off a cascade of devastation that has a detrimental impact on the “wildlife in Cholistan”⁴⁷ and the death cycles of a variety of species. The novel’s eco-traumatic incident investigates how humanity’s functional advantages over other species threaten our and the planet’s survival, the life and death, extinction and survival of “animal figures, trees, flowers, birds.”⁴⁸ The interplay between “ecological violence”⁴⁹ and psychological trauma has been the driving force behind the development of archetypal characters throughout *The Story of Noble Rot*, a novel written on Pakistani land. Therefore, the issue of nomadic history would sooner or later would come to the surface in any discussion of trauma in Pakistani English writings. The premeditated act of extended genocide that took place over several decades was the most terrible experience for Pakistan’s indigenous inhabitants. The questions posed by the narrative depiction of eco-trauma are as crucial to the current culture of the environment as they are impervious to conclusive answers. Overall, the portrayal of eco-trauma and traumatised attachment in literature can help us to raise awareness of environmental degradation and its psychological impact on the importance of protecting the natural world for both ecological and human well-being.

Conclusion

To sum up, the analysis of this novel aims to further the critical analysis of the rural nomadic communities of the Cholistan Desert, with their interconnections to nature, by deducing different facets of eco-consciousness from childhood to adulthood. The idea of a sense of place attachment explains how people maintain connections to a particular place even after moving away. Hence, in this study, we investigate whether the idea of place attachment in the fictitious

⁴⁴ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), p. 33.

⁴⁵ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 75.

⁴⁶ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 139.

⁴⁷ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 107.

⁴⁸ Khan, *The Story of Noble Rot*, p. 172.

⁴⁹ Anil Narine, *Eco-Trauma Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 17.

characters of Khan's novel matches the joyful feelings of nomadic communities that bridge nostalgia and environment. The idea of nostalgia outlines how memory and imagination combine to recreate particular valued aspects of a particular location, potentially transferring place attachment down the generations. We consider the growing significance of tying eco-memory, eco-nostalgia and eco-trauma concepts to the place attachment. However, the newly wealthy urban inhabitants might consider elements of their rural upbringing that are less evident in their metropolitan, contemporary existence. This study claims that people and groups selectively construct histories and geographic narratives, highlights a common value of the place through signs of place attachment and demonstrates how the process of building place attachment emerges at both individual and social scales. The novel shows that individuals are not just passive observers of their environment but active participants who shape and are shaped by it. Ecological memory is a dynamic and complex system that involves feedback loops between the physical environment and the organisms that inhabit it. Understanding the role of ecological memory in shaping human consciousness and sense of place attachment is essential for developing sustainable and resilient communities. The novel suggests that a strong sense of place attachment can motivate individuals to take action to protect their environment and preserve their cultural heritage. In conclusion, it can be said that nostalgia, memories, and the stories of place attachment and identity that migrants share with one another and across generations at their new home sustain a shared place attachment that feeds into the social imaginations of a place attachment.