

## A Freudian Psychoanalytical Interpretation of Dreams in Atiq Rahimi's *Earth and Ashes*

**Dr. Adnan Riaz**

Asst. Prof. Department of English University of Turbat

**Shari**

Department of English University of Turbat

**Dur Jan**

Lecturer Department of Education University of Gwader

### Abstract

*The paper focuses on the psychoanalytical interpretation of Dastaguir's dreams, the central character of the novel Earth and Ashes. While sleeping the human thoughts are active, and carry the tinges of human consciousness. The disassociated elements further reside in the unconscious space of the human mind and equivalently participate in the development of their dreams as well as their personality. On these lines, considering Freudian Psychoanalysis of dreams, the paper argues that a dreamer's dreams are a manifestation of their subjective inner, external, psychic and experience-based circumstances. Consonantly, the study stresses the manifest and latent content of the dreams illustrated in the novel. Earth and Ashes consists of a series of dreams that one way or another contain the portrayal of the protagonist's personal fright, urges and experiences. The research explains how dreams are structured in relation to the "Dream factor" and the driving forces behind it as portrayed in Atiq Rahimi's Earth and Ashes.*

*Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Interpretation of Dreams, Trauma, War, Atiq Rahimi, Earth and Ashes*

### Introduction

*Earth and Ashes* (2002) by Atiq Rahimi is often categorized as an allegorical text, containing circulating conflict centring Afghanistan. As an amalgam of collective social distress and agony in war-torn Afghanistan, it represents social distress and discomfort embodied through individual responses to the socio-political crises. As a portrayal of the social spheres of the region, the novel depicts the perpetuation of devastation which is a result of a decade-long war, specifically emphasizing the USSR's invasion of 1979. By giving us an illustration of Afghanistan tyrannized by Russian enforcement, the book is equally a voyage to the emotional dimension of the characters. Through Dastaguir, the protagonist of the novel, Rahimi transcends individual traumatic experiences and captures a holistic portrayal of the phenomenon. "Haunting in its spareness, *Earth and Ashes* is a tale of devastating loss, but also of human perseverance in the face of madness and war" (Addall, 2023). I believe that the book portrays the psychological impacts of war on individuals. The paper will attempt to Psychoanalyze Dastaguir's internal conflicts and their relation to external factors through the lens of dream interpretations as theorized by Sigmund Freud in his work *Interpretation of Dreams*.

The protagonist of the novel is an aged grandfather carrying his deaf grandchild, Yassin. Yassin did not lose his hearing at birth; rather, it was a consequence of an explosion. Moreover, the loss of Yassin's earring is not merely a superficial incident; it exacerbates Dastaguir's profound agony. Consequently, the character finds himself ensnared in an unrelenting cycle of nostalgia, fixating on memories of witnessing the tragic event. Regarding the explosion, it was a retaliatory strike by Russian forces in response to residents of a neighbouring village killing several men during a curfew. However, these villagers were compelled to join the military in the war against the mujahedeen. The conflict between the native villagers and the forces culminates with the explosion. The ensuing turmoil in the village and its enduring impact on its inhabitants weigh heavily on Dastaguir's mind, assuming the magnitude of a mountainous presence. In many ways "Each of his protagonists could lose his or her life at any moment and knows it; Rahimi's plots involve their search for solace amid physical destruction" (Abrahamian, 2009). Correspondingly, the persona of the following novel is invariably caught by the desirability of solace by his son, recalling his childhood and his pre-bombardment life.

As a survivor of the war, Dastaguir is recurrently visited by dreams and visions that serve as a tangible manifestation of his lived experiences. Besides suppressing his anguish and striving to maintain an outward appearance of composure, he is resolute in upholding his stoic muscularity, akin to his fellow men. Dastaguir's outward display of tranquillity inadvertently contributes to the accumulation of the emotional turmoil he has internalized. His endeavour to relegate the tragedy to the recesses of his mind fails, as the tragedy finds alternative avenues of haunting him. Chiefly through the conduit of his visions and dreams. "Every night human beings lay aside the wrappings in which they have enveloped their skin... We may add that when they go to sleep, they carry out an entirely analogous undressing of their minds" (Freud, 1915, p.1). Moreover, all the experiences that Dastaguir is painstakingly neglect in his conscious state then make a realm of their own in his unconscious state of mind, veiled and floating until they find their medium of expression in his dreams.

In contrast, Yassin's hearing impairment functions as a perpetual reminder for Dastaguir of past events. In addition to escapism, nostalgia emerges as a coping mechanism, allowing Dastaguir to navigate his circumstances. He finds solace in recollecting the untroubled moments of his childhood and domestic life. Conversely, Yassin rationalizes his hearing loss as a consequence of the colossal impact of the bomb, attributing the silence that followed not to himself but rather to the broader world. He describes the bomb as immense, a harbinger of silence. Dastaguir's heightened emotional state and his inability to communicate effectively with Yassin about his newfound disability become a source of distress. When Dastaguir embarks on a journey with Yassin to the Karkar mine, where his sole surviving son works as a minor, the intervening period of waiting becomes rife with dreams and visions that flicker to life wherever his eyelids descend. These apparitions serve to encapsulate three distinct themes: Dastaguir's yearning to have evaded the painful truth he has borne witnessed to; his religious anxieties revolving around the wellbeing of his daughter-in-law, who roams dishevelled and disoriented, his enduring bond with his wife, now only existent through fragments of memories.

Dastaguir fears Murad having acknowledged the accurate report of what happened to his wife, his mother and the rest of the family, how brutally they died no one on earth would be able to control his aggression and prevent him from fighting back. But the matter of consideration is that telling Murad and provoking him for revenge only means losing Murad too, because no matter how sturdy Murad is, he will not be able to fight a force in isolation, “Dastaguir and Murad and Yassin are the voices of this national despair, but the book is also the compelling narrative of individual afflictions” (Solomon, 2002). Contemplating Dastaguir, the novel equivalently contributes to the illustration of individual traumatic experiences of a person and an individual representing a whole community.

In consideration of the psychic development of Dastaguir under the influence of his repressed fears and desirability, I seek to elucidate through the exploration of *Earth and Ashes*, the predominance of experiences and other cognitive conflicts such as anxieties and fears. *Earth and Ashes* is usually viewed from perspectives of terror, Soviet invasion, and other conceptions of trauma-based theories such as *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*. In this study through the interpretation of Dastaguir's dreams, I will explicate how dreams are a manifestation of real-life experiences and other cognitive conflicts since with the examination of *Earth and Ashes* I acknowledged the relativity between the novel's dream-based descriptions and the Freudian perspective of *Interpretation of Dreams* as an outcome to suppressed psychic conflict and coordination. Before the Freudian concept of interpretation of dreams, Greeks believed that the human soul strays out of the body and visits different places. In the same way, some others thought it was the demon and even a supernatural phenomenon connecting man with something predictable in human life. They were addressed as paranormal beings connected to some god or demons," They took it for granted that dreams were related to the world of the supernatural beings in whom they believed and that they brought inspiration from the gods and demons"(Freud, 1900, p.3). Freud, to cut a long story short, sensed all the dreams one way or another directly related to human experiences, human immediate motives, unfulfilled desires, phobias and even those unconscious repressed thoughts which on the surface humans never thought of.

The aspects that reside in an unapparent state of mind (away from human awareness) further keep appearing in human dreams in mostly disguised forms. Sigmund Freud in “*The Interpretation of Dreams*” broadens the ideology of dreams as wish fulfilment by arguing that dreams function as cognitive processes of wish fulfilment valid sources of interplay of the conscious mind and the unfulfilled desires. Likely, he discusses how dreams that do not contain segments of desirability are not restricted to the domain of wish fulfilment since dreams other than desirability contain content that is in opposition to achievement but has much distress and pain. He further argues that dreams are influenced by real-life emotions and experiences. With Freud, the latent content paved the way to go deep into the unconscious and interpret the thought, motive, urge and repressed thought underneath the dominant factor of the superego.

Freudian perception of dreams is not limited to the actuality of what is seen but the underlying objects that dreams symbolically represent (latent content of the dream). The text

*Earth and Ashes* is narrated in a manner that stands as an epitome of Freudian theory of dreams. It behaves as a manifestation of a variety of feelings and experiences. In the novel, Dastaguir mentions how in an entire week of restlessness he has been having dreams about Murad. Dastaguir's dreams about Murad are a demonstration of his unexpressed fears of Murad's reaction towards a disaster he has for him to narrate. Where on the other hand his religious concepts of sin, virtue, paradise, and hell expose themselves rather symbolically or in their true nature with a combination of his present experiences appearing in his half-sleep and visions. The other Freudian dream equipments such as the external stimuli, internal stimuli and several distinctive conceptions follow consequently.

While slumbering Dastaguir's dreams function as a cloudless display of his past, immense grievance, terrors and present escapism. Rahimi as a narrator, illustrates in his novel how anguish and suffering shape a man's personality and control his dreams. He emphasizes anguish taking three shapes, either turning itself into tears, becoming a bomb or a sword. Considering the interconnectivity of the text and the Freudian concept it follows, all that suppression by combining the segments makes a hybridity, containing a multiplicity of emotions, thoughts, memories and events. He argues that dreams function as a space where oppressed desirability and neglected ideas unveil and manifest themselves, "The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" (Freud, 1900, p.608). The study focuses on the text in relationship to the Psychoanalytic context.

Freud analyses how the dreams of the protagonist emerge as a reflection of his subjective life occurrences. In accordance with the Freudian perspective, the dreams of the protagonist often are converted into other disguised forms expressed by substitutes. In dreams inclusive of fright and expressions, desirability also finds space for expression, such as Dastaguir's yearning for consolation by Murad, his son.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The exploration of the human unconscious opened a wide range of discussion in 20th-century psychology overlapping art in many ways. Psychodynamics widens the range of human understanding overshadowing human behaviour, urges and thoughts. Freud, including his pupils, with a variety of concepts, came forth against the introspective and behaviouristic approaches of previous psychological methods replacing unconscious, repressed thoughts, dreams and other such phenomena to go deep into the human psyche and understand human behaviour via free association as a therapy method, "The mind is like an iceberg, it floats with one-seventh of its bulk above water" (Foroux, 2023). For Freud, the human mind is comparable to an iceberg, especially in consideration of the conscious state of mind which is alert, and bound to a particularized number of things whereas the unconscious state of mind is as enormous as the bottom of an iceberg, containing a multiplicity of emotions, restricted thoughts, neglected experiences and more.

Freud in his book *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1917) describes consciousness as the process of differentiating the character of psychological life, whereas psychology as the science of the content in the consciousness. Similarly, Freud further in his

other book, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) broadens his ideology of Consciousness about Dreams. Freud debates that dreams are not a random portrayal of images rather they are connected to the real-life processes of the dreamer, “The Psychoanalysis or psychodynamic theory arose in the 19th century, which focuses on unconsciousness and dream analysis. Psychoanalysis is the first wave of psychotherapy development which has a huge influence on the development of psychology overall and other psychologists” (Zhang, 2020). For Freud dreams are an amalgamation of collective experiences, psychic processes along with unexpressed trauma and desirability.

The constituents in a dream are not mere visions but rather an accurate form of psychic experience as well as the experiences of consciousness. They are a reflection of real-life events. According to Freud, the behaviour of dreams has a similar experience process as of waking state. While the waking state uses verbal language to communicate, the dreams portray images. Consequently, the dreams occur as a demonstration unfolding nodes of happenings, longings and apprehensions that the dreamer has most of the time far knocked out, “The content of dreams is always more or less determined by the personality, the age, sex, station in life, education and habits and by the events and experiences of the whole past life of the individual” (Freud, 1900, p.5). The material contents of the dreams in a Freudian perspective are not distant but closely connected.

Freud argues that the events correspond with one another as he describes that the main content of the dream is always followed by substitutes. Freud illustrates that the central subject matter of the dream though takes the idea as it is but the idea is further shadowed by variations from desirability “Nothing which we have once psychically possessed is ever entirely lost” (Freud, 1900, p.9). Accordingly, Freudian psychoanalysis stresses that all experiences, memories or thoughts perpetually reside in the human mind and even when they are pushed away from the conscious state of mind, they are stored in the unconscious sphere.

Similarly, Freud who is notorious for his version of the psychoanalytic approach, considers the most powerful motive in humans is his or her libidinal urges which are particularly interpreted as sexual urges and generally bodily pleasure. Freud believes there are two basic things in human nature which are innate; aggression and sex. But, both of them are softened or given a better-accepted version through a defence mechanism called Sublimation. The harder concept of sex prevails in the taboos where boy and girl have their repressed desires to have sexual urges in their opposite parents. This can also be found in his Theory of Personality in which the id (pleasure principle) is blind and rational to the moral, religious and cultural consequences. For Freud, sex is one of the basic instincts same as other bodily needs and goes further hurting as usual the sentiment of people that the child in his oral stage is expressing sexual urges while being milked. Sex is one of the fundamental concerns in the human psyche by Freud to discuss, but apart from it Freud's most fundamental work, except his productions such as *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, *Three Essays on Sexuality*, and *Interpretation of Dreams*. The book was produced in the 1900s, in a division of two parts, where the initiative portion contains Freudian ideology of dreams, his perspective on consciousness and unconscious their



functions and progress and the other contains the interpretation of Freud's and his patient's dreams.

Nonetheless, Dreams in Freudian Psychoanalytic therapy had one of the fundamental places to understand the patient's unconscious. He differentiates these two cognitive storehouses, Conscious, as the reservoir of current emotions and thoughts and unconscious as a reservoir that stores those thoughts, emotions and other aspects that have been pushed away and kept aside from the conscious state of the human mind but intermittently, "We have found by experience that unconscious mental processes are in themselves timeless. That is to say to begin with: they are not arranged chronologically" (Freud, 1920, p.21). The material of the dreams is not supposedly sequenced, they may appear in collaboration with year-long memories as well as with most current experiences.

Likely, Freud was among the first to give rejection to the interpretation of dreams through their manifestation (what one sees in dreams) rather than going a step further and giving immense value to the latent content (what things symbolize in dreams). Therefore, for Freud, it gets tougher to relate a thing or a thought with a symbol since the individual psyche creates different symbols and meanings to those symbols in their way. That's why for Freud there won't be an ultimate interpretation of the latent content of dreams but would differ according to the different factors they are based on and the dreamer's self. For him, dream analysis is an unfixed process, and every individual's dreams relate to their own suppressed cognitive contents.

Further, in "The *Interpretation of Dreams*", Freud after distinguishing dream examination into two separate categories manifest content and latent content; then discusses how dreams that are oddly applicable to the domain of wish fulfilment are rather the presentation the distressful and angst emotions, suppressed deep in the unconscious state of the human psyche. Accordingly, Freud discusses how in dreams pain and disgust are more frequent than pleasure "but even less pessimistic observers have emphasised the fact that in our dreams pain and disgust are more frequent than pleasure" (Freud, 1900, p.48). Correspondingly, Freud elaborates how dreams contain real experiences and emotions contrary to the primaeval conception of dreams as supernatural. His argument emphasizes the underlying content of dream symbolizations, which may result from the repression of some occurred events, forgotten urges, current desirability, prevailing fears and other variety of thoughts and feelings equivalently "that all the materials composing the content of a dream are somehow derived from experiences" (p.6). Freud argues over the essence of acknowledging an individual's underneath emotions and memories for better comprehension of behaviour and personality.

Freud considers the unconscious aspects of the human mind as the predominant factor influencing the ways they act and perceive things. Freudian psychoanalysis divides the human brain into two separate domains, the conscious or surface of the human mind and other as unconscious a distant storehouse for repressed human thoughts, emotions and urges. He further treats dreams as an amalgam of the dreamer's personal emotions and life events. He suggests how these repressed emotions and thoughts when driven out of human consciousness, further

settle in the concrete space of the human psyche. Correspondingly, he discusses that these emotions create a free environment to showcase the dreams of the individual.

### Discussion

In terms of experiences, Dastaguir, the protagonist of the novel, undergoes a series of agonizing events. His harrowing journey begins with the Russian bombardment of Afghanistan. The invasion resulted in the country being split into two factions: rebels who resisted the oppressive rule imposed by foreign authorities, and those who were enticed by the allure of rewards such as tidy uniforms and access to weapons by joining the Russian military. The attack reduces Aqbul to ashes and ruins. Although Dastaguir was not in the village at the time of the explosion, upon learning of the sudden devastation, he rushes home, encountering a string of catastrophes along the way. With most of his family members deceased, Dastaguir finds himself without a companion to share his grief, save for Murad. Yassin, his deaf grandchild, is unable to hear his mourning or offer condolences due to the loss of his earring. Dastaguir reflects that since the incident, he has not experienced a moment of peace; the memories and images of his traumatic past continually haunt him, replaying every time he closes his eyes. His silent suffering manifests as a relentless flashback of memories. "As soon as you close your eyes, it's Murad and his mother, or Yassin and his mother, or fire and ash, or shouts and wails...and you wake up again"(Rahimi, 2002, p.13). By interpreting his dreams through the Freudian psychoanalytic lens, one can recognize that these dreams stem from the amalgamation of Dastaguir's past trauma and his current suffering. Similar to the Freudian perspective on dreams and experiences, occurrences in an individual's dreams are not detached or foreign; instead, they are intricately linked to the dreamer's psyche and experiences: "Our dreams always connect themselves with such ideas as have shortly before been present in our consciousness. Careful examination will nearly always detect a thread by which the dream has linked itself to the experiences of the previous day" (Freud, 1900, p.5). A detailed analysis of any dream would showcase how the dream, though varying in order or disguised, is a resident of the dreamer's mind.

Dastaguir is ambivalent. Though he decides to visit Murad to convey the disaster about the village and their family, the fright of narrating such a disquieting tale to his son overwhelms him. He believes Murad can burn the whole village for what it has caused to his family, reinforcing his suppressed fear of losing his son in the fire of revenge while also desiring solace. Correspondingly, the fear arises because Murad is his only living child on one hand, and on the other, Murad as an individual facing brutal armed forces is terrifying. Dastaguir is cognizant that Murad's act of vengeance alone may devastate his own life and strengthen Dastaguir's enduring penitence and the culpability he feels. He is grief-stricken because telling Murad all this is synonymous with stabbing his son with a sword.

Similarly, his appeal for Murad to share his anguishes unquestioned, to let him be his Dastaguir, to be Murad's son, and want Murad to behave superior, stronger as a father figure does, as if Dastaguir is his son. Dastaguir craves he was anyone in the world but not Dastaguir, the grief-stricken, feeble Dastaguir, only if he were the son of Murad, Yassin who does not have

the burden of anguish to place upon the shoulders of his son. Thus, Dastaguir is afraid if Murad asks what brings Dastaguir into the mine, he has to narrate the misery he carries inside his chest, which keeps growing, reshaping, and worsening. The suppression of his fear about being asked by Murad further floats on the surface of Dastaguir's dreams. Throughout the book, he experiences dreams of distinguished categories, and the initiative amalgamation of his dreams and visions is seen in influencing his fear of losing Murad. Consequently, Dastaguir visualizes his apparition in different objects, such as mountains. At the same time when he dreams, he finds himself facing Murad and the harsh radiation of his anxious questions concerning the blast. The questions appear the same as the ones that Dastaguir fears Murad would ask, including his inquiry about his family and Yassin's current state of disability: "Why have you come? Why have you come alone with Yassin? Why have you given Yassin silent stones?" Then Murad starts to cross over to you. "Murad," you shout, stay where you are, child! It's a river of fire. You'll get burned! Don't come!" (Rahimi, 2002, p.12). Dastaguir's aforementioned dream contains trash of past events as well as events he fears might take place in the coming times. The image of the river of fire can refer to two separate anxieties, one from his previous experiences of the explosion and the other from his anxiety about his son Murad. In the same dream, after having encountered Murad, he hears the voice of his mother appealing to him to provide Murad with her scarf, "Dreams do not differentiate between what is wished and what is real" (Freud, 1900, p.438). The part of the dream about his deceased wife's scarf is influenced by stimuli from the external world, as he is carrying the scarf when he dreams. According to Freudian conception, the appearance of deceased individuals in dreams is primarily due to the dream's incapability to distinguish between reality and desire.

Moreover, Freud distinguishes the substances of dreams into four separate divisions they include, the stimuli from the external world that consists of alterations in external conditions such as vision, touch, smell and pain. The other category is Organic stimuli within the body which refers to the internal factor of a dreamer's body. The discovery of certain factors further results in responses such as pH level, temperature and oxygen level. The third division that occurs in the slumber is mental activities. The portion of mental activities contains the metaphysical activities of a dreamer, concerning those related to the brain. It stresses the process of the Rem. The prominence of this factor lies in its involvement in the memory and process of information development. The conclusive part of the theory is the subjective experiences of a dreamer. In the debate about subjective experiences, Freud argues that the content material of the dreams is influenced by the experiences of the dreamer. Considering the series of uncertainties Dastaguir had to witness the incident that occurred while encountering Zaynab. Zaynab is the wife of his son Murad and the mother of Yassin. Considering Zaynab's state of departure, she was in the washroom when the bomb blasted. As a result of the blast, the house collapsed and turned into dust. With the collapse of the house, Zaynab was psychologically shattered and ran naked, with no noise running like an insane. Similarly, when Zaynab went through those uncertainties, she kept wandering in the same state of insanity and nakedness aftermath she



threw herself in the flames and burnt herself alive. Thus, all those traumatic events happened before Dastaguir's eyes. "Before I arrived, I saw Yassin's mother. She was running, completely naked ... she wasn't shouting, she was running about like a madwoman" (Rahimi, 2002, p.22). The staggering accident envelops Dastaguir's thoughts. Overlaying the surface of his mind, it keeps finding its way into his dreams. Nonetheless, the most harrowing aspect of the incident is seeing Zaynab's bare body, and the other, her throwing herself alive into the fire. When Zaynab died, she didn't die alone. The more tragic part is that she was a few months pregnant and died along with the child in her belly. Foremost, Dastaguir has immense regret for not having rescued his daughter-in-law and for not having preserved her dignity. The other factor about the unborn child remains unremembered by his conscious mind but resides in the unconscious sphere of his thoughts. Freud explicates this further in his interpretation of Dreams that there are things that appear in dreams about which the dreamer is incognizant in their conscious condition. "One is therefore forced to admit that in the dream something was known and remembered that cannot be remembered in the waking state" (Freud, 1900, p.6). Similarly, Dastaguir's other dream about himself being naked equivalently contributes to the Freudian structure of dream factors. He dreams that he is standing bare-bodied and in that condition of nakedness, he climbs a tree of jujubes. In the following dream, while plucking the jujubes for Yassin, Dastaguir begins to urinate. In Dastaguir's act, Yassin moves from the ground below the tree and goes towards a door. Though the door is locked Yassin opens the door with a jujubi. In the same dream, he finds himself in a position of falling but does not fall.

The jujubes are an element from the presence of Dastaguir since Yassin asked for jujubes from Mirza Qadir, the shopkeeper or it might also be influenced by the external elements such as smell, since in the following duration the child is still carrying the jujubes. Whereas his act of climbing a tree naked might be associated with another segment of another memory, the memory of Zaynab's bare skin. The part about urinating can function as an internal body factor. Thus, it may also symbolise getting rid of someone's suppressed emotions. Accordingly, researchers have defined it as an indication of the complications of the dreamer's life. Since the protagonist has been waiting since morning and it is already afternoon when he sees the dream, the protagonist's need for urination does have possibilities of affecting his dreams as an internal factor. The concluding portion about falling but not hitting the ground can also be caused due to psychic factors such as fear and terror. A certified psychiatrist Dr. Nereida Gonzalez-Berrios describes the act of falling in a dream as the representation of fear, anxiety and terror. It indicates the fright of having lost control over a situation or the objects. She argues that certain dreams also represent an individual's despair and helplessness. Researchers such as Erin and Wamsley argue that dreams function as a recollection of recent experiences combined with Memories. Similarly, Freud stresses the suppression of pain and experiences. He argues that the repressed despairs that are pushed away from the conscious state of mind, swim deep in the individual's unconscious state of mind, unnoticed until they get a liberated space for release. Those repressed agonies later float on the surface of people's dreams. "All the activities of consciousness occur in our dreams but they are imperfect, inhibited and mutually isolated" (Freud, 1900, p.21).

Moreover, the appearances in dreams are often disjoint and unstructured as well as they may appear individually and not as a part of the chain they originally belong to or they may also appear in an amalgamation of other diverse experiences.

In relation to the Freudian conception of experiences affecting dreams, Dastaguir, in his slumber, is haunted by certain dreams that function as a portrayal of his personal experiences, especially those experiences that remain untold, unexpressed, and buried far away from the access of consciousness. These experiences, unuttered utterances, usually occur in a state of fragments, recollected from different events, in disguised forms, or they are restructured and redesigned in the unconscious state of mind: "Dreams show how recollections of one's everyday life can be worked into a structure where one can be substituted for another, where unacknowledged feelings like envy and guilt can find expression" (Freud,1900). Dastaguir's experience of having seen his daughter-in-law in a disgraceful state, morally and religiously unacceptable, therefore on the edge of Dastaguir's terror, lies the fear of Murad acknowledging the unexplainable accident that happened to Zaynab. He recalls how once Murad was incarcerated for six months since he got involved in an intense fight with a neighbor, Yaqoub Shah's son, for misbehaving with his wife. His other fear is more intense, as deep down he harbors a religious fear of the conception of heaven and hell, unconsciously wondering what would be destined for Zaynab after the state she was left in. Similarly, his dreams about Zaynab come as a combination of both of his fears, the inherited perspective of heaven and evil, and that of having narrated the inexpressible story to his son. According to Freud most of the elements that occur in a slumber are a cause of experiences. "Whatever the dream may offer us, it derives its material from reality, and the psychic life centred upon this reality, extraordinary the dream may seem, it can never detach itself from the real world, and its most sublime, as well as its most ridiculous constructions, must always borrow their elementary material either from that which our eyes have beheld in our outer world, or from that which has already found a place somewhere in our waking thoughts; in other words, it must be taken from that which we have already experienced"(Freud, 1900, p.6). Consonantly, Dastaguir's daughter-in-law Zaynab appears in his dreams in the same state as he encountered her before she turned into ashes. In his dream, he first hears her voice calling Yassin's name. Promptly, the situation shifts from calling Yassin's name to laughter; she laughs while wandering uncertainly bare-bodied. Further, he mentions that Zaynab's voice sounds distant. The dream also includes characters and objects from his current circumstances.

As mentioned, dreams are a combination of present experiences and memories. In the same dream, Dastaguir encounters Fateh, and the abrupt appearance of the guard Fateh showcases how dreams are a recollection of both occurred and now occurring events. He further describes a garden that contains bare oak trees. In the same garden, he encounters Zaynab again but this time she carries a little girl with her. Further, he finds Yassin in the same garden who is also unclothed. Yassin addresses the little girl with Zaynab as his sister. He wonders how it has been possible because when Zaynab died she was a few months pregnant. In his dream, Zaynab keeps moving from one tree to the other. Though he mentions to have called her, the calls remain

unanswered. All she does is run naked while laughing. He further dreams about Yassin turning into a girl. This amalgam of uncertain events terrifies him in sleep; he calls for Murad, his living son. His voice now turns into the voice of his grandchild, bewildered and as frail as Yassin's. The stressed state of nakedness in Dastaguir's dreams, once having seen his own naked body, the other time Zaynab's, Yassin's as well as the bare oak trees might symbolize the same effect of having experienced watching his daughter-in-law naked. According to Sarah Wilson (2009), being clothed is a representation of being covered or shielded, and being under protection. The dreams, according to the following study, that contain content about being undressed or bare, may suggest a state of being unprotected and disgraced.

Between constituents in dreams, according to researchers and Freud, there is always an interconnectivity. The current circumstances of a dreamer's life and his/her past have an equivalent participation in their dreams. In the present, Dastaguir has a fear that the guard will not be gentle enough to stop a ride for him and his grandson. The fear of the guard's harsh response and his awaiting co-occur in his dream. Similarly, his wish to have the truck arrive sooner so he can leave the guard alone appears in his dreams with a portrayal of the guard calling him for the truck that has arrived. The other aspect of the dream about the little girl that Zaynab carries, suggests a repressed memory of Dastaguir about Zaynab being pregnant," The depths of a dream-memory rather contain such images of persons, places, things and early experiences as either possessed but little consciousness and no psychic value whatsoever, or have long since lost both, and therefore appear Strange and unknown both, in the dream and the waking state until their early origin is revealed (Freud, 1900, p.8). As Dastaguir's previous descriptions suggest, he recalls Zaynab time and again but neglects the part about the child she was pregnant with. Thus, Zaynab's state in dreams portrays her state as equivalent to the actual state she was in, in a dressless, insanely roaming one.

Whereas Yassin turning into a girl or addressing his sister are closely related, they may suggest the same thing: the unborn child. Because Zaynab was four months pregnant when she died, the gender of the child is unacknowledged by the dreamer. The unacknowledgment of the gender might be portrayed through these segments: one, the child as a girl, and second, Yassin as a boy turning into a girl. The ending part of the dream about Dastaguir's voice conversion into the voice of Yassin, his frail voice while calling Murad suggests Dastaguir's desirability to be Yassin, the son of Murad, he who owes no accountability for what has happened, he who owes Murad no explanation, no tale, he who Murad would give his condolences to and share his grief. The association of Dastaguir's feeble voice to Yassin's might as well suggest his internal exhaustion, as he describes himself as how weak he has become because for a week answer has been his only food. The physical conditions of Dastaguir equally participate in influencing the way he dreams. Further, his wish for having lost his earring like Yassin's in order he would not have to be answerable to Murad's investigations, Yassin his child would meet Murad, and would have his companion but would not be able to comprehend his reactions and responses: "If only you were his son--his Yassin. Deaf like Yassin. You'd see Murad but you wouldn't hear him. You wouldn't hear him say, "Why have you come?" (Rahimi, 2002, p.3). His terror of being

asked about the disastrous ancient that took place strengthens his appeal to be the kid and not the father.

When the bomb exploded, each resident grieved for their own deceased. Moreover, everybody, in one way or another, had something to grieve beside. For instance, his brother cried beside the ruins of the collapsed houses, his cousin took a scarf like a shroud and rolled it over a pile among them, and his brother-in-law grieved in the barn amidst the dead cows. But he, Dastaguir, had nowhere to go and no possession before which he could vent his underlying emotions and anguishes. He had Yassin and his responsibility for whom he couldn't stay between the ruins and await his death.

Freud further emphasizes the effect of emotions on dreams. He describes how emotions are connected to the dream process, arguing that a dreamer's emotions function even when they are asleep. These emotions, which mostly influence dreams negatively, are crucial for understanding a dreamer's or patient's dreams, according to Freud. Similar to the Freudian conception of traumatic experiences, Dastaguir, who carries Yassin by his side as a Deaf, serves as a constant reminder of his suppressed agony. Dastaguir's suppression of his pain is further embodied in another dream, though in the same context but designed differently. In this dream, he encounters his late daughter-in-law. Dastaguir dreams of her after narrating his miserable tale to Shahmard, the truck driver. When his eyes fall again out of tiredness, he sees Zaynab once more, now with a bare body and open hair. She keeps running in front of the truck, and despite his several calls, none of them seem to reach her. His voice doesn't travel outside the truck, and he doesn't have the energy to move ahead. Therefore, he feels burdened, as if from the bundle lying on his knees.

Researchers describe certain dreams in relation to emotions, suggesting that exhaustion and frailty dreams result from stress and physical un-wellness. In this dream, Dastaguir doesn't even have the energy to move the bundle. But when he unties it, the apples he had are now converted into coal apples. Abruptly, the driver of the truck is now his son Murad. When he sees Murad, Dastaguir is overwhelmed and begins to cry. However, Murad does not seem to notice, as he keeps looking at the road, focusing on Zaynab. Despite Dastaguir screaming Murad's name, he remains unheard and unnoticed. Dastaguir later acknowledges that Murad has gone deaf. Meanwhile, Zaynab continues moving steadily before the truck. Then, the dark dust from the truck covers her body, and she is no longer bare-bodied. The dust blocks Dastaguir's sight from Zaynab, who soon disappears along the road ahead. Moreover, the following dream also contains segments of his fears and lived experiences. Zaynab's appearance time and again symbolizes a loss of protection and grace, as mentioned by Sarah Wilson. On the other hand, her body being covered with black dust might symbolize the fire she burnt in.

More likely, the appearances of Zaynab frequently in Dastaguir's dream as mentioned by Alica Forneret, can foremost be due to grief and other reasons as due to the dreamer's concern about the deceased's welfare. Considering Dastaguir's concern about Zaynab, he fears about if she'll be declared to paradise for, she died in a certain condition that is not favourable to their religious doctrines, "Zaynab is simply dead. Like everyone else. There's nothing more to it. She died like all the others in the house, beneath the bombs. She is bound for Paradise" (Rahimi,

2002, p.38). The other part of the dream about his exhaustion and frailty might be a suggestion of his external tiredness, given that he has been traveling restlessly for a week now. The transformation of apples into coal apples may indicate his fear of nearing his destination, the Karkar mine. Similarly, Murad being deaf and his constant gaze on Zaynab, his naked deceased wife, might stem from another fear: the fear of informing Murad about the state in which his wife died and what has happened to his child. According to Alica Forneret, dreams contain anxieties and guilt, regardless of how many times an individual has attempted to push themselves away from certain negativity. Similarly, Freud suggests that dreams often come in disguised forms.

Furthermore, when the village was bombed, Dastaguir's wife, along with his other son, his wife, and children, were in the house. As a result of the bombardment, the house collapsed, and his family died underneath the collapsed piles. The only possession left of his late wife is the apple-blossom scarf she had. Throughout the journey, Dastaguir carries that scarf as a bundle for his days-old apples and bread. During his journey towards the mine, Dastaguir dreams about his wife asking for her apple blossom scarf. In his dream, his wife appears on a hill and in a state of running in the same direction as the truck, asking for her scarf. The hill is described as the obstacle of a person, whereas running might suggest escapism. Dastaguir frees the scarf from the coal apples, and his wife runs after it. Rob Newsom and Alex Dimitriu describe it as an embodiment of awaken state experiences, whereas Sigmund Freud describes them as a representation of suppressed emotions, fears, thoughts, and wishes. Consistently, in a psychological context, the repression of certain human conditions results as a core influence on dreams. Freud defines dreams as a manifestation of real-life events and subjective feelings. Accordingly, the Freudian perspective suggests that dreams often appear in an unfamiliar form, but that strangeness is not random but rather a recollection of the dreamer's personal life circumstances. The Freudian interpretation of the dream is divided into categories of the actual content which he addresses as the manifest content and its underlying or disguised idea which he addresses as the latent content of the dream. Considering the following conception of the dream as a portrayal of real-life experiences and trauma, contemplating Dastaguir's dreams that manifest as a visual portrayal of his thought process does lie under the category of Freudian interpretation of dreams. By having done the interpretation of Dastaguir's dreams and visions, the study has elucidated that each dream relates to one of his experiences or rather his dreams mostly function as a recollection of his several experiences in a row. Thus, Dastaguir's dreams are influenced by the disastrous events he has witnessed, be it the bombardment, the miserable deaths of his family members, or the unfortunate state of Zaynab's bare running body, especially in association with his fear of narrating his agonized account to his son Murad.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Atiq Rahimi's novel *Earth and Ashes* offers readers a deep exploration of trauma, grief, and the intricacies of the human psyche through the lens of Dastaguir's dreams. Dastaguir's journey through the desolation formed by war assists as a backdrop upon which his deepest fears, regrets, and suppressed emotions are vividly painted. Through a psychoanalytic



interpretation informed by Freudian theory, the paper highlights the subconscious layers of Dastaguir's mind, unravelling the complex web of his dreams and visions.

Central to Dastaguir's experience is the haunting spectre of past trauma, which appears in his dreams as a persistent reflection of memories and anxieties. The Freudian notion that dreams serve as an outlet for unconscious desires and unresolved conflicts becomes obvious as we witness Dastaguir grapple with the weight of his past. Each dream fragment, whether it be the sight of his daughter-in-law's bare body or the recurring image of his grandson Yassin, reflects Dastaguir's inner turmoil and his desperate attempts to make sense of the incomprehensible.

Moreover, Dastaguir's dreams offer a window into his deepest fears and insecurities, particularly his apprehension about confronting his son Murad with the truth of their shared tragedy. The frequent motif of Murad's deafness symbolizes Dastaguir's fear of being unheard and misunderstood, as well as his longing to shield his son from the harsh realities of their existence. Through these dreams, we witness Dastaguir's internal struggle to reconcile his role as a father with his overwhelming grief and guilt. Furthermore, Rahimi's narrative underlines the interrelation of past experiences and present emotions, as Dastaguir's dreams are shaped by the traumas he has endured and the anxieties that continue to haunt him. The Freudian concept of repression emerges as a central theme, as Dastaguir grapples with the lingering pain of loss and the burden of unspoken truths. His dreams serve as a battleground where suppressed emotions clash with conscious desires, ultimately illuminating the complexities of human suffering and resilience. In essence, *Earth and Ashes* invites readers to embark on a deeply introspective journey alongside Dastaguir, as we navigate the labyrinthine depths of his subconscious mind. Through a psychoanalytic lens, we gain insight into the profound impact of trauma on the human psyche and the intricate interplay between past experiences and present emotions. Rahimi's masterful storytelling serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring power of literature to illuminate the darkest corners of the human soul, offering solace and understanding in the face of unfathomable loss.

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