

Pakistaniaat: A Five-Year Journey

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In 2009, when I decided to launch a journal about Pakistan, I had high hopes and a vague idea of its eventual unfolding as a scholarly enterprise. I recall that in the first editorial for our very first issue, I had posed this question: “Why start a journal about Pakistan?” (Raja i). My answer, then, was more philosophical and the need for launching the journal was linked intimately to the issues of representation and production of knowledge.

Now in the fifth year of its publication, I dare suggest that *Pakistaniaat* has lived up to our expectations. So far we have published (including this one) thirteen issues of the journal including two special issues: One on 1971 Indo-Pakistan War and another on Faiz Ahmed Faiz, one of the greatest Pakistani poets.

As I have argued elsewhere about the general representations of Islam and the Islamic—whatever way one defines it—Islam is no longer beyond the horizon of Western academy but rather an “important raw material for literary representations” (Raja, “Democratic Criticism” 464) in the metropolitan. Similarly, as an Islamic republic and as the only Muslim nuclear power, Pakistan is also central to so many aspects of the current world order.

It is, therefore, only proper to accord Pakistan the kind of importance it deserves. Over the past years, we at *Pakistaniaat* have tried our best to represent Pakistan in the best way possible. Our efforts have borne fruit, as Pakistani scholars have trusted us to publish their academic, creative, and critical works from the first issue onward. We acknowledge without reserve that while we may provide the space and the technical knowhow to publish the journal, its true value is deeply connected to the productivity, generosity, and professionalism of an international group of scholars and creative writers who have shared their work with us.

Since our first issue, we have covered myriad of themes and topics about Pakistan. We have, for example, informed our readers about how the Pakistani journalists are also trying to emulate the “Sound-Bite culture” (Khan 35) of Western news reporting model; how the Pakistani writers have “portrayed the

lives of Pakistani women under the imposing role of religious, social, and economic parameters” (Ahmed 92), and dealt with the issues of class, gender, religion, ethnic identities and much more. What I am trying to say is that even though our journal is focused on Pakistan, the subjects of our scholarly engagement are certainly as complex and large as the country and its people and cultures.

We have mostly had successes but also some setbacks. We have successfully published thirteen open access issues without resorting to any form of practices associated with close-content subscription-based journals. We have also consistently published, through a print-on-demand publisher, the print version of our journal. On the other hand while initially we qualified to be an approved journal of Pakistani Higher Education Commission (HEC) we lost that status due to policy changes at the HEC. HEC now recognizes only the journals that are listed as impact factor journals in the Thomson Reuters index. While this may not be an impossible task, it will take us some time to be listed. Meanwhile, however, the MLA as well as Ebsco and certain other major indexing agencies index us. Besides our general issues, this year we also published one of the best issues on Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Edited by Dr. Amina Yaqin, this issue offers, in her own words, “a point of departure to think through questions of individual and social transformation in Faiz” (v).

Thus, in the last five years an international group of volunteers and an equally international array of writers and scholars have made *Pakistaniaat* into one of the finest journals on all things Pakistan.

We know that there are many challenges ahead and that many a topic still need our attention, but we will continue to strive for the best. With your help and support, I am sure *Pakistaniaat* will continue being a prominent and timely voice on all issues related to Pakistan.

Thank you so much for being a part of our journey. Stay with us, for we plan on plodding ahead with patience, courage, and love!

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