Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

On Relaunching *Pakistaniaat*

Masood Ashraf Raja

There were several reasons for *Pakistaniaat's* long hiatus and there is, in my opinion, no need to go over all of them in this "rebirth" issue of the journal. One main reason, however, was that we had lost quite a few members of our editorial team and publishing the journal had suddenly become a one-man show, which I had never intended. I had always hoped that *Pakistaniaat* would remain a collaborative effort by scholars from all over the world, and when it ceased to be so I decided to take a break, a long break!

Since we stopped publishing, I also found myself in a unique position to be more widely in touch with Pakistani scholars and academics, thanks to a US Department of State Grant (DOS). In 2012 I won a one million dollar grant, offered under the People to People program of the DOS, to develop a partnership between the University of North Texas (UNT) and National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad (NUML).

Because of this grant, over the last few years, I have had the honor and privilege of hosting and interacting with many fine young scholars from NUML. The partnership program also increased my annual visits to Pakistan and thus enabled me to meet more and more people in Pakistani academia. During these public and private meetings, the question about future of *Pakistaniaat* was always broached. It was during these interactions that it became obvious to me that most scholars in Pakistan had really not only enjoyed reading *Pakistaniaat* but had also considered it a wonderful addition to Pakistan Studies. Hence, after several years of thinking about *Pakistaniaat*, and to honor the hopes and aspirations of so many who have encouraged me to not give up, I have decided to relaunch the journal.

This new effort would certainly be more fruitful and successful if the Pakistani scholars also lend us their support either by joining our

editorial team or, more importantly, by submitting their works to the journal. I know that as yet *Pakistaniaat* is not listed as an approved journal of Higher Education Commission (HEC). *Pakistaniaat* was a Y category journal until 2012 but since the policy changes in categorization of journals (they now require international journals to have an impact factor), we stopped being one of their approved journals. We will, of course, keep trying to get included in their list. However, this non-inclusion in the HEC list does not reflect in any way upon what we have published and what we plan to publish: *Pakistaniaat* will always remain an exceptional scholarly journal about all things Pakistan.

Here I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues who were with me in 2009 when I launched the journal, some of them are still with us, and I would also like to welcome all those who have joined us in this renewal of the journal.

Please note that we have slightly altered our publication model: Instead of publishing three issues per year, we will now publish one continuous volume every year. In this way as the submissions move through our editorial process, we will keep adding them to the current issue and we will close the current volume at the end of each year. This way the authors will not have to wait too long to see their words in print. Sometimes, when we plan a special volume, we might also add a second issue in a year, but mostly the journal will remain a one volume per year publication.

My friend and esteemed scholar Dr. Cara Cilano (Michigan State University) who has done some impressive work on Pakistani fiction has kindly agreed to guest edit a special issue of *Pakistaniaat* on Pakistani Writing in English. The call for papers/ creative works is included in this volume of the journal.

I am also open to any suggestions that, in your opinion, might improve any aspect of the journal. Please never hesitate to contact me if you have any suggestions.

Thank you all so much for joining us in this new journey. Now, without further ado, I offer you, with all due humility, this first volume of *Pakistaniaat's* rebirth. Enjoy!

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Research::Culture::Exchange: Complex Cultural Exchange Amid a US-Pakistani Education Partnership

By Ryan Skinnell

In 2013, I was an assistant professor of rhetoric and writing at the University of North Texas.[1] My friend and colleague, Masood Ashraf Raja, invited me to participate in a US State Department Public Diplomacy Program grant that he was applying for and subsequently won. The grant was one of seventeen throughout Pakistan and Afghanistan, and they were designed to fund cultural exchanges that connected arts and education institutions in America with arts and education institutions in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Dr. Raja's grant connected the University of North Texas (UNT), where he and I worked, with the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) in Islamabad, Pakistan. Over the course of four years, fifty-eight NUML scholars traveled to Denton, TX to conduct research and build their scholarly networks. As well, half a dozen or so UNT scholars traveled to Islamabad to teach various summer seminars at NUML in subjects such as Shakespeare, sociolinguistics, and postcolonial theory. In June of 2014, I traveled to Pakistan to teach a two-week faculty research seminar about writing for publication.

Pakistan, like many other countries around the world, is in the middle of a precipitous rise in what many higher education analysts call a "culture of research." There are various ways of defining what a research culture is and even more various ways of arguing over how to establish a research culture and what it should bring about (see Hanover). Nevertheless, the rise in research cultures is becoming a global standard—scholars at universities around the world are being asked, and often compelled, to produce and publish research in ever-increasing amounts. This is as true in countries with thoroughly established research cultures as it is in countries that are just beginning to build them.

There are plenty of good reasons to pursue a culture of research, including institutional advancement, faculty development, and pedagogical enhancement. At the same time, there are significant challenges that arise as well. As A. Suresh Canagarajah forcefully argues in *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*, for instance, access to resources, power, and legitimacy are neither evenly distributed nor equally accessible around the world. Nevertheless research expectations—both locally and globally—are very often not keyed in to that reality. And even in places where faculty and administrators are well aware of these kinds of resource

challenges, and even where good-faith efforts are made to address them, there remains the additional challenge of research training and development.

It was in this global educational context that I went to Islamabad. NUML faculty administrators and faculty were well aware of and working to address the resource challenges that accompany research. My participation in the UNT-NUML cultural exchange was intended to address the latter challenge of research training and development. To be clear, I was not invited to develop NUML researchers' ability to research. Thirty faculty from seven NUML campuses in various parts of the country enrolled in the seminar, and many of the participants were already accomplished researchers in their own rights.[2] They were capable scholars trained in research on topics ranging from cognitive and sociolinguistics to global literature, class and gender geopolitics, second-language acquisition, and national and international language pedagogy. Most were well trained in research methods and others were in the process of training. Some were already PhDs and others were graduate students in the advanced stages of earning PhDs. They didn't need me to teach them research, even if I could have.

What I was invited to do was help the researchers who enrolled in the seminar develop an orientation to, and methods for contributing to, a globalizing network of research *publication*.[3] In other words, in keeping with my disciplinary identity as a rhetoric and writing scholar, I was brought in to teach writing.

A quick digression: It is common to think of writing as a thing that doesn't need to be taught to smart people. For complex historical and political reasons, post-secondary writing instruction is often treated as a remedial activity that people should purportedly have learned before they move into higher-level instruction, and certainly before they are graduate students or professors. As I have written elsewhere:

> Until very recently, writing instruction has been all but absent from upper-division, graduate, and professional contexts in higher education, even though there has been a sharp increase in writing requirements for students and professors around the world. For instance, post-secondary faculty are seeing significant rises in publication expectations globally, and failure to produce research articles has serious consequences. Still, even with the critical expansion of academic and professional writing requirements, and even with the increasing presence of students in US institutions who need writing instruction beyond the first year, writing instruction has largely retained the complexion of remediation—as a thing people should have already learned. (Skinnell 132)

My goal in this reflection is not to rehash this argument, nor even to fully elaborate it. I gesture to it here, however, to point out what seems obvious to me

but may not actually be obvious to everyone. Developing a research culture obviously requires research, but it also requires writing, and writing is hard.

Writing for publication is especially hard—even for highly accomplished researchers and thoroughly engaged scholars and teachers. When I noted above that training and development are central challenges to establishing a research culture, I meant that researchers must be given resources to do research, but they also need support to learn (and relearn) how to write for publication. The two are intimately connected, but they are not the same, as the vast scholarly literature on writing for publication attests (see, e.g., Casanave and Vandrick; Feak and Swales; and Rose). Learning to research is not learning to write, and learning to write is a lifelong endeavor that is best accomplished through research, consultation, practice, feedback, and revision on an endless loop.

What I had to offer as a writing teacher—or more realistically, a writing consultant—was perfectly in keeping with what I might have offered to any other group of advanced researchers in a writing for publication workshop. We discussed writing habits such as planning, getting feedback, and revising. We discussed how to assess audiences, how to evaluate journal and book publishers' needs and values, how to situate research in a body of scholarship, and so on. And the participants in the seminar were perfectly up to the task. We were, I think, quite well-matched.

I could conclude this narrative here and feel pretty confident that I proved my initial argument—(1) Pakistan has raised research requirements in higher education, (2) doing so requires resources, (3) NUML administrators procured resources (specifically, me and other UNT scholars) to help their faculty, (4) their faculty have subsequently produced more and better research. The lesson is clear and perfectly tidy.

But quite honestly, it's more than a little unsatisfying. As I noted above, the US State Department Public Diplomacy Program grant that funded my trip to Islamabad was designed to fund cultural exchanges. The story I've been telling, which is true so far as it goes, is not a story of exchange. It is a story of benevolent altruism. And if it was the sum total of my experience in Pakistan, I would be apprehensive to reflect on it here because it's clichéd (and, frankly, damaging for being so).

There are two common narratives that Westerners (especially white Westerners) have enjoyed telling each other for centuries about traveling to the East—one is essentially an old colonizer's tale: we (Westerners) come bearing all manner of civilization to bestow on the unwashed (Eastern) hordes. We bring religion and medicine and democracy (sort of) to tame the wild impulses of the natives. There is an extensive catalogue of colonizer's tales in Western literature,

but for me, Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden," and Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan* are the quintessential examples. As it currently stands, the story I tell above about my trip to Pakistan in 2014 is more or less the colonizer's tale. The other common West-to-East narrative is somewhat more recent, and an attempt, perhaps, to reverse the colonizer's tale. In this story, a troubled Westerner travels East on a journey of personal discovery. In the course of the journey, the (Western) protagonist rediscovers him or herself by (re)discovering the simplicity and uncomplicated goodness of humanity embodied by the (humble, spiritual, technologically naïve) people in the East. *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert is probably the most prominent example in the current moment, though again, there is no shortage of examples to choose from.

The profound problems with both of these narratives—including, but not limited to exoticizing and fetishizing non-Westerners and reinforcing global systems of Western, white supremacy and predatory capitalism—have been well documented by post- and anti-colonial scholars.[4] But both ur-narratives are seductive in their ways, and I will admit, having written and rewritten this reflective essay more than a dozen times over the past three months, I've struggled to tell a story about traveling from West to East without lapsing into one or the other of those well-trod narrative paths.[5]

Ultimately, it is to the notion of exchange that I have returned. It is true that I taught a writing class to faculty in Islamabad. It is true that the participants seemed to value what they got from the class. It is also true that I learned a lot from them as well. For one, any pretensions I had to being the smartest person in the room because I have a PhD from a Western university were pretty quickly dashed. The members of that class were not just smart, which I expected, but they were also working in areas of research that made me feel positively dumb. I am grateful for this feeling—it helped to be more receptive to intellectual exchange, as such.

But there were also important cultural exchanges. Many of the people I met in Pakistan became my friends. They invited me to their homes, introduced me to their families, fed me, and engaged me in thoughtful conversation. On one afternoon, I ended up in a restaurant with Dr. Raja and two other men—one who had driven us to a meeting across town and the other who came along as an escort. They did not speak English, and I do not speak Urdu (or any of the other multiple languages they spoke). At the restaurant, two local musicians were busking for tips. We paid them to play for us, and in the course of their performance, we learned that they were classically trained musicians picking up extra money by playing in restaurants in between jobs at state functions and weddings. The musicians played ghazals, a form of music that was completely

unfamiliar to me before I went to Pakistan, and which frankly are rather distant from my musical tastes. But in that restaurant, translating through Dr. Raja, my hosts (all of them) taught me how to understand the music better, how to understand its relationship to Pakistani culture and history, and how to understand some of its critical complexity.

I tell this story—one of many I could have told—because it helps to round out my reflection on my experience in Pakistan. I went to Islamabad with things I could offer as a writing teacher. I think what I took was important, but it was also relatively narrow. The seminar participants welcomed me, challenged me, learned from me, and taught me. Likewise I came with cultural beliefs and values, and nearly everyone I met welcomed me, challenged me, learned from me, and taught me. In effect, my time in Pakistan was, thankfully, an exchange, or better yet, a series of exchanges—presumably of the sort that the grant was intended to encourage.

And this notion of exchange hints at the complexity that characterizes both Pakistan and its international counterparts. I saw beautiful art and stunning landscapes, I experienced warm and sincere hospitality, I ate food that I still crave four years later, and I learned about the history of Pakistan by attending rehearsals for a play that was written, directed, and performed by a group of brilliant high school students. I saw in equal measure strains on the economic order, violence and its omnipresent possibility, and seemingly insurmountable limitations on people's capacity to live full lives. I saw Americans in Pakistan acting foolishly, and I saw Pakistanis in their own country also acting foolishly. I also saw their opposites. And perhaps more importantly still, I saw Pakistanis, Americans, and people from a variety of other cultures acting foolishly at some times, valiantly at others, and unexceptionally at other times still. The people I met were complicated and worth knowing because of it. In the end, that is the true promise of exchange—not easy connections but rather the willingness to grant complexity to people who may challenge you to live and think differently long after the formal exchange has ended. The stories of going West-to-East are so often heroic and simple; but the experience of going West-to-East resists easy characterization. That is what I hope this reflection demonstrates.

I want to conclude by expressing a message that multiple Pakistanis asked me to convey to other Americans, which is that Pakistanis and their culture(s) are poorly represented in most Western media—films and journalism, in particular. The people I met asked me to covey their goodness, humanity, generosity, and so forth. I am happy to do this because it is certainly in keeping with my experience. But I also want to suggest that one of the chief reasons for Pakistanis' misrepresentation in the West is the familiarity of West-to-East narratives, which

impose simplicity and naïveté at the expense of richness and complexity. I want to suggest further that merely discovering that Pakistanis are good, humane, and generous is not sufficient.

Ultimately, what I am most grateful for are the people I met with whom I still have the good fortune to keep in contact. But in large part, I keep in contact with them (and hopefully they with me) because they helped me experience the complexity of our cultural exchange rather than the simplicity of benevolent altruism on the one hand or naïve virtue on the other. It is worth remembering, of course, that experiencing complexity is built directly into the promise of a research culture, from which this reflection began. Research and culture, in the best exchanges, teach us to act differently in the hopes of making people's lives better. The challenges entailed in doing so never go away, and I am as grateful for the reminder now as I was four years ago.

About the Author:

Dr. Ryan Skinnell is an assistant professor of rhetoric and writing at San José State University. He is the author of *Conceding Composition: A Crooked History of Composition's Institutional Fortunes* (Utah State University Press, 2016) and an editor or co-editor of four additional books.

Works Cited

Canagarajah, A. Suresh. *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2002.

Casanave, Christine, and Stephanie Vandrick, eds. *Writing for Scholarly Publication: Behind the Scenes in Language Education*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Feak, Christine B., and John M. Swales. *Creating Contexts: Writing Introductions Across Genres*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2011.

Hanover Research. *Building a Culture of Research: Recommended Practices*. Washington, DC: Hanover Research, 2014.

Rose, Shirley K. "What's Love Got to Do with It? Scholarly Citation Practices as Courtship Rituals." *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines* 1.3 (1996): 34-48.

Skinnell, Ryan. "Why Studying Writing Matters." Proceedings of the *International Conference on Social Sciences & Humanities: Emerging Interdisciplinary Trends in Social Sciences & Humanities*, Oct. 20, 2015. National University of Modern Languages-Islamabad (2016): 130-4.

Notes:

---

[1] My profound thanks to Faiza Ali Khokar, Dr. M. Uzair, and Roohi Vora for their feedback on previous drafts of this essay.

[2] The thirty participants in the seminar were: Bashir Ahmed, Afsheen Ekhteyar, Yasser Ghayoor, Azher Habib, Farah Hashmi, Farheen Hashmi, Saima Hassan, Bilal Hussain, Sadiq Hussain, Noveera Jaffar, M. Kashif Jaleel, Arshad Mahmood, Ayyaz Mahmood, Aisha Makhdoom, Ejaz Mirza, Jaweria Mobeen, Mudassir Mukhtar, Saima Niazi, Samina Qayyum, Farhat Sajjad, Hadeeqa Sarwar, Khurram Shahzad, Atteya Shahnaz, Amarah Sumbal, Hazrat Umar, Saima Umer, Shahida Usamah, M. Uzair, Faiza Yunus, Faiza Zeb.

[3] Dr. Raja offered a Postcolonial literature seminar at the same time I was teaching the writing for publication seminar. I suspect some of my seminarians wished they had been in his seminar instead of mine, but they were gracious enough not to mention it in my presence.

[4] Homi Bhaba, Franz Fanon, Masood Ashraf Raja, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and countless others have helped to track the ways these narratives shape beliefs, understandings, and relations across various parts of the world, and especially between what have traditionally been Western (colonizing) nations and Eastern (colonized) nations by reinforcing the cultural-geographical divide, despite how empirically artificial it is.

[5] I hope to avoid the trappings of the two West-to-East narratives I sketched above. Where I fail, as I fear I will, I sincerely hope readers will not make excuses on my behalf and will instead hold me accountable. Where I succeed, as I hope to do at least occasionally, I hope readers will recognize those successes as the result of astonishing goodwill of a global network of friends, colleagues, and interlocutors.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Cultural Identity and State Oppression: Poetic Resistance to Internal Colonialism in Pakistan

By Dr. Qaisar Abbas

Abstract

Challenging the conventional wisdom, this article argues that colonialism never left South Asia as it transformed itself into internal colonialism after independence. Strong shadows of British colonialism can still be seen in colonial legacies of legal, administrative and economic structures of Pakistan and other South Asian nations. Within this conceptual framework, this study analyzes poetic discourse in Pakistan's native languages including Balochi, Brahui, Pashto, Seriaki and Sindhi as it resists forces of internal colonialism. The analysis demonstrates poetic resistance within the two major themes: A consistent quest for cultural identity in Seriaki and Sindhi, and a profound resistance to the state oppression in the Balochi and Pashto poetic discourse. This discourse demonstrates themes of cultural defiance with modernist, post-modernist, realistic and expressionist trends. Although resistance is not the only stream, it is a prominent theme with some similar and distinctive features specific to the nature of oppression to marginalize native cultures. The poetic discourse, along with the political and intellectual struggles, however, became instrumental in gaining some breathing space for native cultures although mechanisms of internal colonialism remain intact in Pakistan.

Keywords:

Cultural Resistance, Poetic Discourse, Internal Colonialism, Native Languages, Pakistan, Balochi, Brahui, Pashto, Seraiki, Sindhi.

Pakistan's ruling elites have carved out a unique system to govern and thrive which has been instrumental in sustaining their power and control during the last 70 years. The post-colonial history of Pakistan narrates dynamics of internal colonialism where a new kind of operational mechanism was introduced to maintain the colonial structure allowing for a heavy control by the centre to rule the peripheral areas. An unholy alliance of the landed aristocracy, army and bureaucracy emerged to colonize weaker provinces and communities, their economies, cultures, and languages. The landed aristocracy and army changed their seats as rulers and the bureaucratic establishment provided legal and administrative support to the alliance as needed. The so-called democracy, that was sustained off and on, became subservient to these political forces. The history of Pakistan, at the same time, reveals a cultural struggle against this system by intellectuals, writers, and poets. This article discusses internal colonialism as a conceptual framework for post-colonial Pakistan within the broader context of South Asia. Positioning the poetic discourse of native languages within this conceptual framework, it analyzes poetry written in the major native languages of Pakistan including Seraiki, Balochi, Brahui, Sindhi and Pashto. It further explores the broader role of this discourse in gaining cultural and political autonomies.

How the Pakistani literary discourse, mainstream and peripheral both, defies internal colonialism, is a neglected but fascinating topic to be explored. Poetics of resistance in native languages of Pakistan has rarely been explored as a research topic due to the lack of federal support and limited resources of the peripheral cultures. All available resources were used for this research including online and print material in newspapers, journals and books. The study also involved interviews with poets and writers and several visits to the Library of Congress in Washington DC.

First, this article offers an alternative conceptual framework within a broader context of post-colonial South Asia. The next section explores the concepts of cultural resistance and poetic discourse. After clarifying the dynamics of internal colonialism within the structural mechanisms in

Pakistan, the poetic discourse in the native languages is analyzed in detail. Major conclusions of the study are drawn in the last section within the political and cultural contexts of Pakistan.

Conceptual Framework

Political developments in post-colonial Pakistan should be viewed within the four historical phases of colonialism, internal colonialism, ad hoc colonialism, and terrorism in South Asia. The colonial period created a socio-cultural, economic and political vacuum in the subcontinent. By breaking down the traditional-communal social order, the British imperialism also created an additional class with indigenous skin and color but a mind of the ruling class. This group became proxy rulers to fill in the gaps where colonial rulers were not available. In their language, lifestyle and behaviour, they became the second line of local rulers with an imperialist mindset. The new administrative, political and economic systems remained as exploitative after independence as they were under the colonial setup. Internal colonialism was introduced by national leaders in the newly liberated nations making cosmetic changes in the system, not the colonial structure which remained intact. In the absence of a legitimate electoral process in most South Asian states, except India where it provided stability and legitimacy to rule, rest of the nation states were still hegemonic in nature. Probably that is why we still see the uneasy ruler-subject relationship in South Asian countries where masses seem to be in a perennial mode of agitation against their governments while the ruling regimes, most of the time, behave as oppressive rulers. This colonial legacy continues.

Additionally, this internal disarray in the region was further enhanced by the global tug-of-war between the capitalist and communist forces as part of the cold war introducing another phenomenon in the region what I call "Ad hoc Colonialism." In the current geopolitical circumstance when a world power militarily occupies a country for a shorter period motivated by geopolitical conditions, national interest and economic benefits, ad hoc colonialism becomes a strategy to establish military bases in anticipation of

future manoeuvres or increasing political and economic influence. The concept is highly relevant to those world regions where modern-day colonialism continues for achieving military or economic goals through short term military invasions.

Geopolitical interests of the United States and Soviet Union accelerated internal conflicts and further deteriorated economic and social infrastructures of the whole region. The prolonged foreign intervention began when the Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan in 1979. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the remaining Jihadi groups under different umbrellas, armed with modern weaponry supplied by the United States, became a mighty force that led to the formation of another monster in the region commonly known as the Taliban (Goodson, 1998). These militant groups became so strong that they occupied Afghanistan and ruled it with a draconian hand until another superpower came in to oust them from urban centres.

This time, it was the United States that occupied Afghanistan in 2001 in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York. Continuation of this ad hoc colonialism in the region by two world powers for over three decades not only shook Afghanistan, Pakistan and neighbouring countries, it adversely affected the whole South Asia in one way or another. First, it introduced a new wave of terrorism which was never seen in the region before. Militant forces emerged everywhere in Afghanistan and Pakistan which not only targeted NATO and American forces, but also killed innocent citizens, destroyed the private property and infrastructural facilities.

This conceptual framework, besides analyzing the impact of colonialism in the region, also explains the historical milestones spanning over half a century in the post-colonial South Asia. This alternative approach argues that it is the continuation of colonialism, in the form of internal colonialism and then ad hoc colonialism that is still impacting South Asian societies as a major hurdle to democracy, peace, regional integration, and development. The next section will further explore the concepts of culture and poetic resistance within the context of South Asia.

Cultural Resistance and Poetic Discourse

If culture, as defined by Raymond Williams, is primarily a form of material production and a symbolic system depending on the field of study you are associated with, then culture creates a system of meanings through literature, music, poetry, and other forms of creative arts (Williams, 2002). Culture, no matter how you define, is deeply political and it is widely used as a means of social control by the dominant power structure. Cultural resistance in challenging this hegemony, can be "used, consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resists and/or change the dominant political, economic and/or social structure" (Duncombe, 2002). According to this definition, culture, as an organized and planned activity is essentially political in nature but not a political activity itself, and cultural resistance provides a free space to create language, meaning and vision for the future.

Poetry has been a popular form of public expression in South Asia which has historically played a vital role against imperialism and internal colonialism. Benedict Anderson's demonstrated correlation between the rise of modern nationalism and the form of novel (novel/nation) has become a predominant line of thought in post-colonial studies within the context of Europe (Anderson, 1991). Nazneen Ahmed, however, argues that poetry as a popular mode of communication in post-colonial societies, can also be a national "form" as in the case of Bangladesh where it became a highly effective tool as part the liberation movement in 1971 (Ahmed, 2014). To her, it is the poetic discourse, not novel, that is easily accessible and comprehensible to the masses in developing societies where oral traditions take a central role. In fact, social gatherings of poetry recitation and musical renderings of poems have been a popular public voice in all South Asian societies where low literacy rates limit reading capabilities. This argument is also highly relevant to native cultures of Pakistan where public gatherings of *Mushairas* (poetry recitations) are highly popular among the masses across social and class boundaries.

In *Weapons of the Weak* James C. Scott talks about the everyday cultural resistance as opposed to direct and open defiance (Scott, 1985). Thus, tactics of foot dragging, evasion, false compliance, pilfering or sabotage become strategies to avoid direct conflict with the powerful oppressor. Also, his concept of "public transcripts" as behaviour or speaking mode to defy the abuse of power is also related to poetic resistance. Within the context of poetic discourse, these transcripts tend to convey hidden meanings, linguistic tricks, euphemism, folktales and metaphors which are sometimes hard to detect as they are packed within the folds of symbolic gestures and multiple meanings. This notion of "public transcripts" perfectly resonates with native cultures of Pakistan where the poetic discourse of native languages, under the current circumstances, is not considered a serious threat to the system unless it directly challenges the powerful military establishment or religious orthodoxy.

Dynamics of Internal Colonialism in Pakistan

Scholars have discussed internal colonialism within racial or ethnic dimensions in England, Latin America, the United States, Canada, Australia and several European nations where dominant classes and majority groups tend to marginalize native populations and ethnic minorities (Hechter, 1999). The phenomenon, however, works with different dynamics in the former colonies in Asia.

Within the context of South Asia generally and Pakistan specifically, internal colonialism can be defined as a system of hegemony that works directly or indirectly with the patronage of the core within a nation state to exploit human, economic or natural resources of peripheral regions to bring them under the domination of a powerful central regime. The strong core in the system not only controls peripheral regions politically, it also undermines their cultural, educational, economic, and social spheres. It is the strong federal structure in Pakistan that exploits its weaker regions in coordination with the civil-military establishment and the landed aristocracy. Within the system, as Robert Blauner argues, beyond the natural process of

contact and acculturation "Rather, the colonizing power carries out a policy which constrains, transforms or destroys indigenous values, orientations, or ways of life" (Blauner,1969).

Aijaz Ahmad argues that nationalism became the popular ideology to offset imperialism for the newly independent nations after world war II without comprehending the polemics and weaknesses of the concept (Ahmad, 1992). In fact, while nationalism was used as a major ideological thrust against imperialism, internal colonialism was the real strategy used by most rulers in the new nation states, who became agents of advanced capitalism. Internal colonialism in the form of marginalization of ethnic, cultural or regional minorities, became a predominant mode of governance in South Asia which still poses a huge challenge to development, peace and democracy in the subcontinent. Here, hegemony over the marginalized communities, mixed with the centre's domination over racial, ethnic or religious communities, becomes a major tool for the ruling classes within nation states who try to mock their former colonial rulers.

Dynamics of internal colonialism in Pakistan, along with growing economic disparities, with variations, in the four provinces of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, gave birth to an unprecedented trail of social unrest, anarchy and cultural discord. New social and economic realities found new avenues of religious, ethnic, geographical and even sectarian divisions. Hamza Alavi argues that it was the salaried Muslim class of India who was in favour of carving out a Muslim state as they were afraid of losing power and control in the postcolonial India (Alavi, 1989). These Urdu speaking bureaucrats became the main ruling class in the early post-colonial Pakistan, but their power considerably decreased as the Punjabi dominated ruling junta became the main beneficiary of this arrangement. The system of internal colonialism, thus, continued the legacy of the old British bureaucracy in the Indian subcontinent. The colonial structure of tax and tariffs, the legal structure, and the administrative institution of bureaucracy and military, remained intact in the newly created nation state

modelled on the ruler-subject relationship of the colonial period. Subtleties of this ruling structure established hegemony in economic, political, legal, cultural and educational institutions. The new nation state also continued the British legal system which was efficiently employed to exploit the peripheral areas and marginalize ethnic and religious minorities. The Indo-Saxon legal system was modified to suit the interest of rulers whenever needed. First, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto[1] used the same legal framework to declare the Ahmadiyya community as non-Muslim and then the military dictator Ziaul Haq utilized the same framework to legally outcast the community from the national scene imposing severe restrictions that limited their participation in business, academic, scientific and other professional fields. As a result, the community was not only declared non-Muslim, their status was also reduced to the level of minorities (Ahmed, 2010).

Because the new political system in Pakistan was also barrowed from the British rulers, the colonial pattern of ruler-subject relationship never changed. The Basic Democracy system introduced by the first military dictator General Ayub Khan[2] to use the rural majority against the metropolitan elite-was the same strategy the colonialists used in the undivided India (Sayeed, 1967). However, it was not only military dictators but also the elected political leaders who behaved like colonial rulers. Bhutto, the popular political leader and founder of the Pakistan People's Party, also brutally suppressed the labour movement of 1972 in Karachi after coming to power (Ali, 2010).

This domination and marginalization of peripheries was more vibrant in the cultural domain than any other sector as argued by Langah (2012). In her research on the Seraiki poetic resistance, she talks about the system of lingual hierarchy devised by the colonial rulers. The ruling alliance in

[1] The popular political leader and founder of Pakistan People's Party who was prime minister during 1973-1977.

[2] General Ayub Khan was the first military dictator who ruled Pakistan during 1958-1966.

Pakistan has also devised a five-tier system of lingual hierarchy assigning a specific role to native languages. In this system, English has assumed the status of a royal language of brown rulers in the post-colonial Pakistan. Although spoken by a small educated class, English not only has become the official language in federal and provincial governments, it has also become a language of communication for the army, bureaucracy and the educated aristocracy as they speak and write in this language.

Urdu, on the other hand, has become the second-tier language which has been transformed into a predominant language of most middle and lower classes as national language. On the other hand, major native languages-Sindhi, Balochi, Brahui, Punjabi, Pashto, and Seraiki-have been conveniently relegated to the third place by downgrading them as "regional" languages, limiting their advancement and influence. These indigenous languages have been highly marginalized based on the theory that Urdu as Lingua Franca has a magical power to unite the nation. Nonetheless, the four native languages represent 77.24 percent of the total population where Punjabi is spoken by 44.15 percent, Sindhi 14.10 percent, Pashto 15.42 percent and Balochi 3.57 percent of the total population (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

Some languages, thought to be "insignificant" have been assigned to the fourth place in this lingual hierarchy as local languages while other "irrelevant" languages, already at the verge of extinction, have been placed at the bottom of this totem pole. About 50-90 local languages are rarely considered relevant. Based on this discussion, the following section offers analysis of the poetic discourse in the major native languages of Pakistan.

Poetic Discourse: Cultural Identity and State Oppression

Writers and poets who dared to challenge the system of internal colonialism were traumatized and harassed by the state through internment, torture and economic deprivation in the early years of independence. Faiz

Ahmad Faiz, the popular poet, was arrested in 1951 for "plotting" a coup along with a group of military and civil intellectuals. He was tried for treason with a possibility of death penalty but later released. Other poets including Habib Jalib, Ahmad Faraz and Ustad Daman were also arrested and harassed for their poetic resistance to civil and military dictators.

Excluding the stalwarts like Faiz, Jalib and Faraz, however, it is not the mainstream Urdu verse but the poetic discourse in native languages of Pakistan which exposes cruelties of internal colonialism in the post-colonial Pakistan. Undoubtedly, it is the Sindhi, Pushto, Seraiki, Brahui, Punjabi and Balochi poetry that vigorously and boldly challenged and even rejected the system of internal colonialism. The poetic discourse in these languages offers a unique imagery, metaphorical finesse, and fresh lexicon dealing with postmodernist themes depicting societal agitation, miseries of the poor, insensitivities of the ruling elite and gender issues, both in its manifestation and structure. Besides the poetic resistance against the system at large, each language has its unique poetic expression depicting their specific socio-political environment. These streams widely exist, among others, in the poetry of Sheikh Ayaz, Janbaz Jatoi, Tanveer Abbasi, Imdad Hussaini, Sehar Imdad and Pushpa Vallabh (Sindhi); Hasina Gul, Ghani Khan, Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari and Samandar Khan Samandar (Pushto); Ata Shad and Gul Khan Naseer (Balochi); Noor Khan Mohammad Hassani (Brahui); and Ashiq Buzdar, Mohammad Ayub and Abid Ameeq (Seriaki). Any analysis of the native poetic discourse remains incomplete without discussing the two distinctive thematic streams: A persistent quest for cultural identify and state as a symbol of oppression.

Quest for Cultural Identity

The province of Punjab, with its demographic majority, economic power and the military might (Siddiqa, 2007) is the major beneficiary of internal colonialism in Pakistan. While in the Indian Punjab, land holdings were substantially reduced through reforms after the independence, the

feudal system is still intact in Pakistan which is a major ingredient of the recipe for internal colonialism. This social reality emerges again and again in the Punjabi poetry of Pakistan (Rammah, 2006).

The same system, however, also promotes the worst kind of marginalization of the Punjabi language. The lack of patronage on part of the government and the social trend of the Punjabi speaking population to shun their mother tongue, have been the two major reasons of this marginalization (Rammah, 2006). As a result, Punjabi was never recognized as a literary or academic language after independence which otherwise has a long and rich history of folk and Sufi poetic traditions. The scare of the vanishing mother tongue often appears in the Punjabi poetic discourse. For Mazhar Tirmazi, a known Punjabi poet who lives in London now, winter brings back memories of the motherland where the people "who have no words" becomes a nostalgic reference to his fading mother tongue (Tirmazi, 2004):

> Don't worry about me, I can exist in my words
> But what about those who have no words
> For them the world is a bread-loaf lying in a chhaabba[3]
>
> What do they know of the art of living who are scared by
>
> the sadness that stares from the eyes of others [4]

Charagh Din, known by his pen name of Ustad Daman (1911-1984) was another critic of military dictators and the ruling class of his time through his fearless Punjabi verse. For Zubair Ahmed "The most persecuted poet was Ustaad Daman who was put behind bars not only by the military dictators Ayub Khan and Yayia Khan but also the elected prime minister, Z. A. Bhutto." [5]A common man himself, he opposed corruption and

---

[3] A bread basket.
[4] Translated by Amin Mughal from Punjabi.
[5] Email interview by the author with Zubair Ahmed, April 2, 2015.

exploitation of the poor throughout his life. His highly satirical poem "My Country, Two Allahs" represents a bold example of his vigorous opposition to the military dictator General Zia:[6]

> What fun for our lovely land,
> Wherever we go armed forces stand.
> It happened only yesterday,
> And will again another day,
> A hundred thousand quit the field,
> To give up half their country's land.
> Three cheers for General Zia!
> *Bravo! Bravo!* General Zia![7]

However, the Seraiki speaking population in the southern Punjab, with its rich literary heritage, considers itself a cultural and lingual group, separate from rest of the Punjab province. Their language has been marginalized at three levels. First, Seraiki as a language has been side-tracked by the state that did not allow its growth at literary and cultural levels. Second, it became target of the mainstream Punjabi establishment that does not accept their claim of a separate identify. At the third level, their culture has been exploited by the mainstream and their own landed aristocracy. Against this backdrop, there has been a strong movement demanding to carve out the Seraiki province from Punjab. To the late Seraiki nationalist leader Taj Mohammad Langah:

> More than 90 percent of the poetry produced by Seraiki poets is about resistance. And there is a reason behind this. The Seraiki belt has been slaves for more than 5,000 years and they have expressed the tyranny

[6] General Ziaul Haq was the most brutal dictator of Pakistan who also institutionalized militancy imposing legal and administrative mechanisms. He ruled the country as president during 1978-1988.

[7] Translated by Waqas Khwaja from Punjabi.

> of oppressors and their own helplessness through literature —whether it is poetry or prose (The News, 2015).

The Seraiki poets who became part of the movement and actively integrated this dream into their poetic expression, have become immensely popular. Sain Ashiq Buzdar, with his bold manifestation of political discontent against the provincial authority, became a popular poet as part of the movement for the Seraiki province. His poem *Asan Qaidi Takht Lahore De* (we are slaves of the Lahore's throne) recreates the capital of the Punjab province as a symbol of oppression (Buzdar, 1986). After paying glowing tributes to his motherland, the poem narrates tyrannies of the Punjabi rulers boldly and intensely:

> This land of faith, today
> Weeps a thousand tears.
> Its face is under the Punjabi jackboot
> On its back, the whips are singing
> Every vein has a thousand wounds
> And we, the village lads,
> See what happened to us
> Of rings, pendants and bracelets
> Of our comely adornments,
> We have been disposed.
>
> Our eyes are dripping blood
> Our beings have been demolished
> Our lips have seals of tyranny
> Our hands are bound in shackles
> We're slaves of Lahore's oppression
> We're slaves of Lahore's oppression.[8]

[8] Translated by Athar Saeed from Seraiki for this article.

Abid Ameeq, a Seraiki poet and professor of English, also challenged the cruel dictatorship of General Ziaul Haq and was jailed for his audacity. In Mahmood Awan's words: "Ameeq has artistically used a conversational style to convey simple messages through his poetry" (The News, 2014). Author of two poetry books, Abid opposed discrimination against his culture and language bluntly (Ameeq, 2000). One of his poems reflects depth of his disillusionment over marginalization of his cultural heritage by the powerful:

How come our ponds dried
our herds and belongings destroyed.
Come and take our pictures,
write features on us,
Rohi[9] is a heaven,
portraying us like a circus.[10]

Mohsin Naqvi (1947-1996) was a popular Seraiki and Urdu poet with a unique poetic talent who himself became target of violence and lost his life. In a constant state of fear, he often creates an unparalleled imagery that is full of mysterious silence enveloped in the darkness of his surroundings (Tahir, 1995):

Robbers, thieves and bandits
Making holes in the roof.
And foundation of my home
Asks the milky-white dove
Again and again,
Sitting on the beak of word's spade:

[9] Cholistan desert in the Seraiki area.
[10] Translated by Mahmood Awan from Seraiki.

"What's going to happen now"?[11]

Besides traditional poets, the new generation of Seraiki poets is widening its canvas using the contemporary modes of poetic expression. Mohammad Ayub, a published Seraiki poet of the younger generation, who currently resides in Canada, has published an anthology of his poems. Ayub's poem "For Nazir Abbasi" pays a glowing tribute to the young martyr who became victim of the military dictator's brutality:

> O hanging noose,
> be gentle
>
> we toiled our life away
> to bring up sons
>
> they had a sheltered life
> they didn't face the elements.
>
> O hanging noose
> when everyone was prostrate,
> their brows were aglow with defiance
> when no one braved the torrid sun
> they spread their hands for shade
> and never gave in to tyranny.[12]

Seraiki poetry offers multiple voices of resistance with several themes that include protest for marginalization of their language, economic injustice, settlement of native people on their land, bureaucratic exploitation of their resources, brutalities of ruling elites within the broader context of Pakistan, and the demand for a separate province (Tahir, 1995). As part of the movement for the Seraiki province, the verse became a protesting voice of the people to demand autonomy and respect for their culture. Seraiki

---

[11] Translated by Tahir Tonsvi from Seraiki.

[12] Translated by Athar Saeed from Seraiki.

poetry, along with its resistance and protest to the prevailing system, seems to be in a constant search for its diminishing cultural identity.

While resistance to the provincial hegemony remains a significant theme in the Seraiki poetry, a profound quest for nationalist identity, becomes a prominent theme in the Sindhi poetic discourse, besides other themes such as resistance to the establishment. The Sindhi poetic discourse strives to re-establish the cultural identity which seems to be threatened by the political developments within the Sindh province. Sindhi language as a medium of early education in schools has been the norm in the Sindh province unlike the other three provinces where Punjabi, Pashto and Balochi never achieved this status. This allowed a comparative growth of their literary activities, journalism and publishing. However, in the wake of a large immigrant population arriving from India after independence, the native Sindhi population became minority in the two large urban areas of Karachi and Hyderabad (Kennedy, 1991). The fear that their resources and homeland was being invaded by outsiders led to a consistent quest for nationalist identity which also emerged prominently in their post-colonial literary discourse. Sindhi nationalism was at its height during the Zia dictatorship and resistance to the military domination became a forceful metaphor in the Sindhi literature. It was the time when "writers and poets like Rehmatullah Manjothi, Naseer Mirza, Tariq Alam, Niaz Hasmayooni and Adal Soomro challenged Zia's ideological state" (Talbot, 2015).

Against this political backdrop, the Sindhi poetic discourse signifies dissent and resistance to the Pakistani establishment. Shaikh Ayaz (1923-1998), a leading Sindhi writer, always challenged hegemony of the state for which he was often arrested by military dictators. Not only a short story writer, he was also a prolific Sindhi and Urdu poet who wrote more than 70 volumes of poetry, short stories, memoirs and essays: "Shaikh Ayaz is one of the major voices of the twentieth century poetry. His literary career spanned about six decades and displayed an amazing variety in poetry and prose" (Farrukhi and Pirzada, 1999). In one of his poems "Snake-Charmers"

Ayaz metaphorically summarises his anguish over devastative onslaught on his cultural identity:

> White snakes ran back to their hidey-holes
> In the name of freedom
> We got black snakes.
> The same hiss, the same sting,
> The same onrush of snakes
> On our fertile land.
> Snake charmers come this way
> They can turn nectar into poison
> Fair of face black deeds
> They have made our home their own
> From morning to night, they pretend
> To recite spells for catching the snakes.[13]

His poetic genius touched universal and local themes of freedom, death, beauty, and brutalities of dictators, condemnation of war, and celebration of the folklore. A master of satire, he made fun of autocratic regimes of his time who always claimed to be the guardians of freedom:

> Who can say there's no freedom here?
> Jackals are free,
> Flies are free,
> Here the intellectuals are free. [14]

Imdad Hussaini (born 1940), with his modernistic poetry, became a trendsetter of the Sindhi poetic discourse. He "precipitously changed the

[13] Translated by Asif Farruki and Shah Mohammed Prizada from Sindhi.
[14] Translated by Asif Farruki and Shah Mohammed Prizada from Sindhi.

milieu of Sindhi poetry from rural to urban and from communal to individualistic expression" (Sindhu, 2013). His verse added a new chapter to the Sindhi literature where his bold metaphor and new themes gave him a prominent place as a top-notch Sindhi poet. His classic poem "Roots" draws parallels between the worldwide civil rights movements and the struggle in his own motherland of Sindh:

Speak Truth, drink poison by becoming
Socrates of Athens;
Christ for the cross;
Hussain for Yazid;
Mansoor for the gibbet;
Dado and Darya Khan;
To lay down life for Sindh![15]

Among the contemporary poets, Sehar Imdad (born 1951) stands tall for her avantgarde poetic style. As she published an anthology of Sindhi poems, she is also known as a published Urdu poet. Her poem "Acid" eulogizes the nameless martyrs of Sindh using her unique imagery of the agony that they went through:

Needles stabbed in eyes,
some pleasant dream
Turns to stone.
The jugular severed in the slit throat,
some melodious song
remains trapped in the heart.
Acid poured
over hennaed hands,
slowly skin crinkles and dies.
The sun's hot rays
prick like daggers.

[15] Translated by Saleem Noor Hussain from Sindhi.

Night, like poison,
Runs through veins.[16]

For another Sindhi poet, Pushpa Vallabh (born 1963), darkness and restrictions on freedom of expression become opportunities to find avenues for human freedom. Professionally a physician, she writes poetry in Sindhi, English and Urdu. Her poem "Light a Lamp and See" conveys a message to keep the hope alive despite the darkness that prevails:

So what if the tongue is silenced?
Let your fingers speak, and you will see.
feelings will repair
the broken words.

There is absolute darkness,
the eye cannot make out the hand's shape.
Light will catch at light and grow-
it may be small,
light a lamp and see.[17]

From systematic marginalization to a profound message of hope and equality, the Sindhi verse appears to be in a constant search for ethnic and cultural identity. It boldly challenges the establishment for abrogating civil rights of the people and marginalizing their cultural heritage and history.

State as a Symbol of Oppression

As we have seen, both Seriaki and Sindhi verse become a strong voice of their masses who mourn the loss of their nationalistic heritage and resist their cultural annihilation at the same time. For other native languages

[16] Translated by Azmat Ansari and Waqas Khwaja from Sindhi.

[17] Translated by Azmat Ansari and Waqas Khwaja from Sindhi.

such as Balochi, Brahui and Pashto, however, the state appears to be a powerful symbol of oppression at several levels.

Balochistan has been the target of military and civil oppression more than any other province in Pakistan. Rich in natural resources including natural gas and petroleum, the area has witnessed insurgencies in 1948, 1958, 1962, and 1973, and more recently in 2002. It was General Pervez Musharraf[18] who killed the senior Balochi leader Akbar Bugti in an air attack in 2006. Since then the movement for autonomy within Pakistan has been transformed into a freedom movement (Fazal, 2012).

Scars of this violent history can be seen in Balochi and Brahui poetry, the two major languages of Balochistan that have been exposing rulers' atrocities in prose and verse. This outcry for freedom has also found its way into the poetic discourse of the province. Gul Khan Naseer (1914-1983), a firebrand Balochi nationalist, political leader and activist, was also a revolutionary poet who challenged this onslaught on his people. His long-fought political struggle against the ruling alliance and his daring poetic posture remain a signpost of his literary discourse.

Declaring himself a rebel, he appears to define his ideological commitment to freedom and equality in his poem "I Am a Rebel:"

I fight for rights
I color my land with my blood
I squeeze my enemy
I tell the truth
I am a rebel, I am a rebel

Fettered, they, but I am free
Not the rule, I am the ruler
not deceitful, I bring relief,
not a thief

[18] The army dictator who ruled Pakistan as its president from 2001 to 2008.

I am a rebel, I am a rebel[19]

His fiery poetic style and his denunciation of the state apparatus often sent him to jail. One of his poems "Towering Ramparts" (Arif and Khwaja, 2011) narrates his firm belief that resistance of the poor can topple the powerful one day. The first two stanzas reflect his defiance against the tyrannies of the state:

Towering ramparts of stone and brick,
with strong doors and chains of steel-
jails and prisons have been created, but nothing
can confine high ideals. [20]

Ata Shad (1939-1997) was a poet of mass popularity who conveyed intricate subjectivities of romanticism and social tragedies of his Balochi nation to his audience. As a versatile poet, Ata Shad was also known for his Urdu poetry published in two anthologies besides three books in his mother tongue. He raised the Balochi poetry to a new level as "symbolism, imagism, and dramatism were main themes of his poetry, which he brought into Balochi poetry, just to test the reader's feedback" (Buzdar, 2012).

In his poem "In the Hour of Death" he grieves bereavement of a freedom fighter, whom he calls the son of the homeland:

This son is the spirit of friendship; he loves hope of tomorrow,
good tidings of the defeat of the doom.
You cannot kill life's ideas by plucking flowers
nor, in this way, prevent the diffusion of his scent.
If you wish to destroy me, kill my soul first
if my death is your desire, first hang love's hope on the gallows
and if you wish to annihilate me, first tear out beans of the

[19] Translated from Balochi by Azmat Ansari and Waqas Khwaja.
[20] Translated by Azmat Ansari and Waqas Khawaja.

dwellings of place of thought.[21]

One of his popular poems "Shah Kundan" sums up his interpretation of immortality of soul after execution:

Thoughts cannot be killed by mass killings
scent cannot be killed by pressing the flower
if at all you want to kill me, kill my soul.
For eliminating me
Sacrifice the love I have
For killing me
Kill my conscious
Destroy my thoughts
But killing me is not possible
I am love
Eternal till the end
My prints are there forever
Till the time I have life and blood in my veins
If I die, so will you
Till the time you are alive
So am I. [22]

Noor Khan Mohammad Hassani is a journalist and poet who writes in his mother tongue Brahui. His work has been published nationally and locally. His poem "Freedom" recounts the history of his motherland in a metaphorical way:

Then we have to begin from the beginning

Uproot suppression, disunity, despair and exploitation

[21] Translated by Azmat Ansari and Waqas Khwaja from Balochi.
[22] Translated by Wahid Bukhsh Buzdar and Shafiq-ur-Rehman Buzdar from Balochi.

And sow seeds of love and affection

In soil to harvest the flowers of freedom

But continue to sow weeds and thorns of

And wait for a harvest of sorrow and strife.[23]

Federal policies of internal colonialism have been as strong as their resistance in Balochistan which is also reflected in the native languages of the province. From Gul Khan Naseer to Ata Shad and Mohammad Hussaini, this poetic protest has been very direct, bold, and intense. While poetry of Gul Khan Naseer is candid, Ata Shad talks in highly metaphoric and symbolic way as he is also known as a popular romantic poet of the region in Balochi and Urdu both.

While resistance to the establishment in Balochistan comes with a rebellious tone because of its ongoing insurgency, freedom has also been a hallmark of the Pashto poetic discourse. The Pashto cultural heritage that revered freedom as one of the most important virtues of their tribal society opposed the British imperialism and later the autocratic rulers after independence. Always suspicious of the centre, state becomes a consistent symbol of oppression in the Pashto poetic discourse.

Traditionally, Pashto poetry assumed the structural form of Ghazal as a major influence of Persian poetry. Khushal Khan Khattack, Rehman Baba, Amir Hamza Shinwari and other poets mixed Ghazal with musical renditions in social and literary events to popularize it. Pashto intellectual and researcher Dr. Qabil Khan Afridi gives credit to Amir Hamza Shanwari to nurture and promote Pashto literature, especially the verse, among the public (Afridi, 1998).

Ghani Khan (1914-1996), who was considered as one of the leading Pushto poets of the 20th century, challenged the system through his poetic discourse. The artistic son of the known activist and leader, Khan Abdul

---

[23] Translated by Noor Khan M. Hassani from Brahui.

Ghaffar Khan[24] (1890-1988), Ghani was jailed for 6 years in 1948, just one year after the independence for his political activities and poetry.

Besides the romantic strands in the forms of Ghazals and poems, his politically motivated pieces become satirical odes to ridicule power, powerful leaders, and kings. Expressing his hatred toward "King' as a symbol of power, the poet contemplates that if you cannot guarantee justice, you should not lead. Later in the poem, he contrasts the luxuries of kingship with the people's sufferings and poverty and asks:

What would such life mean

That you either kill or die?

Where are your fruits and roses?

You keep a garden and kill the *bulbul*?[25]

The poem ends in asking the creator: "How can I curse and tyrannize, the spring and crimson flowers." [26]

Exposing hypocrisies of leaders of his time, another poem "Leader" appears to be his continued satire on the dynamics of power and control in the newly liberated state:

Take a crow's beak,

A snake's tongue,

A chicken's brain,

And the heart of a rambler,

A dog's throat

---

[24] Also known as Bacha Khan, Adbul Gaffar Khan led the nonviolent, grassroots freedom movement against the British raj whose struggle for autonomy also continued after the 1947 partition.

[25] Bulbul, the singing bird or nightingale is widely used in Urdu, Persian and Hindi poetry as a symbol of love and melody.

[26] Translated by Taimur Khan from Pashto.

That barks well,

A mule's stubbornness,

And deck it pride,

Mud from the village,

And the city's dunghill;

And then befriend

A blind potter,

Who will prepare a new leader for you.[27]

Exposing moral and intellectual absurdities of leaders, the discourse reflects the poet's dislike towards politicians and their powerplay, probably the reason why he left politics in the later part of his life.

Hsina Gul (born 1966) is a known Pashto poet of the younger generation. With two published anthologies of poems, she works as broadcaster for Radio Pakistan in Peshawar. Her poetry offers a critical view of the prevailing social order and its contradictions. Invoking women's suffrage against the backdrop of political suffocation, this poem creatively identifies both issues in her surroundings:

Excellent it is, a free thinker I am

Though there are numerous restriction upon me, my hands are fastened, my lips are locked, my eyes are taped, yet I am proud of being a thinker.

I condemn all restrictions because I compose odes, write poems, create songs, and I have to engage myself in every fruitful activity.

I want to be free therefore I love freedom, if anyone is hurt and wishes to capture me

[27] Translated by Taimur Khan from Pashto.

he should do it with pleasure, but my art will never be chained.

It's excellent that I am a thinker and I am proud of it.[28]

Pashto and Balochi poetic discourse exposes intensities of the state oppression with different contextual frameworks. While the Balochi poets more often appear to have a rebellious tone reflective of their specific political dynamics, the Pashto poetic discourse invokes the philosophical intricacies of power and powerful leaders in the post-colonial Pakistan, along with the gender and social issues of its own society.

Conclusion

Poetry, with its popularity among the literate and illiterate masses in Pakistan, has been a strong tool of resisting the prevailing socio-political structure. As poetic resistance has been a predominant theme from the beginning in the subcontinent, it became a popular voice against powerful emperors and rulers who tried to silence local uprisings through force. Shah Hussain, the Sufi poet of Punjab, along with the freedom fighter Dullah Bhatti, became a symbol of local defiance against the Mughal Empire in the mid-16th to early-17th century. Khushal Khan Khattack (1613-1689), the Pashto warrior-poet, also used his poetry to raise voice against the mighty Mughal empire of India. Although respected widely by the masses of all faiths, some of the Sufi poets were persecuted for their intellectual resistance to brutalities of rulers. Deeply rooted in the folk heritage of native languages, Sufi poetry also became a message of human tranquillity and cultural diversity mostly in Sindhi, Punjabi and Seraiki languages.

This trend continued during the colonial period when popular poets, who supported the freedom movement, became national heroes. Even after

[28] Translated by Professor Dawar Khan Daud from Pashto.

independence, the tradition was sustained as an unrelenting wave of expression challenging the system of internal colonialism in Pakistan.

The above analysis demonstrates strong poetic resistance to the establishment in Pakistan within the two major themes: A consistent quest for cultural identity, and the Pakistani state as a profound symbol of oppression. As we have seen, both Sindhi and Seraiki discourses strived to preserve cultural identities. While the Sindhi discourse represented a struggle to keep their cultural and ethnic identities within the province, the Seraiki discourse reflects a political movement demanding a separate province. Besides these distinctive streams specific to each province, several parallel themes also appeared in the native poetic discourse including resistance to the federal establishment, revolt against military dictatorships, and an outcry against social, cultural, economic, and gender inequalities.

Although it is important to note that resistance has not been the only stream in the native poetry, it has been a prevalent form of poetic expression along with other trends of Sufism, realism and romanticism. Sufism has been the early trend in all native languages, more so in Seraiki and Sindhi than Balochi, Brahui and Pashto languages. Romanticism has also been the popular trend in all native languages although more often it intertwined with the Sufi philosophical renderings so deeply that it became difficult to distinguish between humanly romanticism and the divine adoration as it became a symbol for both.

In terms of content and structure, the poetic discourse of native languages offered multiple trends and styles. While expressionism, imagery and symbolism became the hallmark of poetic expression in Sindhi and Seraiki poetry, the content of most Pashto, Brahui and Balochi poetry more often remained pragmatic, direct and motivational. While Sufi poetry used the multiple structural formats, borrowing from folk-poetic traditions in native languages, more recent trends are transforming these styles from the traditional Ghazal to modern blank verse and meter based lyrical structures. Traditional and contemporary, both forms have become a popular mode of

poetic discourse in these native languages. Content wise, while the traditional poetry was limited to romanticism and religious themes, modernist and post-modernist trends are common in the more recent native poetry. Miseries of the poor, small tenants and workers, and gender-based marginalization are the popular themes of today's native poetry in Pakistan in addition to the voices of discontent against the feudalistic social order.

Can poetic resistance become a major catalyst for socio-political change in the society? The above analysis reveals an interesting scenario within the historical context of Pakistan. It would be wrong to consider the poetic discourse as a catalyst for socio-political change as it can only provide an effective mode of communication from opinion leaders and intellectuals to the masses. Poetry, nevertheless, has its role in raising social and political consciousness among the masses when it becomes part of journalistic, political and activist movements. Poets, however, as part of these movements can also become political activists (Langah, 2012).

Learning from the past, ruling elites have adopted sophisticated tactics. They tend to abide by the constitutional and legal frameworks while the real exploitation comes through selection and exclusion of federal assistance to peripheral regions, administrative policies and economic marginalization. With the same token, cultural resistance also uses refined tactics for avoiding direct confrontation with the establishment. Thus, the poetic discourse adopts a middle way between direct confrontation with the power structure and passive acceptance of oppression in the Pakistani setting.

Although the nature of internal colonialism has not changed much, its strength has been curtailed, thanks to the long struggle at intellectual, political and journalistic levels. Only future can tell if these gains can be further sustained and transformed into a more egalitarian, democratic and just society in Pakistan.

References

Afridi, Qabil K. (1998). *Literary Heritage of Khyber: Past and Present.* A Research Project Presented to Peshawar University, 25 April. URL (Consulted May 23, 2015) from http://www.drqabilkhan.com.

Ameeq, Abid. (2000). *Tal Watni*. Lahore: Sachet Ghar, Shirkat Press.

Ahmed, Asad. (2010). The Paradoxes of Ahmadiyya Identity: Legal Appropriation of Muslim-ness and the Construction of Ahmadiyya Difference. In *Naveeda Khan (ed.), Beyond Crisis, Re-evaluating Pakistan.* (pp. 273-314). New Delhi: Routledge.

Ahmad, Aijaz. (1992). *In Theory, Classes, Nations, Literatures*. New York, London: Verso, p. 41).

Ahmed, Nazneen. (2014). The Poetics of Nationalism: Cultural resistance and Poetry in East Pakistan/Bangladesh, 1952-71. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. 50(3). pp. 256-268.

Alavi, Hamza. (1989). Politics of Ethnicity in India and Pakistan. In Alavi and Holiday (eds.), *South Asia*, New York: Monthly Review Press.

Ali, Asdar. (2010). Strength of the State Meets the Strength of the Street: The 1972 Labour Struggle in Karachi. In Naveeda Khan (ed.), *Beyond Crisis, Re-evaluating Pakistan.* (pp. 210-244) New Delhi: Routledge.

Anderson, Benedict. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

Arif, Iftikhar and Khwaja, Waqas. (2011*). Modern Poetry of Pakistan*. Champaign and London: Dalkey Archive Press. p. 88.

Blauner, Robert. (1969). Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt. *Social Problems.*16 (4), p. 396.

Buzdar, Wahid and Buzdar, Shafiq-ur-Rehman. (2012). A Trend Maker in Modern Balochi Poetry. *Balochistaniyat, Annual Research Journal, Balochi Academy, Quetta.* Volume 01.

Buzdar, Ashiq. (1986). *Qaidi Takht Lahore de.* Zila Rajan Pur: Seraiki Lok Sanjh.

Duncombe, Stephan. (2002). *Cultural Resistance Reader.* London, New York: Verso.

Fazal, Jalal. (2012). Nature of Education in Balochistan. *Balochistaniyat: Annual Research Journal of Balochi Academy*. (1): pp. 30-52.

Goodson, Larry. (1998). Fragmentation of Culture in Afghanistan. *Alif, Journal of Comparative Poetics*. (18): pp. 269-285.

Hechter, Michael. (1999). *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Kennedy, Charles. (1991). The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh. *Asian Survey.* (31)10: pp.938-955.

Langah, Nukhbah. (2012). *Poetry as Resistance: Islam and Ethnicity in Postcolonial Pakistan*. New Delhi: Routledge.

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2001). *Population by Mother Tongue*. URL (Consulted May 23, 2015), from http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/population-mother-tongue.

Rammah, Safir. (2006). West Punjabi Poetry: From Ustad Daman to Najm Hosain Syed. *Journal of Punjabi Studies.* Spring-Fall, 13 (1, 2): pp. 205-228.

Sayeed, Khalid B. (1967). *The Political System of Pakistan*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Scott, James. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Resistance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Siddiqa, Ayesha. (2007). *Military Inc. Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Sindhu, Amar. (2013). Imdad Hussaini: A Vagabond Poet. *Dawn*, January 13.

Tahir, Tonsvi. (1995). *Seraiki vich Mazahmati Shairi*. Multan: Seraiki Literary Board.

Talbot, Ian. (2015). *Pakistan: A New History*. New York: Oxford University Press.

The News. (2015). *Literature of Resistance*. March 1.

The News. (2014). *A Symbol of Freedom*. March 10.

Tirmazi, Mazhar. (2004). This Winter. *Modern Poetry in Transition.* March, King's College London. URL (Consulted November 6, 2016) http://poetrymagazines.org.uk.

Williams, Raymond. (2002). Culture. In Stephen Duncombe (ed.), *Cultural Resistance Reader*. London, New York: Verso.

Farrukhi, Asif and Pirzada, Shah. M. (1999). *The Storm's Call for Prayers*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

About the Author:

Qaisar Abbas

After working as faculty, director and assistant dean for several American universities, Dr. Qaisar Abbas currently leads a consulting firm in Washington D.C. on Media Strategies and Grant Development. His research interests are South Asian politics, mass media, and poetic discourse. He has also worked in Pakistan as PTV News Producer, and Information Officer for the government of Punjab.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

The Pakistani English Novel: The Burden of Representation and the Horizon of Expectations

By Dr. Masood Ashraf Raja

Abstract
Using a theoretical understanding of the role of the narratee and the horizon of expectations, this essay suggests a nuanced mode of reading the Pakistani Writing in English. The hope is that both Pakistani readers and authors will become aware of the possible ramifications of authorial intention and reader reception of the texts of the global periphery.

Keywords: Pakistani writing in English, postcolonialism, Pakistan, Reception theory

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that the Pakistani novel in English has finally come of age and has garnered its space within and without Pakistan. In most of the cases, Pakistan as a subject of narration figures quite prominently in these works. In fact, in one of her interviews, Kamila Shamsie, one of the most celebrated contemporary Pakistani novelists, attempts to see a connection between the works of several contemporary Pakistani writers:

> l don't know how you'd draw a line connecting me, Mohsin Hamid, Mohammad Hanif, Nadeem Aslam, Moni Mohsin in terms style or form—except we're writing about Pakistan. A lot of Pakistan's English-language novelists are looking at history or politics in their work, to a greater extent perhaps than Indian novelists. (Das)

Thus, no matter what these writers write about, their acts of artistic representation, it seems, are caught within the politics of the nation and national representation. This aspect of reception of Pakistani fiction in English became evident to me a few years ago during several exchanges with Pakistani audiences. During the summer of 2014, while in Pakistan, I

gave four public talks about the role of humanities in the twenty-first century. In all these talks, during the question answer session, the audience members insistently sought my views about the works of Pakistani writers writing in English. The questions, I must admit, were always about the issues of representation. In other words, the audience members wanted to know whether or not I agreed with the kind of representation of Pakistan that some leading Pakistani writers were offering at the moment.

Needless to say, it was hard for me to answer this question convincingly. On one hand, being a scholar of postcolonial studies, I understand the dynamics of postcolonial cultural production and am thus, like Aijaz Ahmad, very skeptical of what passes around as the quintessential postcolonial novel in the metropolitan cultures. But, on the other hand, I also wanted to defend the right of the authors to represent Pakistan as they deemed fit.

The purpose of this brief essay is to think deeply about this issue and to offer my views about this struggle between the authors' right to represent and the right of the represented to contest that particular representation. In the process of elaborating the 'response' from my auditors, I will also discuss the stylistic structuring of these novels and the question of representation as it pertains to the Pakistani novel in English as a genre of postmodern writing. While I am using Mohsin Hamid's novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, as my core text, I do not plan to provide a deep or detailed textual analysis of the contents of novel. I will, rather, use the novel as a point of reference to frame my discussion of the expectations of such novels with a hope that other scholars would then build on this preliminary discussion about the aspects of reception of the Pakistani English novel within Pakistan.

Having-reflected on this for some time now, I have realized that most of these questions were crafted, probably unconsciously, around the national expectations of the Pakistani authors. Thus, while the authors see themselves as cultural critics and tend to highlight the darkest and the most troubling aspects of Pakistani culture, the Pakistani readers, constantly under attack from various kinds of Western media, see such representations as a betrayal

and a negation of the richness and beauty of Pakistani culture. The questions posed to me, therefore, were primarily about the Pakistani readers' expectations and the role of Pakistani authors in representing Pakistan to outsiders.

I will rely here, for my analysis, on Kobena Mercer's take on the burden of representation and then use Mohsin Hamid's novel as a tetst case from the point of view of the author as well as his countrymen and women.

While discussing the first ever Black art exhibition in Britain, Kobena Mercer provides some incisive insights about the issues of representation involved in such a scenario:

> When the artists are positioned on the margins of the institutional spaces of cultural production, they are burdened with the impossible task of speaking as "representatives," in that they are widely expected to "speak for" the marginalized communities from which they come. (235)

This imperative to represent and be representative of an entire culture is what Mercer terms the "burden of representation." I would argue that this burden of representation is two-fold: the metropolitan audiences and market force the writers to be "representative" of their culture and the primary culture also expects the authors to represent the whole of their culture. Thus, the diasporic author of English is in a double bind: he or she must meet the expectations of the metropolitan market and the pressures and pulls of their own primary culture. This further supports Mercer's claim that these "artists do not have the last word when it comes to the public circulation and dissemination of their work, because authorial intention alone cannot determine the contingent circumstances in which a work is taken up by different audiences" (43). furthermore, I suggest, that the Pakistani authors working in English are already aware of these "contingent circumstances" of publication and thus an imperceptive idea of what to write and what to produce bas already, in a way, become a part of their authorial intention. And this authorial intention is structured and enforced by the expectations of a postcolonial work of art in the metropolitan market.

By far the best account of this extra-authorial imperative comes from Aijaz Ahmad, who foresees this latest industry of metropolitan appropriation of the Third World issues for the metropolitan publishing industry. In fact, I myself have often relied on Ahmad's argument to discuss the nature of metropolitan influence over the creative texts of the periphery. In his groundbreaking work, Ahmad points to the very canonicity of the counter canon that must rely on certain accepted and valorized tropes about the Third World within the metropolitan cultures. For Aijaz Ahmad, there is a certain logic of expectations of the works of the periphery published by the metropolitan publishers. By and large these works must contain certain tropes highly expected within the metropolitan culture:

> The range of questions that may be asked of the texts which are currently in the process of being canonized within this categorical counter canon must predominantly refer, then, in one way or the other to representation of colonialism, nationhood, postcoloniality, the typology of rulers, their powers, corruptions, and so forth. (124)

A critical review of works being published by the Pakistani authors testifies to Aijaz Ahmad's claim: most of these works do highlight the very tropes that Ahmad finds as the accepted and canonized tropes of the postcolonial novel. Thus, it is not hard to suggest that the Pakistani writers, in their zeal to address a global audience and to be relevant to the expectations of the metropolitan audiences, are at least unconsciously producing the kinds of works that are expected of them and that may sell better within the metropolitan cultures. It is this repertoire of postcolonial stereotypes, now authenticated by the authorial voices of the postcolonial writers themselves, that vexes and disturbs their Pakistani readers.

In other words, there is a conflation of two kinds of representation going on: Representation as "speaking for" as a proxy (*vertreten*), and representation as "re-presentation" (*darstellen*), the two shades of representation that Gayatri Spivak famously discusses in one of her most crucial and controversial essays.[1] While these authors claim the right to

[1] I am referring to Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

represent reality in their chosen artistic forms, without attempting to carry the burden of representation, the readers also see this representation as *verteten*, in which the authors stand in as a proxy, as those representing Pakistan to the rest of the world. Furthermore, as Mercer clarifies, the metropolitan audiences also expect the diasporic writers and artists to be representative of their own culture. Thus, the limited authorial choice that these writers have is forced into a shape that can be palatable and acceptable to their metropolitan audiences. However, this transforms the mere artistic representation into a political representation. Thus, if the artistic representation is also a political representation, then the question of the nature of representation becomes foregrounded whether the writers like it or not.

In such a scenario, the Pakistani writers do not have the liberty of hiding behind their right to artistic license as whatever they write and proffer to the so-called West also happens to be more than just an artistic rendering: it becomes a political act of representation. Seen from this view, the concerns of the Pakistani readers seem sound and just. After all, why should they not object to the stereotypical renditions of Pakistan offered to an already prejudiced metropolitan audience? The writer's artistic and political roles are therefore inherently connected and the writers cannot claim any kind of artistic immunity for their authorial choices. In other words, Pakistani readers see the artistic representation of Pakistan as a symbolic act of hanging Pakistani dirty linen on a global clothesline. Time and time again, the audience members in my talks pointed out that already enough of negative things are being said about their culture by the Western media and this anxiety about their representation also underwrote their dismay and anguish about the works of their "own" authors.

These readers wanted their Pakistani authors to go beyond the usual stereotypes and to represent the kind of Pakistan that is unduly silenced in the metropolitan cultures. One could say that the Pakistani readers were saying, *a la* Edward Said, that there is "more going on" in Pakistan than just the issues of women oppression, terrorism, socio-economic injustice etc. As for me, this is a just and honest expectation of the Pakistani authors, for

since the Pakistani writers have access to the metropolitan audiences, they should use this global reach not just to sanctify the pre-existing stereotypes but to also challenge and complicate the stereotypical views of Pakistan. Thus, within the politics of representation, if one were to think only in national terms, this sounds like a natural and valorized task. After all, those of us who work in the cross cultural field do so every single day and challenge all unjust representations of Islam and Pakistan from our varied places of enunciation. Why should the native Pakistani writers not do this? This is the question that ultimately lay at the heart of the concerns raised by my Pakistani auditors.

However, since the objections to these representations mostly came from the students and professors of literature in my audience, I though it important that they should mobilize their criticism of the works with due attentiveness to the stylistic aspects of the novels. In other words, the response must be shaped through a thorough understanding of where the postcolonial novel is at the moment within the symbolic and material economy of global production of art. A mere assumption of what constitutes a good Pakistani novel and what is truly "authentic" about the Pakistani narrative and storytelling cannot be the ultimate grounds of assessment.

The question of authenticity and the permission to represent, so to speak, was also one of the issues. Most of my audience members believed that since these novelists do not live in Pakistan, their representations of Pakistan could, therefore, not be authentic. While I do consider location of the authors important in dealing with the issues of the periphery, I think to ascribe a certain degree of authenticity to those living full time in Pakistan in opposition to the diasporic authors is a sort of over emphasizing of the role of lived experience over imagination. Besides, and I pointed this out to my audiences, those living in Pakistan can also not carry the burden of representation of their entire nation. After all, a novelist living in Islamabad cannot claim to be the true representative of the people of Chitral or, for that matter, of people of Gilgit. This, however, takes us back to the debate so thoroughly rehearsed by Spivak in "Can the Subaltern Speak." Most critics miss that the main question in that essay was not whether the subaltern can

speak, but rather about the nature of representation itself, and the risk being that if the critics, scholars, and writers assume that the people can speak for themselves, then their responsibility of representing the unrepresented is effaced and that, for Spivak, is a great loss and an abdication of our responsibilities. The Pakistani writers in English perform this task of representation and for them, no matter what their grounds for justification, this critical function is important. Otherwise, one would fall prey to what Ngugi Thiong'o so expressively suggests in the beginning of *The Devil on the Cross*, where the narrator provides a justification for the critique of the nation:

> Certain people in Ilmorog, our Ilmorog told me that this story was too disgraceful, too shameful; that it should be concealed in the depths of everlasting darkness.... I asked them: How can we cover up pits in our courtyard with leaves and grass, saying to ourselves that because our eyes cannot now see the holes, our children can prance about the yard as they like?
>
> Happy is the man who is able to discern the pitfalls in his way, for he can avoid them. (7)

Thus, it is imperative on the Pakistani authors to point out these "pitfalls" in our paths; it is in fact their responsibility to the nation in particular and the humanity in general. And if in the process they are blamed for embarrassing their nation in the public arena, then that is the risk worth taking for the purposes of representing the subalterns of their country.

However, the Pakistani writers writing in English find themselves in an impossible position: they are expected to produce works that are specific to their region but contemporary in form and style, while at the same time carrying the burden of representation of an entire nation. This burden of representation, of course, cannot really be understood without delving into the expectation of such texts by the Pakistani readers, thus forcing us to account for the very consciousness of the reader and the narratee of these works. For Gerald Prince all narration, whether it is oral or written, whether it recounts real or mythical events presupposes not only at least one narrator

but also (at least) one narratee, the narrate being someone whom the narrator addresses. (7)

It is also important to understand the crucial function of the narratee within the narrative logic of a particular work. The narratee should neither be "confused with the virtual reader" nor with the "ideal reader" (Prince 9), for "if it should occur that the reader bears an astonishing resemblance to the narratee, this is an exception and not the rule" (Prince 9). Needless to say, "the portrait of a narratee emerges above all from the narrative addressed to him" (12). Prince also argues that there are always certain signals in the narrative itself that allow us to recognize the specific narratee of a narrative, and these could include "all passages of a narrative in which the narrator refers directly to the narrate" (13) or "passages that, though not written in the second person, imply a narratee and describe him" (13). In all these modes of representation, the narratee does preform certain important tasks and understanding these functions is crucial to understanding the main thrust of a narrative work of fiction. Some of these functions include:

> He constitutes a relay between the narrator and the reader, he helps establish the narrative framework, he serves to characterize narrator, he emphasizes certain themes, he contributes to the development of the plot, he becomes the spokesperson for the moral of the work. (Prince 23)

As is obvious from this brief discussion of the functions of the narratee, it is important to understand these functions especially if one wants to read a novel not just as the direct addressee of the novel but as someone who is a reader reading the interaction between the narrator and the narratee, thus enabling the narratee to perform his or her function of being a relay. Thus, *a la* Prince, one important reason to study "the narratee is because it is sometimes crucial to discovering narrative's *fundamental thrust*" (23, My emphasis). I think a lot of problems and a lot of questions that are being posed about the nature of representation of Pakistan arise because most readers find themselves to be the narratees of these works and thus feel obliged to contest their own invocation and representation.

So, in order to really understand the dynamics of the burden of representation, one must account for the expectations of the general narratee of the works and then also, must, delve into a clear understanding of the nature of representation offered and the kind of representation expected. I think Mohsin Hamid's novel can be a wonderfully didactic text to learn about the burden of representation and the nature of expectation of Pakistani readers.

This didactic function of the novel becomes quite obvious from the very first lines of Hamid's novel, which employs the most conventional mode of narration to a narratee: second person narrator, a narrator who addresses a YOU directly. The most important strategy here is to define this YOU as this YOU is the ultimate narratee of the novel and it cannot certainly consider all Pakistanis as this YOU of the narrative. Thus, a clear understanding of the narratee would go a long way in reception and understanding of this novel.

It would be apt to dwell on the title first, for the title already develops a sort of "horizon of expectation"[2] about the novel. One cannot help but assume that there is something playfully ironic about the title, for being "filthy rich" and the term "Rising Asia" are already two most prominently mobilized tropes about the current global economy and no matter how one slices it, being filthy rich cannot just be read as a positive, unmotivated term. This implies that the novel must be read with due attention to its tone, and that irony happens to be an important aspect of this tone. Needless to say, irony and parody are two of the most important aspects of the postmodern novel. The novel is, in a way, a wonderful example of "a kind of seriously ironic parody that often enables the contradictory doubleness: the intertexts of history and fiction take on parallel status in the parodic reworking of the textual past of both the 'world' and literature" (Hutcheon 124).

---

[2] A brief discussion of the term "horizon of expectations" is provided in the ensuing pages of the essay.

These two aspects of the postmodern parody apply to the novel in two ways: in terms of form and in terms of the reworking of a classic narrative of upward mobility. In terms of its narrative structure, Hamid is offering us a rags-to-riches story, but with a certain twist: it is a Cinderella story in the world of neoliberal capital and thus relies on the extralegal means of upward mobility available to those on the periphery of global capital. In terms of its generic form, the novel is an ironic parody of the self-help book genre, which happens to be one of the best-selling genres of writing in the United States. Thus, there is, in a truly postmodernist sense, a layered degree of sophistication of narrative techniques involved here. The narrative also highlights the kind of amoral and ambivalent subjectivity needed to succeed in the current regime of capital, which, in tum, makes the novel a trenchant and refreshing critique of the global division of labor.

The term global division of labor is crucial in understanding all writings of the global periphery, for if one effaces the existence of such a division, then there is no room left to critique the metropolitan. In fact, highlighting the global division of labor was another important point in Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak," which most readers of her text fail to acknowledge. One cannot go far in cross-cultural contact without plotting one's place within the global division of labor and despite the tall claims of the proponents of the neoliberal capital, the world is now drastically divided between a sort of universal elite—universal in the sense that they al1 share certain privileges in common—and the marginalized and localized masses of people. For Zygmunt Bauman, for example, the world already has a sort of elite which shares the same ease of travel across the globe in opposition to their less fortunate counterparts who cannot escape the specificity of the local (Bauman 6-26). Thus, the narratee, YOU, of the novel is one of the natives who has been left outside the promise of neoliberal capital, the one who is from what George Manuel calls the "fourth world."

The Pakistanis who can read the novel in English, however, are predominantly from the middle or upper middle classes of Pakistan, and they are therefore the implied readers of the text, but not the narratees, for the narratee is not likely to be able to read the very text that addresses her. The

implied reader, however should not be confused with the ideal reader, for the ideal reader would understand the subtleties of a postmodern text: The implied reader reads the novel as a Pakistani and instead of seeing it as an indictment of global capitalism, reads the novel as yet another derogatory representation of Pakistan.

Here is how the novel, written as self-help book, invokes the narratee:

> This book is a self-help book. Its objective . . . is to show you how to get filthy rich in rising Asia. And to do that it has to find you, huddled, shivering on the packed earth under your mother's cot one cold dewy morning. (4)

Thus, from the very start it is a self-help book masquerading as a novel and one cannot help but see the irony in the narrative. Coming to the narratee, one can safely assume that the narratee is the quintessential rural peasant of Pakistan. So, the book is not just about how to get rich in rising Asia, but a sort of manifesto for the most disenfranchised and the most exploited constituency in Pakistan: the rural poor, or what are called the *muzara* or the *haris*, in other words bonded labor, in the local languages. That Pakistan has never really attempted a land reform and that a large segment of its rural population, at least in Punjab and Sindh, is still employed in this slavery-like labor process is pretty obvious and does not need a novelist to bring to light. The novel, therefore, is an ironic didactic text aimed at the most oppressed and provides a strategy to our narratee for escaping the given culture that he was born in, but by using the very free market that creates and sustains these global inequalities.

But since the narratee cannot read English, the narrative addressed to the narratee thus becomes a sort of didactic tool for the implied reader of the novel, the Pakistani middle class reader who can read novels in English.

So what must our narratee, who is also the protagonist of the novel, do to rise in rising Asia: the novel explains this in a chronological sequence and the chapter headings provide a clear indication of the suggestions. Note that the solutions are about changing the material circumstances and aim at creating the ideal conditions to be successful within the neoliberal economy. There is no moral lecturing or other moral didactics involved here. One can

guess that the ultimately successful subject of neoliberal capital has to be at best, amoral.

Naturally, in order to construct this narrative of upward mobility, Hamid must start at the very bottom, for the novel is not written as a self-help book for yuppies but for the most vulnerable and least vocal population of Pakistan. It goes without saying that in this narrative strategy the very given of their lives—the part that they must escape to be rich—must also be represented and taken into account. It is this description of the lived conditions and its ramifications that our protagonist must escape that forms the raw materials for the novelistic imagination, but it is the representation of these conditions that is likely to make our middle class Pakistani readers uncomfortable. To the middle class readers, this harsh representation of the realities of life in Pakistan offered to a global audience is likely to come across as a betrayal, for it fixes and sanctifies the preexisting negative image of Pakistan. It seems that the Pakistani novelist writing in English is in an impossible position: he or she must carry the burden of representation regarding the hopes and expectations of Pakistanis but also must meet the demands and imperatives of the metropolitan publishing market.

The same inequalities that create the global division of labor also create the very dynamics in which the Pakistani writer, masquerading as a native informant, must peddle his or her wares. Thus, what gets written and represented is shaped by the imperatives of the market and not necessarily by the demands and claims of the native culture. The question of an autonomous authorial intention, thus, becomes moot as the intention is already laden with the unconscious and unacknowledged dictates of the metropolitan market. The case is similar to any other material forms of international trade, in which the developing nations have to meet the trade criteria already set by the developed nations. Take, for example, Pakistani export of mangoes: Even though Pakistan produces the best quality mangoes in the world, that alone does not promise open access to the metropolitan markets. In order to be sold in Europe and North America, Pakistani mangoes must meet the rules created and implemented by these economies. Similarly, within the material economy of international publishing, the

symbolic aspects of the texts must correspond to the conditions and imperatives of the market; Pakistani writers offering their artistic wares in the symbolic economy of literary production must also, thus, package their goods according to the expectations and imperatives of the market within which their ware are judged and consumed.

Going back to Hamid's novel, there are two main characters in the novel: our rural entrepreneur and the pretty girl. They are unnamed, and hence may be considered character types rather than individual characters, but that is consistent with the style of the novel; it is, after all, a self-help book and thus must address a certain type and not just a couple of individuals. The two main characters, a rural kid in the city and a girl born in the urban poor class, find their own ways to upward mobility in "Rising Asia." There is a certain mobilization of the stereotype here, for the girl uses her beauty and sexuality to advance, but she is nobody's pawn. There is a certain degree of resilience in her character, for she uses what she has within the logic of the market of desire. The boy, the main subject of the story, in a way epitomizes what one must do to offset the advantages of those above you in a free market. It seems, however, that being as unscrupulous and aggressive as possible is the key to success.

Read as a postmodern parody in form and in content, the novel becomes a sophisticated critique of the global division of labor as well as a scathing critique of the Pakistani native elite, who, let us not forget, are more like their global counterparts than being close to every day Pakistanis.

Now, to answer the question of reception of this and other such novels, especially concerning the auditors in my public talks in Pakistan, I will briefly explain the epistemological gap between the avowed aesthetics of these texts and their creators and the horizonal expectations of these middle class readers. In order to do justice to this very complex inquiry, I will rely on Hans Robert Jauss's theorization of the "Horizon of Expectations" and its impact on understanding literary texts. Jauss introduces the crucial role of Horizon of Expectations as follows:

> The coherence of literature as an event is primarily mediated in the horizon of expectations of the literary experience of contemporary and later readers, critics, and authors. (22)

Note that for Jauss, a literary work is not "an object that stands by itself" (2l) and similarly "the historical context in which a literary work appears is not a factical, independent series of events that exists apart from an observer"(21). Thus a literary text "becomes a literary event only for its reader who reads this last work"(21) of an author with a "memory of his earlier works and who recognizes its individuality in comparison with these and other works that he already knows" (21). Thus, obviously, the literary text as an event presupposes this dialogic dance between the reader, the text, and the specific and general contextuality and contingency of the text. A horizon of expectations is, therefore, dependent upon this dialogic engagement with the literary text. But sometimes there is a gap between the aesthetic value of a literary text and the horizon of expectation. Jauss calls this "horizonal change" (25). This change occurs when a literary text exceeds the expected horizon of expectations and it is at this time that the act of interpretation and understanding must account for the "horizonal change." Thus, the "difference between the familiarity of previous aesthetic experience and the 'horizonal change' demanded by the new reception of the new work determines the artistic character of a literary work" (25).

I think in terms of reception of Pakistani writing in English, the Pakistani middle class readers need to be aware of this horizonal change: they are expecting a kind of writing that they are used to, a kind of writing that relies on the myths of the authentic and provides, or ought to provide, some form of a national narrative. The Pakistani writers of English, however, are already working in a more complex literary arena where they are expected to carry the burden of representation as shaped by both ends of the global division of labor.

ln such a scenario, both readers and writers will have to revise their strategies of engaging in the practice of reading and writing. The readers will have to keep in mind that no single text can carry the burden of an entire nation and that it is salutary, and sometimes necessary, to mount a literary

critique of one's own nation. The Pakistani authors in English will also have to decide whether they really want to be slightly independent or just continue to be naive cultural informants who produce works, *a la* Aijaz Ahmad, that continue to perpetuate the metropolitan myths about the periphery.

Note: This is a revised version of my essay entitled "Pakistani English Novel and the Burden of Representation: Mohsin Hamid's How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia." *The Ravi* Vol. 150, 2014: 81-89.

Works Cited

Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 2000.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Chea, Pheng. *Inhuman Conditions*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Das, Srijana Mitra. "Writing drives me crazy but it gives a sense of home: Kamila Shamsie." Interview. *The Times of India*. March 14, 2014. http://timesofindia.indiatimes

Hamid, Mohsin. *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2013.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. London & New York: Routledge, I988.

Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Trans. Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Manuel, George. *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*. Canada: Collier-Macmillan,1974.

Mercer, Kobena. *Welcome to the Jungle*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Prince, Gerald. "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee." *Reader Response Criticism*. Jane P. Tompkins, ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1980.

Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-*

Colonial Theory. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994: 66-111. .

Thiong'o, Ngugi Wa. *Devil on the Cross*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1988.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Academic Policing via Top-Down Implementation of Turnitin in Pakistan: Students' Perspective and Way Forward

By Adnan Rashid and Athar Rashid

Abstract

The implementation of Turnitin in Pakistani academia has a top-down pattern, i.e. starting from Ph.D. and M.Phil. thesis writing to the lower level of college education. To a Pakistani student, it seems justifiably unfair to be 'judged' on an Originality report, at the usual culmination of her/his academic life.

This paper attempts to probe the challenges and dynamics faced by Pakistani students and to investigate their coping strategies. In order to find out the best possible methods of educating students into academic integrity and conventions of writing, this paper scrutinizes the top-down pattern of tackling plagiarism and its implications.

Considering student's background, this paper explores best possibilities of using Turnitin as an invitation to students into realms of academic ethics and integrity. The paper also suggests inculcation of educational technologies, such as blogs, instructional videos, webinars etc. in order to ensure wider student participation, higher motivation and individual effective learning. The plan is to reinforce and justify use of Turnitin and establishment of a live interactive digital space, wherein students can get their questions, queries, comments and suggestions attended and responded to in a timely fashion. The paper also highlights the current practices of Turnitin (mis)use in a Pakistan, and suggests newer ways of ensuring its proper utilization to facilitate the training of individuals into a tradition of effective and standard writing.

Keywords:

Education Technologies, Interaction, Turnitin implementation, Student Response, Motivation, Online Collaboration

Background

Turnitin product is designed around international standards of referencing, writing conventions and styles. It is, by definition, a text-matching tool that analyses a document for its similarity with digitally available content on internet. It compiles a similarity index, in its Originality Report (Turnitin, n.d.). This similarity index is very much open to human comprehension and interpretation. It is for an instructor/teacher/evaluator to decide about the presence of plagiarism, similarity and referencing issues. This seems fair enough and does not let the 'machine' control and decide 'fate' (grade) of students (Badge 2008). The whole mechanism of Turnitin requires qualifying prerequisites with the instructors and students. For instructors, after essential digital literacy and skills, the key requisite is a vigilant eye that can sharply identify the problem in a work and is able to use Turnitin as an aid in evaluation, rather than as a 'sole' evaluation mechanism. On the students' side the demands are higher: From them is expected academic integrity, proper use and acknowledgment of sources and, most important of all, digital literacy.

This mechanism does not account for instructors and students who have a lot of catching up to do, with skills such as digital awareness, general computing and referencing. In Pakistan, the instructors and students are struggling with the basic issue of digital literacy and are striving to become 'digitally aware individuals,' who can comprehend and utilize the expansive digital space. There are two dimensions to this situation. From the instructor's side the major concerns entail infrastructure, training, capacity building, hands-on practice, etc. (Neville, 2007). The students are more likely to get in trouble, since there is an element of precarity in almost everything that takes place through their academic journey. In this stated backdrop, Turnitin is considered no less than a policeman that will catch them for the 'wrongs' they are never educated in, cautioned about and reprimanded on.

Introduction

Use of Turnitin in Pakistan dates back to 2009 (Ilm ki Dunya, 2009). It has been procured and managed centrally by Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan and further disseminated to all public and private sector universities across

Pakistan. Each university has been allotted a total of 1000 accounts (HEC Annual Reports, 2010) followed by a wide-ranging Plagiarism Policy by HEC, which outlines aspects, such as permissible percentage of Originality Report, permissible number of submissions, actions that follow, degrees of penalties etc. This was done to ensure nationwide consistency. Out of this subscription, from iParadigms LLC. Turnitin OriginalityCheck™ is the most widely used so far (HEC Annual Reports, 2010). According to HEC Annual report 2010, the total number of Turnitin submissions from all over Pakistan, reached 45366, out of which only 18241 submissions were below 25% of the similarity index (HEC Annual Reports, 2010). The following year, 2011, the total number of submissions reached 111,153, and submissions below 25% were 53003, which is nearly the half. If seen closely, there is surely improvement, due to the efforts of HEC and sustained cooperation of iParadigms LLC. in organizing free webinars, suiting Pakistani timings.

The situation in Pakistan is changing fast. The universities and many competent and understanding instructors are striving to educate students and route them towards a cleaner road of original, acknowledged, and referenced written output. Such universities and instructors, although not in majority, are striving hard to make this happen. Still a major population of Pakistani universities and students is facing tough times at the hands of Turnitin implementations. This study has tried to focus on this 'troubled' class of students and tries to explore the 'real' issues, plans a solution and analyses the efficacy of the plan.

The researchers conducted a nation-wide electronic survey, using Google Docs™ , in coordination with HEC, and targeted Focal persons of all the universities across Pakistan in order to discern how universities took in Turnitin mechanism. It was discovered that 80% of universities implemented use of Turnitin at Postgraduate level straight, and that too for Thesis evaluation. This was dangerous enough for the students, who would not have a slight inkling about what was waiting for them at the apparent culmination of their academic career. This survey was necessary to find out a common trend of Turnitin use and to generalize the findings of this study over a larger population across Pakistan. This top-down implementation strategy has exhibited many downsides during the three years of Turnitin use, in Pakistan.

The electronic survey was filled in by representatives of 10 universities, from various regions of Pakistan. The findings of this survey are as below:

- Turnitin started being used at Postgraduate level initially. It continues to be used at the same level in 80 % of universities.
- Majority of students do not use/have their accounts.
- Mostly, the users are Administrators/ Focal Persons/digitally literate instructors.
- Instructors and students usually debate about the inefficacy of Turnitin, hence result in lot of negative beliefs and want to continue with the years-old copy-paste culture of assignment and thesis writing.
- Of all of Turnitin Products, OriginalityCheck™ is the most used.
- OriginalityCheck™ is mainly used as a means of cross-checking a written attempt and it serves as an evidence of Plagiarism-free work.
- Originality Report (OR) interpretation is not 'known' (mostly) or not done, usually.

These findings clearly denote that the implementation of Turnitin did not follow requisite amendments in the education policy at higher education. The very fact of including Turnitin at higher education can be contested, seeing from the coping strategies and struggle which both, instructors and students had to undergo. Hence a much-needed capacity-building and gradual orientation of faculty members in Plagiarism-related issues did not materialize. In such a situation, the attitude of instructors and students is/ and has been more of an uneasy compromise. With use of Turnitin, being mandatory for instructors and students, the pressure of producing an OR, along with the award list, results in a mixed practice. With a brief sketch of the working mechanism of Turnitin stated above, the sheer dilemma of students can easily be envisioned.

In order to 'evade' a Turnitin OR, an average student employs practices such as getting assignments done by other computer-adept students or paid writers. There is a decade-old tradition of copy-pasted works in education in Pakistan, like many other developing countries, so the use of internet seems to have facilitated the practice. But with the introduction of Turnitin, there seem to be a lot of disturbance.

In these circumstances, the students suffer due to an impractical scheme of implementation. As the online survey demonstrates, only few students' accounts are really in use, which probably explains the gap between students and the use of Turnitin. This could either be because of a wide-spread unfriendliness towards the rationale of using Turnitin, or due to the students' inaccessibility of Turnitin, reflecting on the not-so-sure instructors. Since this plan is in practice far and wide, all across Pakistan, there is no way that it can be rebooted and started afresh 'properly'.

Keeping this dimension in perspective, the researchers set out on a project to use the given circumstances, and state of affairs, to find a solution that is geared towards creativity and originality. The main objectives were to bring about an attitudinal shift in students about Turnitin, drive them towards the practice of originality, let them experience using Turnitin themselves and to reduce their fears of being 'judged' through Turnitin mechanism.

Using Originality Report as a teaching aid

The idea was to take Turnitin Originality Report (OR) as a starting point of educating students about referencing styles, writing conventions, academic ethics, and use of digital sources and resultantly avoiding plagiarism, both blatant and clandestine. This was an indirect tutoring about the process of using Turnitin as a student. So, it was also silently aimed at making them aware of academic integrity.

Methodology

Participants

Randomly selected 35 Pakistani postgraduate students, of M.A English final semester, henceforth referred to as 'Students,' from a university in Islamabad, Pakistan, were the research participants. This choice was based on the fact that the university offers postgraduate programs in various disciplines and the students here usually belong to various parts of Pakistan, hence adding to disciplinary and regional complexity of the sample.

The Research Plan

There were four components to the study.

- A questionnaire.
- 5 Video Screencasts (*walk-through Tutorials in L1, Urdu, created with CamtasiaStudio® 7, put online with the intent of flexibility of time and number of access by students, uploaded to free video sharing platforms, YouTube™ and Vimeo™)*. These videos touched different areas, ranging from using various sources in a document, to using Referencing Tab in Microsoft® Word® 2007.
- Interactive sessions that were organized to foster face-to-face dialogue on importance and necessity of originality. These sessions were in coordination and gradual combination with Video screencasts. These sessions did not constitute part of the formal taught content of the curriculum.
- Hands-on practice of Turnitin student accounts.

The Research Process and Discussion

Students were introduced with the nature of the project they were engaged in. They were briefed about the utility of these exclusive meetings for their academic writing skills, and for upcoming Thesis. The proposed focus areas were briefly discussed with them, i.e. referencing, plagiarism and Turnitin.

They were engaged after their class timings, in consultation with concerned authorities. The university administration facilitated the researchers with necessary requirements and a venue to have the students' interactions. Considering the expected outcome to be directly reflecting on the performance of students in the upcoming compulsory Thesis writing, in final semester, this project was integrated with Research Methodology module, hence ensuring 100% attendance and seriousness from students.

Students were provided with written consent forms that clearly stated the objectives of the study, and how the information would be used to put up workable suggestions to HEC, for implementation in similar scenario in Pakistan. The female participants had their concerns about their names being used and they were assured of complete anonymity. In the same meeting, after the consent form procedure, students were asked to do three more things:

- Fill an online questionnaire (*designed and hosted on Google® Docs*) *(till the*

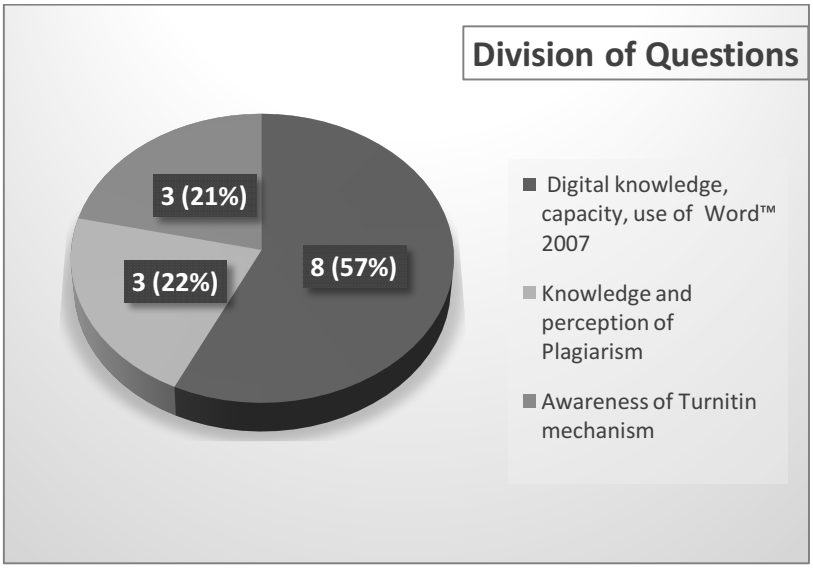
next day)

- Write a 200-word anonymous composition, on any self-chosen topic. *(with references from a book, a website and a journal article)*
- Email their compositions to the researchers *(within next three days)*

The web link to the questionnaire, instruction of paragraph writing, and researchers' email address were provided to all students, in print.

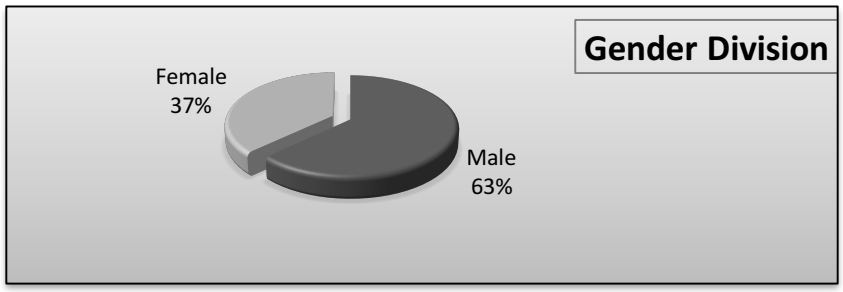
Questionnaire

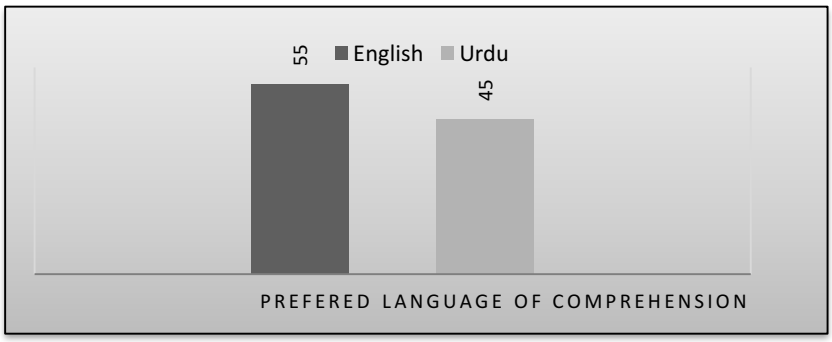
An online questionnaire was used to collect basic data from the students. This questionnaire specifically was aimed at three main areas. The breakdown of questions per area can be seen in the chart below.



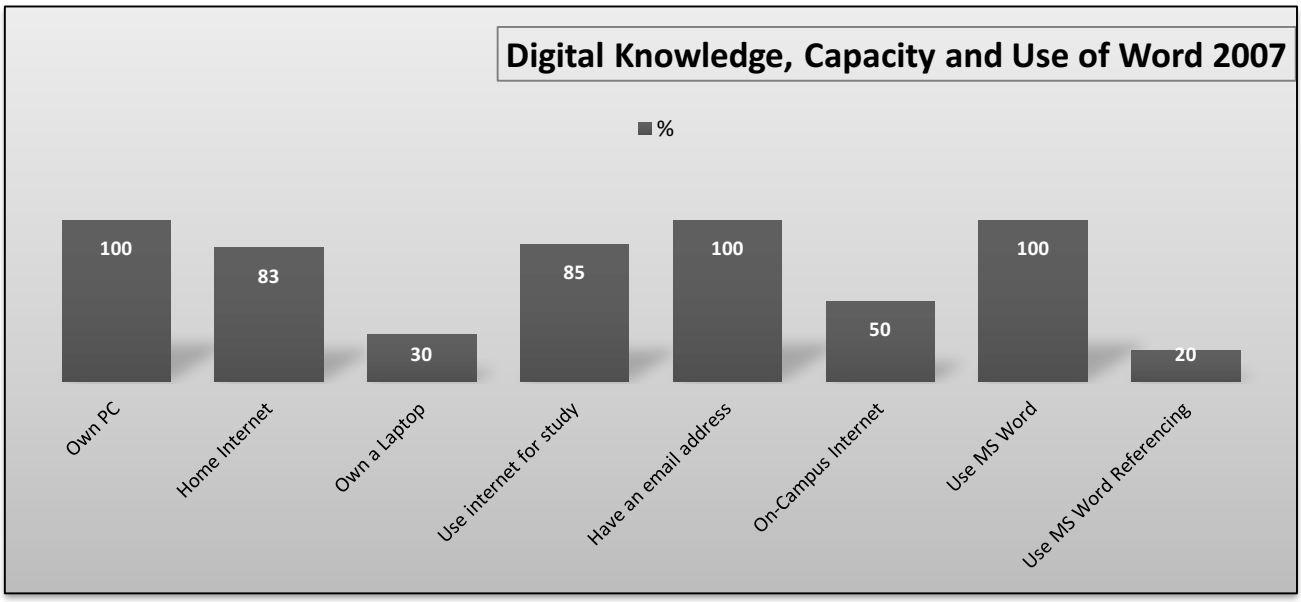
This three-dimensional questionnaire brought forth the following demographics:

Students' Demographics:



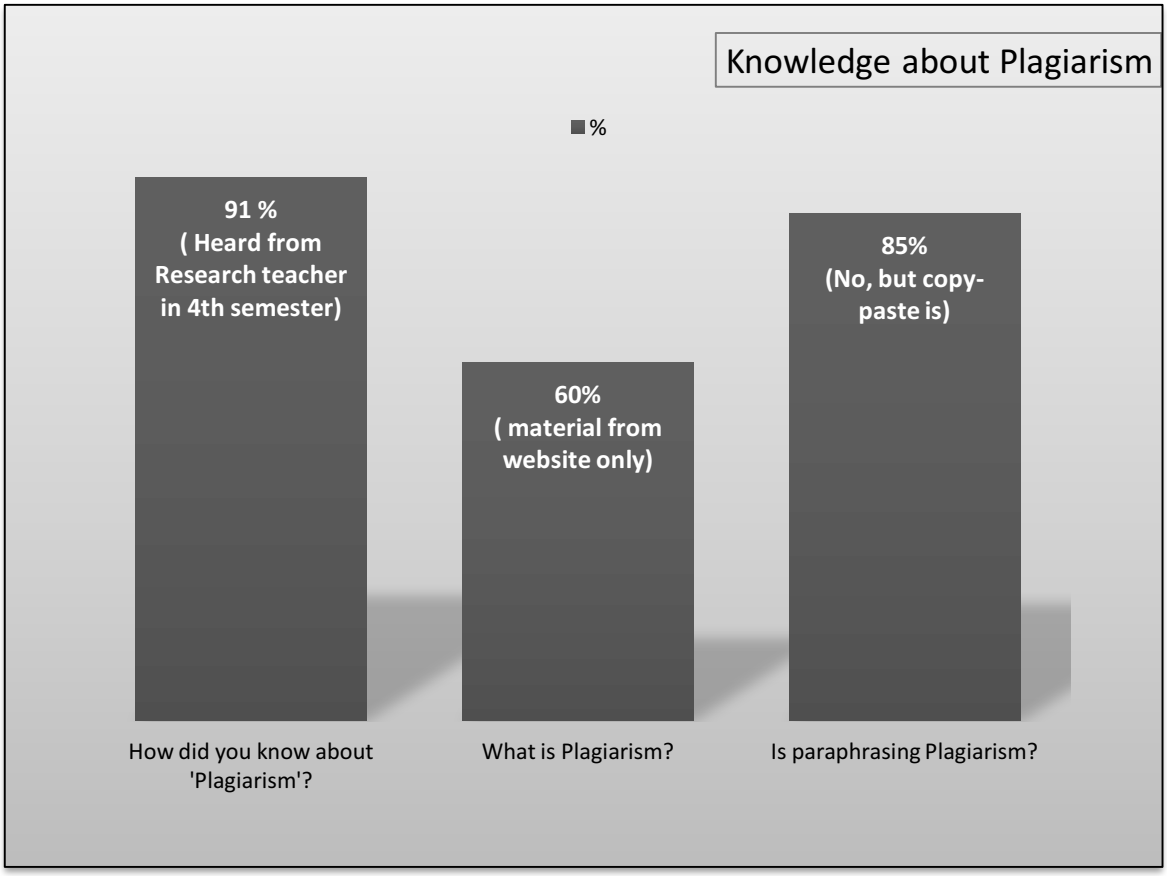


Below is a summary of the first focus of the questionnaire, which is about finding out the patterns of students' digital knowledge, capacity and use of word 2007.



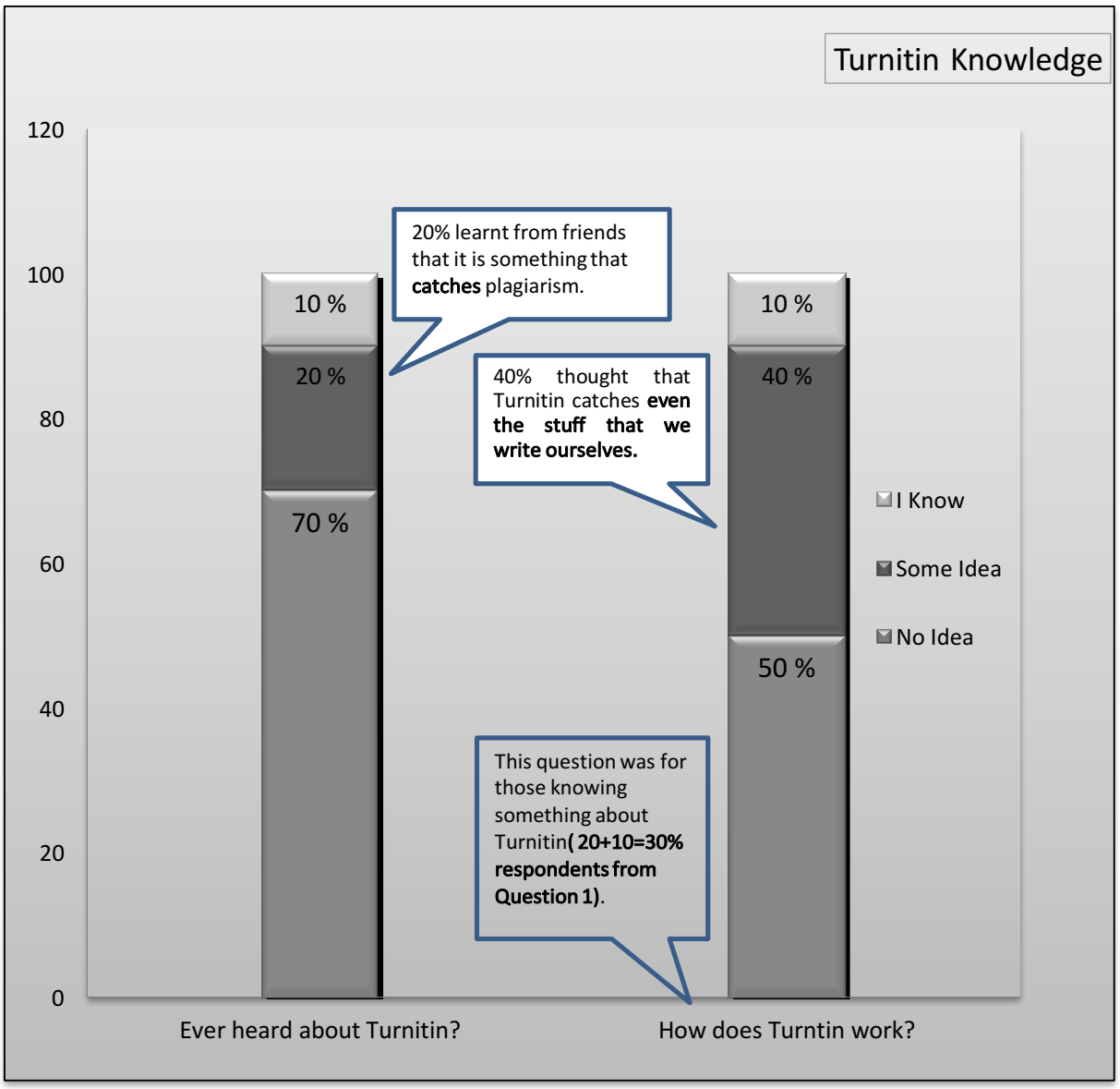
With these figures it was encouraging learn that the respondents had the basic requirements that were expected from a student of a university, situated in capital of Pakistan.

The second focus of the questionnaire was to find out about the students' knowledge and awareness of plagiarism. The following illustration reflects some major findings, with regards to students' knowledge and beliefs about Plagiarism. There are many cultural renditions to these figures.



In the last focus area of the questionnaire, Turnitin familiarity the results were fully linked with the findings stated in the second focus area, of Plagiarism knowledge.

Below is an overview of the responses.



From this questionnaire, it was evident that the common perception, among those who knew about Turnitin, is negative and that it is believed to be an unfair

and inapplicable tool that has been 'forced' on Pakistani students.

Interactive Sessions

As the second component, the students were engaged in three interactive presentations, by the researchers, focusing mainly on opening aspects of Plagiarism, common perceptions and use and acknowledgment of sources and workings of Turnitin. The sessions were not arranged within the regular classes' schedule. They were especially scheduled, coordinated and organized after class timings.

These presentations were conducted with a gap of 7 days each. Each 60-minute long session was conducted in a bilingual mode, of English and Urdu, for maximum comprehension among mixed ability students. The choice of a bilingual mode was in response to mixed responses of students, about preferred language of comprehension. Each session started with a 15-20 minutes of presentation time, in which the researchers discussed the dimension to be focused that day. This followed a dedicated time of 30-40 minutes of questions from students. A multimedia projector was used to live-demonstrate any query that needed it.

Session 1

On the day of first interactive session, after some basic discussion about the findings of the questionnaire, students' works were processed through Turnitin, to familiarize them with Turnitin mechanism. With the similarity index of all students visible and available within five quick minutes, the students were excited yet afraid. Due to the anonymity of the authorship of documents, the researchers opened a few Originality Reports, for everyone to comment on. It was an interesting sight as students had mixed feelings and doubts, and raised many questions regarding many highlighted areas.

Students were asked to point out faults with the highlighted areas. The responses were mixed. Some were wondering about the material in quotation marks, and others spoke about the sentence order change. The researchers explained the full working of Turnitin Originality Report and explained three broad categories of highlights in an OR, that is, referencing issues, plagiarism, and

similarity.

Starting with referencing, the researchers directed them towards two video tutorials, one about using Word 2007 referencing feature, and the other about the right use of sources in writing. The latter was about the manner in which the sources can be incorporated in a write up. They were asked to go through these video tutorials, and furnish another write up of 300 words on any self-chosen topic, using 2 websites, a book, a newspaper and a journal article. Added to these was a direction to a few links on Owl.perdue.org, about citation manuals, MLA, APA, Chicago, etc. Like the first time, they were asked to email the finished work to the researchers two days prior to the next scheduled meeting. For opinion and questions, they were provided an online interactive space, a Todaysmeet.com page link. So, throughout the week whenever they had any questions, which were more than 20 in total, they would express on this webpage and every participant would look at it and give input. The researchers gave their inputs where necessary, but mostly let students 'talk' to each other. It was encouraging to see that students shared their understandings with each other.

Session 2

In the second meeting, the discussion was mainly on the issues of paraphrasing, that many questioned as difficult to understand. In this meeting, the reports of a few students, with higher percentage, were discussed for analysis. Some students were of the view that paraphrasing and quotation is difficult. Moreover, there were questions about the appropriate referencing styles like MLA and APA. The researchers had established a blog for students to interact and have all sources pooled from Turnitin.com, Plagiarismadvice.org etc. This blog had many resources embedded from these websites and especially Owl.perdue.org for up-to-date referencing. The latter half of the second meeting was dedicated to discussion on plagiarism sensitivity and identification in students. This was a very crucial part, as it was about changing the common student's belief about authenticity, acknowledgment and originality. In discussion about academic theft, most of the students voiced the concern that since there is so much of the knowledge present already all over the world, in print or on web, a person may not be able to produce

'original' work. This is one of the most-echoed arguments levied against Turnitin implementation in Pakistani education set up. This concern needed to be addressed and resolved amicably. The researchers requested the university authorities for a computer lab arrangement for students to let students undergo online tutorial and quizzes on Plagiarism prevention. For this purpose, free online resources on University of Leicester's website (Plagiarism, n.d.) were chosen, for it offers discipline-based, intelligently timed and designed tutorials about plagiarism prevention. It was necessary to help familiarize students with the right and wrong of using sources, side by side. For a hands-on practice of plagiarism identification, online plagiarism quizzes were also selected.

Upon the availability of computer lab, all students were timed to work on these online plagiarism related study guides on the first day (for 30 minutes). The link to each guide was provided with timed intervals of 5-7 minutes each, on the shared Todaysmeet.com page. Students worked individually and noted the things they were not clear about, on a blank page. After each guide, they were asked to take 5 minutes to pen down the things they learnt, and the things that did not make sense in quick bullets.

In the second half of the lab session, the students were randomly put in groups of three to share their learning experience from the online study guides. They were asked to compile questions that they still had. The researchers visited each group, stood close to them to listen to their discussions and moved on. When representatives of each group shared their questions, paraphrasing-related questions were the most raised. The researchers pointed student's attention towards a handout from plagiarismadvice.org, about paraphrasing, and provided them with links for a few videos explaining the permissible forms of paraphrasing, and their referencing methods.

On the following day, of lab session, students were given three free online plagiarism quizzes. They were selected from websites of Indiana University Bloomington (Frick, 2008)) and Monash University Library (Demystifying Citing and Referencing, n.d.). The link to each quiz was shared on that day's Todaysmeet.com page. Students were asked to share their result on Todaysmeet.com page after each quiz, and write their impressions too. Of all the

students, 11 students exhibited comprehension issues in their attempts to understand Plagiarism quizzes. For this reason, there was an open discussion formed and students with questions were asked to pose their questions in open and other students attempted to answer. The researchers included his input where necessary and quietly moderated the activity for 20 minutes. During this discussion, a student wondered if Turnitin was a tool for instructors only. Knowing the amount of information students possessed about Turnitin, at the outset of this project, this question was no surprise. The researchers took the opportunity to explain a bit about the mechanism of student's account and put the rest of the discussion and practice on the following day of lab session. Students were asked to bring a write up of 200 words, on a self-chosen topic, on a flash drive or as a self-email.

Using students' account in Pakistan is yet to mature at large. No provision of accounts to students, points to trust deficit of instructors, or their sense of insecurity. In order for students to realize and take responsibility of their authorship, the researchers made a 5-minutes step-by-step guide for using Turnitin accounts, for students, after setting up a class for them and creating their accounts the same evening.

The next day lab session was for their practice of Turnitin student's accounts. Like the last two lab sessions, a Todaysmeet.com page was set up for that day. Also, the researchers opened up Turnitin on Multimedia, and walked students through all steps till submission of their paper and generation of an OR. This was a 35 minute long walk-through. There were explanations on every step. In this practice session, students were finally asked to process their own 200-word write up. The excitement in the computer lab could be felt in the air. The students were asked to practice a few submissions in the next couple of days, before the last interactive sessions, and come up with queries.

Session 3

The last session was set up to draw general discussion, impressions, and problem areas from students. This turned into a fun activity. It turned out to be a total recall session. Students were asked to recall every step of the process and

share one by one, the order in which they were given the information and guidelines, by the researchers. It was interesting to see students trying to recall and remind each other. This form of information cluster was aimed at a refreshing of the knowledge items acquired. Students found it difficult to recall process of Turnitin account use, even though it was the most recent. This probably could be remedied with more practice.

Conclusion

The following core recommendations are based on various dimensions discussed by students and observed by the researchers:

- There is a dire need of amendments in education policy and an educational campaign started and implemented at lower levels of education has visible chances of improved and original quality of academic production at higher levels. The main reason is that the current implementation of Turnitin in Pakistan does not follow a chalked-out plan. There are scattered attempts to train and facilitate the instructors and students, in the shape of webinars, workshops and training sessions, held by HEC. These efforts are surely encouraging, but absence of academic regulatory pressure is sure to result in zero motivation by students and instructors in general to participate. Hence these special arrangements remain underutilized.
- With the change at policy level, there should be gradual and extensive training of instructors in digital and non-digital resources. Many instructors resist Turnitin outrightly, mainly due to the sense of insecurity that their students are more digitally aware and capable. It is imperative that the instructors learn these digital systems.
- Students are what teachers make of them. They are easily carried away by the heresy about Turnitin, and how it does (not) apply to Pakistani educational milieu. This and such misconceptions need to be undone, through conscious and systematic training and practice. Organization of face-to-face orientation sessions and establishment of online forums can be good starters for students to clear up their doubts. A blog and/or a Facebook page that carries the essential guidelines, instructional video tutorials in Urdu or even regional languages,

would have a lasting impact.

- There is a dire need to instill the sense of authorship and copyrights in students. They need to be clearly told that their efforts and original ideas need protection too, just like that of any writer on earth. It is imperative to create awareness among students about digital objects, their owners and their privacy.
- Students need to be given regular practice of different forms of using sources, which is quotations, paraphrasing, etc. Majority of the students believe that paraphrasing is fine and does not require acknowledgment. This idea needs to be fixed through mandatory practice on in-text citation.

Significance of the present study

This study is expected to serve as a model for such scenario where students are laden with misconceptions about Plagiarism and Turnitin due to implementation flaws. The resistance that Turnitin implementation faces is mainly due to lack of knowledge and training. Instead of asking students to stop cheating, it is ideal to make them aware that their work can be stolen and used unacknowledged too. The realization and fear of losing one's belongings can stop one from stealing from others. Asking them to protect their work from others is an indirect way of making them aware of fair play of acknowledgment.

There have been many known cases where students have claimed, with proof, that their supervisors/ instructors have used their work and published it without their consent and knowledge. During one of the interactive sessions in computer lab, the researchers had a five-minute online poll, on Urtak.com, from all participants, about their knowledge of authorship and how can Turnitin protect it. Unfortunately, 95% of the respondents had neither any idea about their academic rights as writers, and 100% students obviously didn't know that Turnitin actually helps in keeping student's work under a, figurative, lock and key protection too.

Students would usually try to go the easier way since their instructors would let go of such stuff. The main issue is that students usually believe that there is no such possibility of new or novel and 100% genuine work. There is a growing misconception, or say, nearly a maxim, that all is a manipulation and reproduction of the same knowledge over and over and again, and hence, there is no possibility

of new *knowledges*. This negative mindset keeps students in the dark and they do not have any sense of authorship and their copyright. Turnitin is not only a policeman that catches the violations and anomalies, but it also helps protect student's work, rights, and gives them their due credit. So, it strives at securing intellectual valuables for the genuine owners. Therefore, it discourages and keeps academic thieves and robbers from stealing other's works.

The manner, in which Turnitin has been introduced to students of Pakistan, from Postgraduate level downwards, has resulted in more problems than anticipated. In the present study, all such notions and mindsets were evident from day one. The research participants needed a lot of clearing up of their perception, carefully tailored orientation and practice in referencing, plagiarism sensitivity, and Turnitin use. In this 40-day consistent and gradual practice, there was a visible change in the perception of 85% of students, as was evident in the end-of-project online questionnaire. Yet practice remains conditioned with time. So, it can be safely assumed that in other situations in Pakistan, where Turnitin continues to be implemented from the 'top' only, such projects can be inculcated, as credited components, at all levels. Similar project for instructors, as a part of their in-service training should also be facilitated, so that they can train their students more meaningfully.

References

Badge, Jo. *What is Turnitin?* 2008. 2012 йил 12-February. <http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/itservices/resources/cis/student-is/blackboard/staff/turnitin/getting-started/what-is-turnitin>.

Brown, Cary A., et al. "Promoting academic writing/referencing skills: Outcome of an undergraduate e-learning pilot project." *British Journal of Educational Technology* 39.1 (2008): 140-156.

Cross, Michael. "Policing Plagiarism." *British Medical Journal* 335.7627 (2007): 963-964.

Defeldre, Anne-Catherine. "Inadvertent Plagiarism in Everyday Life." *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 19 (2005): 1033-1040.

Demystifying Citing and Referencing. n.d. 5 February 2011. <http://www.lib.monash.edu/tutorials/citing/citing-quiz/quiz.html>.

Freedman, Michael P. "A Tale of Plagiarism and a New Paradigm." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 85.7 (2004): 545-548.

Frick, T. *How to Recognize Plagiarism*. 19 March 2008. 5 Febryary 2010. <https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/plagiarism_test.html>.

Goffe, William L. and Kim Sosin. "Teaching with Technology: May You Live in Interesting Times." *The Journal of Economic Educatio* 36.3 (2005): 278-291.

HEC Annual Reports. 2010. 2012 йил 6-January. <http://www.hec.gov.pk/MediaPublication/NewsViews/PublishingImages/Annual%20Report%20for%20Uploading/Annual%20Report%20for%20Uploading.html>.

Hu, Guangwei and Jun Lei. "Investigating Chinese University Students' Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward Plagiarism From an Integrated Perspective." *Language Learning* (2011): 1-38.

Ilm ki Dunya. 2009 йил 11-July. 2012 йил 5-January. <http://www.ilmkidunya.com/edunews/hec-launches-anti-plagiarism-service-in-public-sector-universities-2662.aspx>.

Katie, P. *Does Turnitin Detect Plagiarism?* 2010 йил 20-August. 2012 йил 2012-February. <http://community.turnitin.com/blogpost/597928/107645/Does-Turnitin-Detect-Plagiarism>.

Koh, Hwee Ping, Glennda Scully and David R. Woodliff . "The impact of cumulative pressure on accounting students' propensity to commit plagiarism: an experimental approach." *Accounting and Finance* 51 (2011): 985-1005.

Lancaster, Thomas and Fintan Culwin. "Preserving academic integrity—fighting against nonoriginality agencies." *British Journal of Educational Technology* 38.1 (2007): 153-157.

Neville, Colin. *The complete guide to Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism*. New York: Open University Press, 2007.

Olson, Kristina R. and Alex Shaw. "'No fair, copycat!': what children's response to plagiarism tells us about their understanding of ideas." *Developmental Science* 14.2 (2011): 431-439.

Pecorari, Diane. *Academic Writing and Plagiarism: A Linguistic Analysis*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010.

Plagiarism. n.d. 2 February 2011. <http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/careers/ld/help-with/plagiarism>.

Turnitin. n.d. 2012 йил 12-February. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turnitin>.

Whiteman, Sherri A. and Jay L. Gordon. "Cross Conversations: The Price of an "A": An Educator's Responsibility to Academic Honesty." *The English Journal* 91.2 (2001): 25-30.

Williams, Bronwyn T. "Trust, Betrayal, and Authorship: Plagiarism and How We Perceive Students." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 51.4 (2008): 250-354.

Zeng, Weiqin and David Resnik. "Reasearch integrity in China: Problems and Prospects." *Developing World Bioethics* 10.3 (2010): 164-171.

About the Authors:

Adnan Rashid received his M.Phil. in Cognitive Linguistics from National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, Pakistan in 2012 and is completing his Ph.D. Dissertation in Film Media Discourse at the moment.

Athar Rashid is currently pursuing a PhD in Political Science & IR at Izmir University of Economics, Turkey. His research interests include Comparative Politics, Energy Politics, Technology in teaching, Discourse Analysis, Governance and Public Policy.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Writing Pakistan: Conversations on Identity, Nationhood and Fiction

Reviewed by Dr. Munazza Yaqoob

Writing Pakistan: Conversations on Identity, Nationhood and Fiction. Mushtaq Bilal. India: HarperCollins, 2016. 252 pages. ISBN-10: 9352640136

Mushtaq Bilal's *Writing Pakistan: Conversations on Identity, Nationhood and Fiction* (2016) is a collection of conversations that he had with ten contemporary writers of Pakistani fiction in English. These include Bapsi Sidwa, Musharraf Ali Farooqi, Uzma Aslam Khan, Aamer Hussain, Mohammad Hanif, Kamila Shamsie, Mohsin Hamid, Bina Shah, Bilal Tanweer and Shehryar Fazli. The book is divided into ten chapters, each containing an interview with one of the authors.

In the introduction, Bilal draws our attention to the increasing popularity and visibility of Pakistani writers of English fiction in the global literary market. He informs his readers that this 'boom' is due to the geopolitical position of Pakistan in the context of 9/11 and the 'war on terror.' He believes international readers are interested in learning about a country on the frontlines of the war on terror and the dynamics of its society and culture, which breed religious extremism and patriarchy. He explains that writing about Pakistan has become equal to making political statements about Pakistan. Pakistani fiction in English, therefore, is perceived as politically engaged by international readers. He supports this argument by suggesting that despite the fact that the country has no publishing houses that specifically publish English fiction, and English is still regarded as the language of the elite with a very small community of speakers, it is

growing and attracting Western readership. Therefore, he is interested in exploring how these writers represent Pakistan, address the nation, and construct its identity. He desires to find out whether these writers dismantle or perpetuate the Western constructed stereotypes of Pakistani society and people.

This book's major strength is its focus on selected dynamics in a vast subject, which helps the author get his point across to his intended audience. The interview questions are formulated dexterously as they focus on very pertinent issues related to Pakistani fiction in English. The questions include subjects such as: The position of Pakistani writers of English fiction as 'citizens of a Postcolonial state,' their responsibility to represent Pakistani society and subvert stereotypes, the possibility of using fiction as a form of cultural diplomacy between the West and Pakistan, self-censorship and writing fiction in the English language.

Almost all of the Pakistani writers interviewed assert that they are not engaged in 'rewriting the social history' of Pakistan. They disagree with the general perception that their fiction represents Pakistani society and assists in the construction of a national identity. They consider fiction to be an art form and are mainly concerned with the process of writing stories and creating characters. They write for informed readers who have the ability and aesthetic education to appreciate the merits of their works and are not merely reading it to draw political insights about Pakistani society and its relationship with the West. They want to be appreciated as writers of fiction rather than 'cultural diplomats.' They reject the 'reductive frameworks' used to interpret their works and want their readers to appreciate the complexity of Pakistani society and culture and the place of English fiction in the Pakistan's literary culture.

In response to a question about their intended readers and audience, all of the authors declare that they simply want to write good stories and create good and memorable characters. Being fiction writers, they consider it restrictive to have a particular audience in mind while writing. However, Mohsin Hamid and Bina Shah say that

they are happy to play the role of intermediaries or cultural diplomats because as writers, they are making an effort to 'build bridges between Pakistani culture and the rest of the world' (185) and 'disarm' some of the wrong perceptions about Pakistani society (161).

What makes this book compelling is the commentary of the writers on their popular works. It is interesting to note how their works have been interpreted in light of their own intentions. The general readership of this fiction within Pakistan and abroad considers it to be politically engaged and written for the global Anglophone community. The sudden popularity of this fiction after 9/11 and during the war on terror serves as strong evidence to support this perception. However, the writers interviewed in this book deny this observation and encourage readers to develop alternative viewpoints and use alternative frameworks to read their works. Their comments on their own works may be convincing enough to get readers to read with a different set of eyes.

In terms of self-censorship, almost all of the writers assert that they are free to write whatever they want and as fiction writers, their only obligation is to be true to their own ideas. Indeed, writing a good story is their 'first responsibility.' However, Mohsin Hamid admits that he likes to 'self-censor' in all of his writing because 'words are powerful' (172). Most of the writers say they regard the label of 'postcolonial writer' to be an academic construct because scholars need to group writings into certain categories and use certain labels in order to design courses and conduct researches. The authors are simply interested in writing stories that entertain their readers.

One of the most important issues discussed in all of the interviews is the use of English language. Uzma Aslam Khan thinks English is one of Pakistan's languages because 'it is a part of our culture now' (76). The other writers also agree with this viewpoint and think that their English fiction is actively 'engaged with issues that are characteristically Pakistani' (12). The use of English does not prevent them from representing Pakistani reality; instead, it helps them 'explain Pakistani culture and society' (191). Shehryar Fazli

thinks that English helps Pakistani writers reach an international audience (222) and Musharraf Ali Farooqi similarly considers it an effective medium to 'share our literary culture with the rest of the world' (57).

I am particularly appreciative of the interview questions that were used in this book. These questions keep the reader focused on the pertinent issues, help to organise the content of the book, and make complex theories and terms easier to understand. Bilal's approachable tone engages the reader in the conversations, and his comments help to explain the viewpoints of the writers. In addition, as the Bilal asserts, 'these interviews not only contribute to literary but also to various cultural and political debates going on in the contemporary world' (21).

This book adds to academic scholarship on Pakistani fiction in English by providing useful insights into the works of ten popular contemporary writers. The conversations compiled in this book inform us about the writers' beliefs, their preferred writing processes, their observations of and views on Pakistani society and the relationship between Pakistan and the West. The conversations also touch on the status and role of Pakistani fiction in English under the labels of postcolonial literature and commonwealth literature. These conversations can serve as soft landing spots for readers when studying fiction by these writers. I believe this book deserves a special place on the bookshelf of anyone who appreciates Pakistani fiction in English.

About the Author:

Dr. Munazza Yaqoob is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Woman Campus, International Islamic University, Islamabad. She is author of two books and numerous research papers published in national and international interdisciplinary journals.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Rizwan Akhtar's *Lahore I am Coming*

Reviewed by Dr. Shahid Imtiaz

Rizwan Akhtar. *Lahore I am Coming*. Lahore: University of the Punjab Press, 2017. 220 pp.

Lahore I Am Coming is the first collection of poems by Dr. Rizwan Akhtar who is an Assistant Professor of English at Punjab University, Lahore, Pakistan. Some of the poems included in the collection have been published in the prestigious literary journals like *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Poetry NZ*, *Transnational Literature* and others. The Preface is written by Fiona Sinclair, editor of the on line poetry magazine *Message in a Bottle*, and the Introduction by Alistair Paterson, poet, editor, essayist, anthologist, critic and a novelist. In Paterson's view Akhtar "has the skill and sensitivity for such work as his current collection reveals."

A distinctive feature of Akhtar's collection is his thematic diversity and fictive poetic diction. From his experience of being a poetry student of Derek Walcott to the agonizing experience of being lonely on a foreign land in London, his poems focus on the human condition and predicament on the whole. There are some poems of personal loss and grief: "Flying Home For My Father's Burial," is about poet's deepest feelings on his father's death:

> passengers dragged trolleys checking-in
> I carried him like a luggage in boarding lounge.

In another poem entitled "Death Has Poetry" Akhtar sees graveyards as anthologies of rejected poems: "graves sit just as poems rejected." Poems like, "Children Bombed in a Park in Lahore" and "Burnt Brides of Lahore" are about the constant menace of terrorism faced by inhabitants of Lahore, a city where

Seven brides and many yet-to-be brides burnt to ashes
their embroidered dresses charred into seared palls.

One of the fascinating themes of this collection is Akhtar's interest in cities and their landscape. His poem "Lahore I am Coming," the title poem of the book, is based on his early childhood recollections of impressions recorded on the slate of his memory. It spotlights the magical power, re-invoking, re-shaping and reconstructing childhood images into art. Akhtar comes back to his native city of lasting images to refresh and sharpen his creative skills. It is the city that taught him the art of writing, the skill of giving poetic form to his experience and observation of physical realities around him. Lahore has made him what he is now, a poet, and perhaps a mystic. Haggard and exhausted, the poet comes back to his city for new ideas and themes with the satisfaction that Lahore would not disappoint him. "Lahore I am Coming," therefore, creates a very strong sense of liberation from self- imagined exile in London. It's a journey back to his childhood.
[Cite a few verses from this poem here]
There are quite a few poems based in the theme of Lahore as a city as well as an imagined space. For example, "From Empire's Days in Lahore" is about colonial Lahore, a historical aspect of colonized Lahore that Akhtar is very aware of, for, in his words:

In colonial days the Mall Road was laid
for clerks and officials.

Even today the Mall Road along with other colonial structures of power and domination built on it are the symbols of British legacy. But it is the contemporary Lahore which really impacts Akhtar's imagination. The poem "Pakistan Meets a Terrorist" spells out the fear the Pakistanis in general and the Lahoris in particular:

The world had one 9/11 and one 7/7
we live through them each moment.

Akhtar sees Lahore as a city taken over by the dreadful feeling of foreboding and fear. He finds a link between Lahore and Belfast which was also once hit by the terrorists. As a poet who travels between the East and the West with a vast cultural and literary knowledge, Akhtar understands the human condition and predicament on both sides of global division of cultures. So, this cross cultural-experience is easily translated transformed in his poems.

Such poems as "My Language," "Text," "Alphabets," and "Your Poem's Content" reflect Akhtar's special concern with language. The choice of language for his literary and creative expression has been an issue with him His ancestors' language was Arabic, "I dream about my ancestors in Arabic" and "I talk in my father's language" but after struggling with what language to choose for his poetic expression, he ultimately picked English, which he describes as the "one with which I swam all the oceans." His knowledge of Arabic, Persian and Urdu poetic traditions is evident in structuring of his English poems. He seems to be obsessed by the idea of "form," be it the form of a female body or the form of a poem. The form and theme of Urdu ghazal, a complete harmony of words, inspires him so much:

> Why brother? Urdu ghazals speak too much of love
> dark voluptuous concubines repeat Persian couplets
> their shadows simmer over Lahore's skyscrapers.

A distinctive feature of Akhtar's poetry is the originality of metaphors and similes. His poems are well-structured metaphors providing depth to the meanings of his poems. Like a modernist poet he takes out the traditional meanings associated with the image and gives it a new meaning by using it in a new context. Evening has been used by the traditionalist poets as a romantic image. Whereas in Akhtar's poetry evening is dusty, "My voice in a dusty evening of Lahore," which lends new meaning to a hackneyed theme in Urdu tradition. The image of a dancing body, both male and female, is a recurrent image in his poems. The rhythm of his poems corresponds with the

rhythm of a dancing body that “encores my mystical whirls” creating ecstasy of its own kind.

Besides the city of Lahore, the bird imagery adds a mystical element to his poetry. Pigeons are frequently mentioned landing at the Royal Mosque’s water pond and at the tombs of saints, where the pigeons along with the ‘dervash’ are lost and engrossed in the mystical whirls. Birds imagery also gives us a great sense of a journey in search of truth, a journey from the outer landscape to the inner landscape of soul. Poetry is a deity and the poet is a worshipper paying homage through words. Akhtar is in love with poetry and Lahore: “Lahore I am in love with you. (page no)”

Overall, Rizwan Akhtar has offered all lovers of poetry a gift, a text made possible by a human subjectivity constructed both by the East and the West but that centers around the rich, great, and magical Lahore of past, present, and future. This collection of poems is the most beautiful love song for Lahore, the city of love and friendship!

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Awake in a Dream

Reviewed by Muhammad Sheeraz

Jaagay Hain Khuab Mein (Novel). Akhtar Raza Saleemi. Lahore: Dastavez Publications, 2018. 241 pages. Pakistani Rupees 350

Once I thought of writing a tale of a princess who sleeps for several weeks to live the dreams that she could not dream of living all those summers she had been awake. I needed to know how they work. Dreams, thus, became my favorite shopping. I would search them everywhere: book stores, coffee shops, flower markets, shining eyes. This search one day brought me my best Urdu novel on dreams: *Jaagay hain khuab men* (Awake in a Dream).

Written by Akhtar Raza Saleemi, this book has dreams scattered everywhere in it. Dreams that explore life. Life that travels through space in time. Time that expands in dreams and contracts in the real. The real that happens to be an illusion. And illusion that outshines the real!

Inquisitive by nature and interested in cosmology, the protagonist of the novel, Zaman, lies down on a rocky platform at the mouth of a cave and lets his eyes feast on the stars. His background knowledge of physics boosts his galactic imagination. Moonlit nights spark questions in his mind. Motion—be it that of a rabbit or of the solar system—transports him to persons and places existing at a time distance as humble as a moment to as great as a light year. His romantic self lives in dreams, nature, physics and philosophy, and wears a range of persons from his paternal line.

The summary-and-scene balance of the novel keeps us engrossed. At one point, we experience stillness, at another, we find ourselves surrounded by the Sikh army preparing to kill Syed Ahmad Brelvi. The zigzag plot of the novel hikes through the mountains taking us to the heights of ecstasy as we go in and out of Noor Abad. In and around the town, we see questions inscribed on rocks: What is time? What is space-time? Are we awake only in dreams? Can a well-dreamed sleep fully unpack all our genetic codes and show us through all the persons we have been living since Adam? Are we the us who lived ages ago? Does a perfect victory of our internal nature over the external one make us experience timelessness? Can we see forth in time the way we can look back through it?

Muhammad Sheeraz

Faced with these and several other such questions, we cry out for help, only to awake Zaman.

If you dream a lot, if dreams trouble you, if you dream of places before you actually visit and see them, if your dreams have actually happened to others, if you believe in spiritualism, if you see oneness in the universe, if you wish to be jolted by storms and earthquakes, then the first thing you want to do is read *Jaagay Hain Khuab Men*. Its ambitious characters, novel setting, complex plot, converged subjects, fluid style, and vivid images make *Jaagay Hain Khuab Men* an extraordinary book. Books like this are there to be read, translated and made into films.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Exit West

Reviewed by Anum Aziz

Exit West: A Novel. Mohsin Hamid. Riverhead Books (Reprint Edition), 2018. 256 pages. Paperback. $10.40

Mohsin Hamid explores the issues of identity, migration and change in the face of a war-ridden and fast-evolving world in his fourth novel *Exit West*. This novel has been nominated for and has won multiple awards globally including LA Times Book Prize. *Exit West* follows the lives of the two protagonists, Nadia and Saeed as war and an extremist regime forces them to abandon their (unnamed) home country and search for refuge in the West. Hamid has used extremely simple, yet poignant and profound, prose intertwined with elements of magic realism to tell a story of humanity in flux through the experiences of the two protagonists. He explores the transience of human contact in the bigger scheme of the world which nonetheless forms bonds and leaves lasting impact – molding personalities and changing lives. Despite the profundity and seriousness of the subject matter, *Exit West* never becomes bleak and continues to paint an optimistic and variable picture of a world with an innate understanding of human nature and abundance of humor.

Nadia is an unconventional young woman who is estranged from her family for opting to live alone and flout convention in a highly traditional place. Saeed is a mild mannered young man who lives with his parents as per tradition and is part of a happy family. They meet in an evening class on "corporate identity and product branding" and fall in love while the world around them changes and transitions from a comparatively peaceful place to a dangerous and conflictual one, which eventually claims the life of Saeed's mother. Grouping together for protection and security, Nadia moves in with Saeed and his father where they mourn his mother and plan an escape from this place where the new regime carries out daily killings of opponents.

Hamid has brilliantly used the elements of magic realism to draw a vivid picture of change and migration and the dangers they entail. He subtly blends in the magical elements with the real by referring to the magical "doors" as "dark rectangles" and simultaneously showing them emerge across the globe with shadowy people moving through them. These secret doors open onto new and unknown places and thus offer an escape from war. Hamid describes them emerging in mundane places but quickly reclaimed by secret agents who let

desperate people pass for a price. There is complete uncertainty as to the journey and place of arrival, depicting not only passage and escape but also danger and uncertainty of the refugee routes in the contemporary world. Nadia and Saeed hear of the portals and decide to use one to escape the dangerous and oppressive regime. As they move from their native home to Mykonos, the narrative focuses on regret and loss as the first change which makes itself apparent in their identities. Nadia's and her family's regret of never bridging the gap which becomes final in the face of war; Saeed's regret and sense of guilt and loss at giving in to his father's injunction and leaving him behind.

They use these "doors" to move from Mykonos to London and then to Marin, California. Each place of transition brings in its own challenges, hardships and dangers for them – all the while contributing to the change and development in their identities and outlooks on life. These changes transform their romantic relationship to one of familiarity and then distance. Despite the hardships, Nadia embraces the challenges more readily than Saeed and does not have difficulty in accepting and fitting in with different cultures. It is because of her initiative that they are able to find the door to London and then to Marin. Saeed, on the other hand, finds it difficult to adjust and is forever looking for a connection with home. These differences slowly transcend into the silences between them, mimicking the changes that occur in cultures and identities due to displacement and migration. Hamid intersperses the story of their journey with short narratives of similar changes occurring all over the globe, where people are coming together from all across the world and making new hybrid cultures – a dazed family emerging in a luxury building, a dark shadow emerging from a cupboard in Australia and an old "wrinkled" man emerging from a shed and taking a native for an exhilarating trip back through it. All these stories paint a picture of a world in flux, which is changing and evolving and giving birth to new worldviews and new vistas.

Nadia and Saeed's move from one part of the globe to another, leads to their unintentional yet unavoidable involvement in the conflict between natives and incoming refugees. The authorities of the host city (London) decide to provide habitation for the foreigners by starting a home building project. The influx of strangers of various ethnicities into Saeed and Nadia's daily lives, the politics surrounding such interactions, the dilemma of faith in such a diverse community all become factors in the development of their identity. Nadia, the woman who did not pray, finds it easier to adjust and move away from a culture and a country which she already sees in the past. Saeed on the other hand, is nostalgic about his home and connects with his countrymen – all the while

becoming more religious. These differences in their personalities keep expanding, slowly pulling them apart even as they try to hold on. In a failed attempt to reignite the spark between them they use another door and move to Maine. The reformation of their individual identities due to contact with diversity eventually results in them splitting, with Saeed moving on with a priest's daughter and Nadia finding a companion in a blue-eyed woman.

Hamid uses the story of their journey to create a microcosm of the globe which is constantly changing and reforming due to the onslaught of terrorism, war and displacement. *Exit West* discusses these changes with optimism for a more fluid world which oscillates between cultures and identities smoothly. So, in the end, when Nadia and Saeed meet again after fifty years in the now peaceful city of their origin and make plans to see the stars in Chile, they are different and yet the same people – reflecting real human beings and their development. Hamid's narrative is a vivid, optimistic and yet real depiction of our modern fragmented world and his recent Sitara-i-Imtiaz [Star of Excellence] from the government of Pakistan is a timely and well-deserved testament to his excellence.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

The Anthropocene and the Magic of our Ecostories

By Dr. Munazza Yaqoob

On 25th January 2017, I landed at the small and cosy airport in Wilmington, North Carolina to carry out my postdoc research supported by the UNCW-IIUI Academic partnership program funded by the Department of State, US Embassy. Wilmington is a port city in North Carolina and is known for its one-mile long Riverfront at the Cape Fear River which is regarded as the most beautiful riverfront in America. The city has gardens, Reserves, Natural habitats and four beaches including Fort Fisher, Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach, and Kure Beach.

I could not think that my very first morning walk in Wilmington on January 26th, 2016 to get familiar with the place and the neighbourhood would be the beginning of life-transforming experience with nature. The clear pollution free blue sky, clusters of tall trees all around the house, campus, and the area, fresh and soft breeze, and a pleasant symphony of the birds' twittering worked their magic, and I found all overwhelmingly beautiful. I loved the place. It was pleasant to observe how skillfully nature is infused in the city planning; Wilmington appeared to me as an ecologically friendly city. The landscape of Wilmington made me fall in love with nature for its own sake; trees, flowers, birds and sunshine all appear in an unusual light with uncommon beauty. Pleasant walks on the trails, sittings near water ponds and under tall shady trees in open green fields, walks on the paths adorned with irises, tulips, azalea and roses generated pure pleasure and had a magical soothing effect on my nerves and the heart. The time spent in nature was

the time of deep reflection on the human-nature relationship; the moments of deep reflection worked to review the privileged positioning of humans in the vast web of the ecosystem thriving with the multiple forms of life. The fault which lies in the anthropogenic lifestyle and thinking of human beings which gives a privileged position to them by which they consider it their legitimate right to control and use nature became apparent. It was obvious to learn that how our misinterpreted notions about the ontological exceptionality of humans deny us the wisdom, whereby we appreciate the magic of interconnectedness and invisible artistry which is in the diversity of biosphere and have an overwhelming experience of being a meaningful part of the grand web of the ecosystem. The journey from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism is, though tough but it offers exceptional contentment and joy; it liberates us from constant and insatiable desires which lead us to pursue our happiness in material things and luxuries. The harmony, interconnectedness, and interdependence, once we can observe the biodiversity of the ecosystems, it painfully makes us more critical of the politics of identity and labels which have divided humanity. Nothing, then, appears more absurd than the human greed to overuse nature and disturb its harmony and deplete its resources in the name of modernisation and advancement. We learn to be mindful of our overconsumption and avoid all those acts which lead towards "ecocide" in the name of the progress and development. The understanding of the grand web of ecosystems which interconnect millions and trillions of organisms is the inspirational lifestyle model for the modern humans engaged in an endless pursuit of acquiring material resources.

Wilmington, like other modern cities in the world, has an impact of growing industrialisation and consumption which we can observe in the form of city sprawl, deforestation and the overuse of cars and vehicles and resultant

construction of highways to meet the needs of growing traffic. However, the distinction of the city is that the planners of the city have their environmental conservation policies and have taken care of ecosystem and habitats. Therefore, developmental activities do not alter the natural state of the earth and damage the ecosystem. The efforts of the city planner to conserve the elements of the natural world is exhibited in the form of planting natural gardens on undeveloped land, reserves, preserving natural habitats like forests and water ponds, massive tree plantations and preserving green open spaces across the landscape of the city. Airlie Garden, Halliburton park, Greenfield lake park, The Abbey Nature Preserve, Old Forest, and Wildflower Preserve at UNCW are a few such spaces among many in the city. And similarly, to generate a healthy lifestyle intimately connected with nature, the planners have also designed and provided a variety of places for bicycling, walking and jogging, camping, swimming, fishing, bird and animal watching, kayaking and boating, and open fields for sports and events such as flower festivals and market fairs. The festivals and other such activities celebrated to pay homage to nature manifest the living and vibrant interrelationship between human cultural life and nature in Wilmington. The environmentally conscious planning of the city and people's environmental friendly lifestyle and social activities appeared to me as the most inspiring feature of the city.

The most exciting time of the year in this port city is Spring, which starts in mid-February and lasts until April. The season adorns the with beautiful Azalea, Camellias, dogwood, daffodils, tulips and roses and flowering trees such as redbud, cherry, and magnolia and fills the city with the spirit of festivity. The highlight of the season is a famous festival called Azalea Festival which has been celebrated in the region since 1948. The Festival manifests the spirits of the

American South by featuring dance, music, marches, and local arts and crafts exhibitions which are arranged in the Downtown Wilmington. The most popular activity in the Azalea festival arranged by the city administration as well by people who own big gardens celebrating the blooming of Azalea in Wilmington. SSummer follows the Spring, and this coastal city becomes very humid due to frequent rains and rain storms. The change in the season leads Wilmington to pay homage to nature through other eco-friendly activities and festivals. Berry picking is the most favourite outdoor activity in Summer. Many farms such as Lewis Farms grow blueberries, strawberries, and blackberries under protected tunnels made on their big farms. In summer these farms are open for the public to " Pick your Own" berries. Young, old, children and families swarm the farms to eat and collect their berries. It was a great fun for me to eat and pick berries while walking between the tunnels where berry plants loaded with fruit seem welcoming us in the humid May.

The best of my memories of my six-month stay in Wilmington are the moments of peace, ecstasy and mute dialogue held with nature during my long walks in the early mornings and in the evening on the trails carved in woods. It was during these long walks that I experienced nature very closely and intimately; an exceptional bond silently and gradually was formed by hugging trees, touching their leaves and barks, listening to breeze passing through leaves, seeing and touching a flower from different angles, exploring shades of the same color, gazing at the spacious green fields and shadowy paths, listening to and trying to identify different sounds of the birds. I could feel invisible threads which connect us with the earth, plants, sky, and water and was thrilled with a joy I never experienced before. It all had a profound effect to make me learn that our active

response to nature is also our intellectual or rational understanding of the world of nature around us. When we genuinely derive pleasure from the beauteous forms, sounds, and colours we actually develop our understanding of what beauty is; beauty becomes purity, generosity, peace, condensation, patience, healing, and unconditional affection extending to all. Each season in nature brought its own beauty; thus beauty never dies in nature; nature and its cycles of change taught me the true meaning of resilience. My Wilmington experience thus turned out to be a life-transforming experience which enabled me to develop an alternate perception of the Earth, our planet. The new understanding dismantled my view regarding a privileged anthropogenic position of humans, and the beauteous forms which used to appear as mere abstractions to me became alive making me feel I breathe with them in the grand web of the ecosystem. This was the beginning of the realisation of the significance of educating ourselves about environmental ethics to foster an eco-friendly view of the planet and recognise the rights of non-human species. The very realisation that anthropogenic thinking as the leading cause of our mindless pursuit of material progress is actually responsible for the heinous ecological crisis the world is suffering from transforming our modes of thinking about nature and environment. We need to learn that it is our psychological, emotional and physical disconnect with nature that has resulted in human greed and perversion and is responsible for enormous ecological crises and environmental degradation. The Wilmington experience highlights the need to develop a personal affiliation with nature; the personal bonding has potential to develop an intuitive understanding of the ecosystems and understand the horrors of the Anthropocene. Today we live in the age of the Anthropocene when humans have become a noticeable geological force that has the power to move tectonic plate of the earth and transform the environment of the planet. Deforestation and

chemically poisoned food, water, and air, water scarcity and resource depletion, layers of plastic rocks, pollution and toxicity, and the absence of biodiversity all are manifestations of the Anthropocene.

There is a considerable volume of research available which highlights environmental degradation and its hazardous impact on ecosystems and the scholarship in the related fields builds our understanding of the crisis and help us learn the ways to protect the environment. Along with these let us share the stories of our personal experiences with nature; our stories being emerged out of our deep recesses of the heart have potential to connect us deeply with nature whereby we can develop a critical understanding of ecological problems and become willing to mitigate these problems. These stories speak our heart and thus are powerful efforts to counter the horrors of the Anthropocene which warns us that humans being oblivious to their negative role in the planet are pushing the planet to its destruction. Humans with their faulty notions of the economic and technological development have made nature an endangered species and have become dangerous for the non-humans as well for fellows humans. Our personal stories telling our intimate relationship with nature can make a huge difference in recognising the agency of the non-human as crucial for the environmental sustainability and making a harmonious living possible in the ecosystem. Our ecostories as they explore the human-nature intimate relationship are inspirational and can build up alternative perception necessary to re-examine "inherited notion of the human, the cultural, and the 'identity'." I believe my ecostory contributes in ongoing efforts to develop environmental consciousness and foster critical ecological thinking.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Pakistan Needs an End to Dynastic Politics

By Dr. Masood Ashraf Raja

A few months ago the Pakistani Twittersphere went ballistic when Maryam Nawaz, daughter of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, declared herself a part of "Ruling Family," thus suggesting as if she and her family, somehow, should enjoy some special privileges and rights within Pakistan. In a democracy, of course, such ideas are absurd, but sadly some major political parties in Pakistan are built as dynasties and while the average workers may get a chance to advance to a certain level, the top echelons of these political parties still consist of either the children of their founders or close relatives. At this point, the Muslim League (N), Pakistan Peoples Party, and Awwami National Party are all governed by either the founders or the progeny of the founders; same rules always apply to quite a few regional political parties.

If Pakistan hopes to develop a viable democratic system, and if the civic structures and practices are to be reshaped within this democratic norm, then the political parties need to be openly democratic, which means that the party leadership should not be passed from one generation of a family to another. The parties should hold open elections to elect their leadership and the top leadership positions should be open to all members of a political party. Otherwise the entire nation ends up becoming the private property of one large extended political family. Look at the recent Nawaz Sharif cabinet, for example. Almost all the major cabinet positions were either held by Mr. Sharif's immediate family members or the members of his extended family.[1]

---

[1] In fact, according to some reports at one point at least 17 members of Nawaz family held political positions and over all, it is said by some, 84 members of this family were in powerful top positions at one time. "Family politics of Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif."

Of course, when such is the case with the most powerful political positions in the government, then the children of these leaders feel aptly justified in thinking of themselves as a "natural" ruling class. Our so-called leaders forget that any powerful regime depends for its survival on the "willing" consent of the people.[2] For a group of politicians to consider themselves as part of a "natural" ruling class the recognition of this claim must come from the people, for if no one accepts you as ruling class then, your claims notwithstanding, you cannot become this so-called ruling class. The people, on the other hand, should see the kind of hubris that encourages our cultural and political elite to think of themselves as a "ruling class."

The two major dynasties in our politics, the Sharifs and the Bhuttos, if we look at their histories, were both propped up by military dictators and served the interest of the dictators in the early years of their political rise. Of course, both these families eventually broke away from their masters and charted a political path of their own, but it is our job as the people of Pakistan to keep reminding them that they gained their ludicrous "ruling family" status by either selling their loyalties to the military dictators, or, if we want to go further in the past, by selling their allegiances to tour erstwhile colonizers. This critique of the "naturalized" claim to being the rulers must be posed consistently through the media and social media. The idea is to let no one get away with the claim that they, somehow, own our destiny as their birth right!

There is a lot at stake in the process of eliminating dynastic politics; the case is intimately connected with the politics of personality. Any politics that relies on a narrative of liberation at the hands of one man, one leader, is bound to unleash the macro and micro fascist tendencies in our culture. In simple terms, fascism is nothing more than the deeply internalized belief that one single leader can, somehow, solve all our problems. Thus, any time we look around for one strong leader to liberate us, we are expressing our latent

---

[2] I am relying on Antonio Gramsci's explanation of "hegemony" as means of obtaining the willing consent of the people.

fascism.[3] By eliminating dynastic politics, we might also be able to dislodge this deep seeded fascism in our souls and might then, ultimately, look for collective solutions to our manifold problems.

We all must look at our political parties to see how democratic they are in their structures before we give them the power to lead our democracy. Yes, there are some religious parties that do tend to be more democratic, but since they consider one single interpretation of religion as the solution to all our problems, their worldview becomes more exclusivist and less democratic. So, despite their democratic practices in selecting their leadership, their vision of the future will always be restrictive and reliant on one way of looking at the world, which can never be a recipe for success in a country as diverse as Pakistan.

So, over all, besides challenging all assertions of "natural" legitimacy by our political elite, we must also be watchful against all those who claim to know the future and have simple solutions for our problems!

(Note: This is a slightly modified version of an article published in Cross Cultural Conversations: http://masoodraja.com/2017/08/29/pakistan-needs-an-end-to-dynastic-politics/)

[3] This concept of micro fascism comes from the brilliant works of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Ismat and India

By Rafia Zakaria

This upcoming Saturday it will have been twenty-four years since the author Ismat Chughtai died. A fiery woman, she was known for her ascerbic and trenchant prose, piles of acutely observed short stories that laid bare the hypocrisies of middle class Muslim society in pre and post-partition India. It was the fiery burial she chose decades later that made the Pakistani side of Urdu speakers uncomfortable. A Muslim writer must choose a Muslim burial, and the insecure borders of post Partition South Asia dictated that such post-mortem predilections, even by the eccentric and eclectic, be considered complete repudiations.

So it was with Ismat Chughtai, whose receding position in the canon of Urdu literature has been chronicled in at least bi-annual laments near her birth and death dates. In an additional burden, Ismat Chughtai's birthday falls on August15; the detail that this happenstance took place in 1915, long before the divisive vagaries of Partition would mandate patriotic hatreds, is often lost in the fervid mileau of nationalist passions. The calculations left to the subcontinent by the British also mandate that a hesitant embrace of Pakistan equals an amorous passion for India. Ismat Chughtai, the brilliant author, the talented wordsmith, the creative genius, chose to live in India even after Pakistan was carved out as the better location for the subcontinent's Muslims. For this she was loved by India and Indians, their ardor for this living female testament to the superior soil offered by their staunchly secular environment, reflected in the pile of awards and titles with which they festooned her. The possibility that Ismat Chughtai may have chosen to stay even in some small part from some mix of habit and familiarity, a banal repugnance toward the usually inconvenient project of migration, was not a proposition that anyone wished to consider. India the secular was assumed to be India the freer, more given to bending and bowing the constrictions of culture to suit the whims and fancies of reliably unpredictable writers and artists.

That may well have been then, but like so much else in a subcontinent increasingly empty of writers who lived through its bloody border carving, it is not so anymore. In the past several weeks, Indian writers, some of Muslim origin but largely any who have had

the temerity to question the Government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have become subject to harassment and hate crimes. Three notable public intellectuals, M.M Kalburgi, Govind Pansare and Narendra Dhabolkar, have all been recently murdered. Other writers and poets are also facing censorship and harassment; they include Perumal Murugan, scholar M.M Basheer and poet K Satchidanadan. Dismayed by the Modi Government's refusal to investigate the murders and cases of harassment, over thirty Indian writers have returned the "Sahitya Akademi Awards," one of the highest literary honours awarded in India. According to PEN International, the organization that monitors literary freedom around the world and which is trying to organize a campaign to protect literary freedom in India, two Ministers from the Modi Government have even questioned the intentions of these writers in returning the awards. In the words of PEN International, "it takes courage in the current climate in India to express dissent in a public manner. PEN international salutes the courage of and expresses solidarity with those who have returned the awards in protest or have resigned membership of the Akademi."

On the Pakistani side of the border, of course, there is even less room for glib satisfaction at threatened state of Indian secularism. With recent months and years littered with the unabashed killing of writers, scholars, students and really anyone uninterested in the constricted agenda of a blood thirsty few, the streets of the country are stained with blood of slain intellectuals. If Indian writers are protesting, Pakistani intellectuals have had to flee or die or hide. Those too poor to hire coteries of guards to protect themselves must beg at the embassies of former or recent colonial masters; those even poorer must keep quiet in life or be sentenced to a more permanent silence. The choices are all bleak ones and their paltry offerings have been lamented often on vast acres of newsprint filled with incessant and helpless eulogies. Writers after all have only words to commemorate the words that were taken from the mouths of murdered others.

It is well that Ismat Chughtai is dead, however, for neither India nor Pakistan would have offered her much relief from the ever constricting shackles of religiously motivated obscurantism. The dead who saw the hopeful, if momentarily so, birth of two separate nations seem luckier in their demise than they would evaluating the miserable present. As the two countries get older, they do not get wiser; new generations are born reared on resolute and hatreds they are told are sacred. For the writer, it is a delicate balance of precision mourning: criticizing Muslim persecution in India can launch mobs that kill the Hindus left behind in Pakistan; criticizing Hindu persecution in Pakistan can launch mobs

that kill Muslims left behind in India. There are a lot more of the latter but even such factual acknowledgements morph into macabre competitions of greater bigotries. The construction of a sentence, here or there, is burdened with this baggage; it is evidence of the success of a gruesome osmosis, the equalization of hatreds on either side.

Ismat Chughtai is actually dead; others in Pakistan and in India and in all the other scattered corners of the world where they live and read and write in shrines to their lost lands, are the breathing dead, the living ones. Their words stained with the pain of exile or the burden of censorship, the fire of zealotry that burns and burns unsated and on either side.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Fall in Love

(Short Story)

By Sonia Irum

We understood each other, and understanding is addictive.

My room is scattered with my half-finished articles. I know I never read enough to be able to write well. Sometimes I feel all the important things in life are half finished. I think they are beautiful that way. They would lose their charm if achieved. Perhaps that is why you loved me; I was never enough and there was always something to explore like an addiction.

I get up and start collecting the article papers from the floor laced with university papers; the messy floor, your voice echoes in my ears, "I want you here with me. It's a beautiful feeling to see the person you love lying beside you, breathing: I want to smell your skin, touch you and feel you." I grab a half-written page from under a book, you echo again, "Distance is awful for me. What is the point in living away, I don't believe in love that thrives on distance." I smiled and assured you, "I love you."

Egham Hills hear the giant clock strike eleven in the morning. Lisa, my housemate has ordered some groceries; no one else is here. I need to go and collect them. A lot of items. I wonder where she is going to store all this. The fridge is not big enough but admittedly, she does have fridge organising skills. How I find my food inside it, that is my skill. She has forgotten breakfast items. Closing the fridge door, I recall how I would leave a note on the dressing table mirror, in your office drawer, sometimes on the fridge door saying "Smile" but you never noticed because you wanted me there, smiling back at you.

Remembering this I look at the weather report on my phone. It's October, and it's sunny. I pick up my keys and stroll to the grocery store to buy milk and yogurt for breakfast. I carefully read the details on milk bottles. I am new in Surrey; in fact, I am new in England. I am learning to adjust. I pay the bill and step outside to find beautiful skylines. This is my favorite weather – cold sunlight. Perhaps that is what I am composed of – cold and warm elements. My coldness disturbs you, but you can't leave me because I carry warmth too. Coldness lets you let go and warmth lets you go on. I sit at the bench near the bus stop where sunrays fall perfectly on me. The day reminds me of the hours spent waiting at Daewoo terminal. It starts sleeting. Weather is strange here. The ground is becoming wet, and the distinctive smell of earth takes me three years back and a thousand miles away to another time in Rawalpindi. I was at the busiest bus station in one of Pakistan's largest cities. It had rained the night before, so the air was fresh. I am not fond of rain, but I like it when the ground gives off that fresh earthy smell. Remember I told you how pleasant that day was?

* * * * * *

That day at Rawalpindi Daewoo Bus terminal the rush was relatively controlled (perhaps because advanced booking had arranged the flow of people to travel). As I waited, I observed the people around me. The hostess of one bus looked tired; she had come from Abbotabad and would be on her way to Lahore after a stay of 15 minutes or so. She met another hostess, giving her a usual courteous smile before they entered the office together. There were a lot of people that morning because of Eid holidays. People came and went; the way people come and go. "Going is a little harder than coming," you had once told me.

A young girl looked apprehensive. Maybe she was travelling alone for the first time; she clutched her bag tightly and looked around, fearful that someone might steal her bag or, worse, grab her.

A young boy with a shopping bag looked restlessly for his bus. He had bought shoes, from Sage, the bag declared. His worn-out jeans were ambiguous and didn't reveal whether this was his youthful style or whether he couldn't afford new ones. A woman in uncomfortable stilettos tried to walk casually, but the agony in her face, contrasted with the shine of her shoes, told a different story. Her long brittle nails and cracked heels conjured an image of primitive caveman. It seemed obvious to an observer, though not to her, that at least half of the pain in her life right now was due to heels she wore. A middle-aged village woman in intricately patterned tea-pink print *shalwar qameez* and white *malmal ka dupatta* alighted from a Multan bus. She carried a small steel bucket of *desi ghee* or *sooji ka halwa,* or maybe *gur wala halwa*. She looked like a headstrong woman from Punjab; she was alone and seemed confident to travel, but now she looked anxious as her eyes roved, waiting for someone, or something. She carried the small bucket determinedly – her only possession. A chubby guy hurriedly paid his taxi driver and looked for his bus. Late? I became anxious, I didn't want him to miss it. At least he was trying to reach to honour the waiting.

After checking two, three buses, his movements slowed, a visible contentment lulled his steps. He had his bus. He felt relieved. To celebrate this moment, he lit a cigarette and released the pleasure in puffs. He leaned back on the wall staring at his destination bus. Another man, old-school with a nice English hair-cut, stood in camel-coloured corduroy pants and gave occasional glances to people sitting on the bench. He had an 80s-style suitcase. Taking some measured steps, he moved towards the tuck shop and slowly examined the displayed items. He eventually settled on a hot coffee, but suddenly looked disturbed, as though he felt my eyes watching him. He didn't like being observed. This memory reminds me how one fine day you kept looking at me with a curious gaze and complained that I ignored what you felt though you knew how deep I felt too. I remember how passionate you would become when I responded to your non-verbal

communication with words, “Don’t imagine me – it’s an aphrodisiac. When you wrap me in your thoughts, you become irresistible to me.”

I began looking at the terminal gate again. A family with five children entered the terminal, each child carrying a pack of crisps. The mother seemed tired. Perhaps she rose early to prepare for the journey while her husband and children stole a couple more hours of sleep. Behind them, another family with two boys. The woman in *abaya* seemed furious and admonished her husband, “Aamir! I cannot sit in such a dirty place,” she said, refusing to sit on the bench. She continued lambasting the filth of the station (she probably hadn’t seen the real bus stops and *dhaabay* there). They seemed to come from some Arab country. Maybe Dubai. Giving up and seeing she had little other choice, she sat on the bench. I could smell the strong fragrance of her perfume as if she had doused herself with the whole bottle. The man and sons seemed quite peaceful and ignored her concerns. They were busy watching a young couple arguing with the bus host about the alleged non-availability of seats. Perhaps they had been issued with wrong tickets. The host tried to assure them that the company was doing its upmost to accommodate them. A sweeper came to clean the floor. Passengers sitting nearby became incensed by the dust his broom whipped up. He said sorry to all, but what could he do? It’s all wrappers, juice packs and used tissues, thrown on the ground by educated people, civilized and cultured enough to travel by expensive bus service. He was there to clean the mess they had brought with them. He did it with a smile. As the weather was good, he did not mind. Most of the passengers preferred to sit outside as it was enjoyable out there. A newly-wed couple glided towards their bus with new suit cases. They were happy and so oblivious to the dirt, dust and rush around them. They looked forward to joyful days together. Oh, my own, this flashes across my mind: our beautiful happy days back in Islamabad when we first met. You were amused to discover that I could observe an abundance of love in the slightest movement of your eye, in thousandths of a second. I could connect. I

know why you loved me. You loved me because I observed. I noticed. I absorbed. I radiated. And because I was never enough.

* * * * * *

Sitting here in Egham Hills, I get lost in the voices of the people moving around that are mixed with the smell of flavored cigarettes, men's perfume and hamburgers. I close my eyes and picture the drive back to home from Margalla Hills. We discussed our busy lives that day. We hated weak and stringy relationships, and despite our happy lives I felt my life complicating; my schedule was always filled with work, you and goals. Sometimes I would hold my tears, trying not to cry when I was squeezed by all three of them. You knew it, you knew it all. I was all yours, yet not enough for you. We were silent after an argument and in that space of silence I started looking outside. I was lost in the past where we met. We met at a beautiful hill station just a short distance from concrete jungle of the capital. I was travelling to Islamabad lost in my thoughts. I saw a hand fading away in a distant view through the window, and with a jerk I came back to the life around. The bus had stopped. The passengers filed off the bus in search of a cup of tea at the sub-terminal in a hilly area with lush natural backdrop. I sat down to people watch in the garden of the restaurant next to a small cafeteria. The café speakers played a famous Hindi song in the most celestial female voice:

> *Aaj phir jeenay ki tamanna hai, Aaj phir marnay ka iraada hai*
> *(Today I want to live again; Today I again want to die)*

I was thinking years back – when I heard this song it did not inspire any significant thought. But that day it caught my attention as I recognised the intensified desire hidden in these lines recording a passion to live out one's own will and choice, to awaken in one's self a 'vibrational being.' While I was lost in my thoughts you came and sat next to me because that was the only chair left. It had been a long

time since we met each other during the university days. You casually appreciated the song. I was already preoccupied because of an issue back home. To relax my mind, I started a journalistic conversation with you about a girl who wanted to rise. The family wanted her to read great thoughts but not think, they wanted her to meet people but not speak, they wanted her to learn but not practice. Such culture makes you excel in hypocrisy. You were listening to me bemused. You said, "You don't talk much, right?" I felt alarmed by your insight; I had already observed that you could understand and that you knew I understood too. I was being examined the whole journey. I want you to do that again.

I didn't answer, and you continued telling me how that melodious song made you wonder about your life span on earth. There was an urge in your eyes, in your speech. You said, "A few years? And we continue to shrink that short life span through unnecessary restrictions, sometimes for our own selves and often for others. People don't realize how they deny someone their right to live life to its full. Can they imagine how much their soul is wounded when they deny them a full life…?" I picked up your thread and replied, "So, I left the world with restrictions behind…". You had already understood my struggle. You smiled and gave me a deep look. I kept on telling you that there were social things I did differently, I broke constructed, unnecessary traditions and restrictions to live life to its full, people stood in the way, threw stones, put hurdles in the way, but I had to bull my way through it, and once in a life I just wanted to go my way differently – for it would complete who I was. You knew it and you loved me for that. You wanted to see me complete. It was you who taught me that if we want our passions around us, sometimes we should do it the hard way for our heart goes with it.

I looked at a boy who sipped his last drop of tea and I thought one would never want to be dead while still alive, one would never

choose to put herself in an endless misery which has no compensation. Once lost you can survive, but what is left behind is so much less of you. And then you came nearer and offered your heart, "Come with me!" So, I did not wait passively for something to happen. I left behind the darkness of false fears and tried to live just for once, at least with you. I chose you, believing and not knowing that you had already chosen me. Together we realized "Life is Beautiful." The moment was seized, and I thought it would never tick back.

* * * * * *

A father in a waistcoat scolded his five-year-old son who insisted on buying snacks from the high-priced tuck shop, while his mother was busy scrutinising the dress of another woman who was busy texting. Announcements at the Daewoo Bus terminal informed of arrival and departure times, but the old loud speaker failed to make the message clear due to its gritty sound, so most people were hovering around their buses, none the wiser. Two young boys greeted each other warmly and looked surprised to be meeting. They walked towards the open area talking eagerly. A young mother carried a baby peacefully sleeping. The infant woke, and the mother put a Milk Pack in a small feeder and began feeding; the elderly woman with her seemed suspicious about it. Perhaps she was thinking it's not good for a baby to drink such thick and artificial milk, that it might cause terrible constipation and stomach cramps. But why would a young mother care? She might hate traditional approaches and remedy. Dissatisfied, the elderly woman turned her face aside. It's time to leave. Everyone with their luggage moved towards the bus. Kids having eaten their snacks left wrappers on the floor. A girl moving towards the bus stumbled upon an empty Milk Pack under her feet. While everyone moved, the sweeper came again to clean the mess the passengers had left behind. A half-smoked cigarette lay burning on the floor. I loved that small glow of a burning end as if a sigh was

being released from deep within the chest. Burning with the range of bright colours; red, orange, yellow, amber…Colors always fascinated me.

* * * * * *

At Egham bus stop my train of thoughts halts as I am distracted by the crying of a toddler who is unhappy and not willing to wait at the bus stop with his mother. I look at the woman wearing the red and black checkered blouse. Right now, I am wearing grey denim jeggings and a black and white checkered shirt. I resume my thoughts, "I know you like me this way: stylish, petite, well dressed, always up to date. You believe it's a blessing, a soft and warm feeling to know that your companion is beautiful. Oh, come on, why do I have to dress to validate your standards? Love me the way I am," I said while getting ready for the walk. You just smiled back at me with the most beautiful smile in the world, for you loved my expressions and spontaneity. I continued while walking through the woods, "Making up and grooming to look smart is not bad. I like it, but sometimes I want to materialize my abstract side, my feelings in some tangible, touchable form because we are human beings made of flesh. How long can we survive on soul? We need physical with us. Our body needs it. Why should I deprive it of what it is created for?" I was trying to come to the point. You stopped, I stopped. You looked at me. It was an inquisitive look that carried deep emotions. Before I could read it, you moved forward to the woods. You were never so quiet before.

I still remember the patio where I sat, the soft couch specially bought a day before, maybe you wanted to welcome me warmly, softly. I sat there in my beautiful skirt trying to cover my legs. Soft afternoon light touched my face as I looked outside the window observing the patio. I remember you were amazed to see me. You grew fonder of me. I smiled. You sat at my feet, and I felt like a deity. That is how you always made me feel, my true.

I still think of you sometimes in flesh with your warm body, no, a lot of times, and I wonder if you still can miss me, feel me. You are so far from my material world. I wonder if you still feel and miss the moments that you wanted to preserve; our rhythmic silence, my hair falling on the naked back. You always thought your chaotic soul was dangerous for me. You're no more here in this world but you're present. Now you're trying to remove your presence that wrapped around me, and so now it is getting easier to sit at the bus stop observing people and their lives, and to get lost in that. I am trying to fall in love with life. I know you wanted me to feel alive, but life is no life without you. I told myself each day that I would never give up on life if you were there.

I am recalling how I would interrupt your thoughts with my endless talk while planting a fork in the steak. You would look at me with a deep smile. I know you loved that interruption in our silences. You always told me you used to wake up feeling you hadn't slept, that when I came into your life I gave you back peaceful sleep like that of a child. Now it's I who suffer sleeplessness. I miss you a lot and now I am tired. I am tired of your permanent silence.

I see wind blowing tired leaves off the Maple tree. I see peak fall colors through the window. I have enjoyed the changing colors of leaves before they fall. I want to fall again, deeper. In my room, I sink into the cushion, and try to feel how your voice grew louder the more you spoke. You spoke gracefully and wrote beautifully. You loved gracefully. Who wouldn't fall in love with you?

Your enduring love has made me wonder if there could be any other way of living. For me, abstraction was fascinating, while you found concreteness captivating. And now that you are gone, I try to feel your absence as presence, but this is abstraction and I no longer am fascinated by abstractions. I miss you. I am addicted to your being with me. You understood me, and understanding is addictive. At

times, I hope that I will walk in through the door and you will turn with arms outstretched to let the fall begin.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

The Girl in Rags

By Rafiq Ebrahim

After a rigorous morning walk, my uncle and I were seated on the porch of the Army guest house in Murree, a picturesque mountainous resort in northern Pakistan. We had come here on a week's vacation, promised by my uncle if I got a first division in the Matriculation examination (equivalent to High School Diploma). I passed the exams, earning a distinction and he was fulfilling his word.

Though it was quite cold, I enjoyed the scenic beauty of winter in this place. The fragrance of roses and jasmine flowers filled the air. It was exhilarating, but I had never bargained for the strict military discipline of physical workouts which included twenty to twenty- five push-ups and a brisk walk in the mornings. I was only a skinny sixteen-year old boy at that time and my uncle, a sturdy well-built athletic guy, was not only a relative, but an army officer. I simply had to follow his orders.

Looking at my physique, he remarked, "Look here, boy. You must build your body. Keep doing the push-ups and eat more nutritious food. I want to see you as a tough young man." I lowered my gaze and nodded.

Besides physical workouts, I was also made to listen to his philosophies, most of them going in one ear and out the other, but a few sank in. He spoke a lot about persistence and told me that if I wanted to climb the ladder of success, I would have to persist and be patient. With persistence you make life yield to whatever price you ask. He went on and on, but my immature mind could take no more. I just kept on nodding.

My uncle was about to get up and go inside when a little girl of about twelve, dressed in rags, climbed the stairs and came to where we were seated. She was as beautiful as most other children of the northern areas in Pakistan are; her rosy cheeks were weather-beaten with little cracks here and there on her face, but the charm was captivating.

"Sahib (sir), I want fifty rupees," (it was equivalent to five dollars at that time, but now worth only fifty cents).

Uncle looked at her sternly, turned his face away and proceeded towards the glass entrance door.

"Sahib, I want fifty rupees," she repeated.

Uncle now stared in anger and waived her to be gone. She, however, stood rooted and said, "I want fifty rupees to buy a toy for my little brother."

Uncle was now in complete rage. He raised his hand as if to slap her but resisted.

"My little brother won't eat anything unless he gets that toy," said the girl.

"Go away!" he thundered and told me to come inside.

"Please don't go away," the girl pleaded. "You are the only guests here in this season. All other guest houses are vacant. As such, I can't get the amount from anyone else."

Uncle paid no heed to her, grabbed my hand and took me inside. My mother had given me one hundred rupees as a pocket money for the trip. I felt like giving the girl what she asked for, but I could not go against the wishes of my uncle.

A servant brought our breakfast in the living room, and after taking the meal, I sprawled on a sofa with a magazine. One hour later, I looked out. The girl was still there, leaning against a wall. I was surprised at her determination. Why she had to stand there, braving the cold wind, dressed only in skimpy attire, when she was not getting anything from us? I saw her looking up at the sky, as though pleading to God. A moment later, the clouds cleared up and the sun came out, bringing warmth in the air.

Uncle, too, must have seen her from the window of the bedroom, because he came out with his wallet in his hand. Opening the glass door, he went out. I saw him take out a fifty-rupee bill and give it to her.

I was amazed. What made him suddenly change his mind? He came in, inserted his wallet in his pocket and dropped on a chair.

The girl knocked at the door. "Now what?" yelled my uncle, opening the door. The girl had a hundred-rupee bill in her hand which she gave to my uncle. "Sahib, you dropped this accidently while giving me fifty rupees," she said and went away.

I got the answer. The girl was neither begging nor obstinate, but full of childhood honesty.

Uncle had said so many things to me, most of them didn't click, but I remembered what he said about persistence.

I saw persistence in action. It pays!

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Three Poems

By Waqas Ahmad Khwaja

1

It is the end of the world

Smoke everywhere
Grey and blue, rustling upwards
And thick fumes, darker, denser
Rising mournfully from a charred earth
And behind all this
A searing noise
The hoarse hiss of slowly dying fire

It is the end of the world
Her eyes smolder
The slightly parted lips thick with desire
Ignited by sooted smoke upon his tongue
The cinder stink on his breath

They have just made love
And they will again
Drunk on the burn of tobacco and cured weed
Among blackened, broken walls
On the floor of a bare room
Up a crumbling stairway
In the ruins of a collapsing mansion

Elsewhere, insubstantial words
Are made to bear
The rush of an ardor they cannot sustain
A notion and idea that will not light
And there is nothing at all that survives

Waqas Ahmad Khwaja

Only desperation
Of bodies knotted and tangled among ruins
Finding comfort in famished lips and smelly armpits
Dreaming with glazed eyes
In the fumes of a lighted joint
On the floor of an empty room

2

awakened by a hum

awakened by a hum
a voice, turquoise
like domes of shrines
and mausoleums

blue me in
or green me
if you will

my sepulcher
deepest violet
studded
with splintered sapphire

no sunshine laburnum
but coral twilight
bleeding across
a forehead smudged
by smoke

the sun
sinks into the cauldron
of a seething ocean
I cannot see

Waqas Ahmad Khwaja

3

Food, where it is needed

In the end, I would like to renounce life
But I don't know why I need to pull
My hair out by the roots to signify this
It is already sparse, and I would
Prefer rather to let whatever of it is left
Grow to the end in straggly strands, to not
Worry about grooming or washing it
Nor violence against the body either
The rest I have no issues with, and in
The forest or wilderness of scrub and bush
I would go about as I am, naked
As far as that is possible, for the hide
May remain a while with me still
Perhaps I will survive on berries
And young shoots, on leaf and thorn fruit
Perhaps I will let myself starve to death
Slowly—that would be best, so I may pass
Into the buzzing soil and insect life
Around me, without disturbing another's
Peace or comfort, but providing rather
Food where it is needed, and compost
It should not be difficult to make
An exit from the world of humans
When all is seen, and said, and done
To step into company far more
Multitudinous and diverse, to be
Many lives unselfconscious and free
Than to be enclosed by consciousness
Confined to the prison house of one

About the Author

Author of several books, including *Hold Your Breath* (poetry), The Onslaught Press, 2017, Dr. Waqas Ahmed Khwaja is Ellen Douglass Leyburn Professor of English at Agnes Scott College, United States

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Three Poems

By Shadab Zeest Hashmi

1

Ghazal for the Girl in the Photo

You became the girl with the piercing eyes when you found your country swiped by a stranger
In Kabul snow, a missile turned your mother into coal, your last tears were wiped by a stranger

A garden once hung from your name like the perfume of wild apple blossoms, phantom tulips
In the refugee camp, are you Sharbat Gula, *liquor of flowers*, or a number typed by a stranger?

Your eyes teach how cold flint ignites a flare, how a father's bones become an orphan's roof
History writes itself clear as cornea, your green glare—no whitewashing, no hype is stranger

Pity the empire that failed to decipher the disdain in your eyes, the hard stare of war
Pity the first world's pity, the promise of friends who show up as every type of stranger

Zeest, return to the arms of memory, the riddle of its minefields, velvet lullabies
To the lilt of this land, its lyrical storms, its bells and bagpipes, you're no stranger

2

Ghazal of the Superstitious Darling

You brush your long hair far from the oak, the tamarind's shadow, my superstitious darling
You spit and toss the tangled tresses to be safe from the jinn, and all that's vicious, darling

Bad luck vaulted across your obsidian threshold (a velvety cat romping with a rabbit foot),
tied itself into the knots of your trousseau rug which we'd thought auspicious, darling

What message was encrypted in a woolen rug by weaving desire into loss, flame into ash
This lovely handspun contention is no less than an extravagant hint, my judicious darling

Not the kohl dot on your neck, not the hand trained to wave thrice to avert your demons
Not *esfand*, not turmeric, kept you from being eaten— fate's maw is malicious, darling

You struck the enemies with shock and awe, smoked them out of their living rooms
They cast the evil eye just before execution, when you were least suspicious, darling

You ordered robes of fire-proof textiles, goblets of amethyst, amulets of bloodstone
Your superpower-needs for protection left the planet bankrupt, my ambitious darling

Look, the lovely tropical paisleys, the arctic-blue blossoms on your trousseau rug
No nuptial bliss as exquisite as art— the true magic carpet ride, my capricious darling

Zeest, come, unravel the day to the song of the koel, the magpie, the scent of wild moss
You've burnt the sage, sprinkled the salt— let them wish the harm they wish us, darling

(Note: The two Ghazals were previously published in Shadab Zeest Hashmi's poetry collection *Ghazal Cosmopolitan*. Jacar Press, 2017)

3

Ghalib lists thirty-eight varieties of mangoes in his letters

Because the sky's vote of ruin
in yellow dust storms
said seven times your life-size mirror will crack
show marks of infant deaths
in cinnabar ink:
Go bury each palpitation of hope

Said your haveli's thirsty walls
will devour years of rains
flood your bones and your wife's
and burst through your brother's
schizophrenia

The poet tosses and turns
but always wakes up with Adam's spark
of mischief and his gift for names

dandles a new divan on his knee
taunting loss
by naming the lust of monsoon
thirty-eight times:

Husan Aara "adorned with beauty"
Enviable beauty

Badami "Almond-like"
Shape of jinn eyes
shape of secret through spy glass

Neelam "Sapphire"
Verandah under the indulgent velvet
of the night-sky

Shadab Zeest Hashmi

Zafrani “Saffron-like”
Aubade of the beloved’s veil
draped over the window

Fajri “of the Morning Prayer”
Gold foil rising
Dew under the worshipper’s feet

The poet finds names of mangoes
in the folds between empires:

Bishop:
Man of God
on the chessboard of the great game

Bombay Green:
Green hills where “Chaughaan”
becomes “Polo”

Hamlet
who asks on every stage
what the poet asks

Monsoon moistens the grave
Ghalib inhabits
Mirror in the courtyard webbed with cracks
He pens:
Nazuk Pasand “Favoring the Delicate”
Turn of phrase
shard of diamond

(Note: This poem was previously published in INK NODE)

About the Author:

Shadab Zeest Hashmi is the author of *Kohl & Chalk* and *Baker of Tarifa*. Her poems have been translated into Spanish and Urdu, and published in several journals. She represents Pakistan on Universe: A United Nations of Poetry.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Two Poems

By Rizwan Akhtar

1

Broken-in

for Zulfqar Hyder

On ground broken doors were like unidentified corpses
clumsy bolts and gauze portals showed nail scratching
in the compound our car was untouched and a layer of dust
sat secure on its roof, no fingerprints except a cat's excrement.
On floor scattered clothes showed an epic quest of undressing
us for leaving our house to mere faith and that stretch of bond
hidden in photographs and my son's books and cupboard
ransacked, what we horded was taken away with a primitive
glee; men smelt each corner of the house, each room combed
where a legacy compelled us to huddle, this spectacle put us
in a war with invisible antagonists who took away my memory
cast in my mother's jewelry, her trinkets of pride she passed on
now gone to a no-place rattling with robbers' risqué laughter;
I make plans to compensate covering my daughter's face
with weak fingers the custodian of the home scattered
like many reflections thinking that our history is not in
the family graveyard but in this house exposed to silence.

2

Form

It was such a close thing to feel
your body unaware of its
beauty and the space
it occupies like sparrows
transgressing rooms and
passages carrying on their
feathers muddy bits of a dug-
up earth flitting mad waves
of recognition through
crevices under eyelashes, you
mutter something I can only
surmise such was the quick
departure elbowing
me to jot down to structure
and to frame your visit,
perilously leaning on me
while the noisy world
continues without cantos and
stanzas and freak meters
you bring the desire to write
in couplets and silence that
called you afterwards.

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 6 (2018)

Adam Khan-Durkhani:[1] A folk tale from Pakistan

Translated by Muhammad Sheeraz

About *Adam Khan-Durkhani*:

The mighty mountains, green grasslands and fresh waters of Swat proudly sing a song of pure love: the love tale of *Adam Khan-Durkhani*. This legend has lived for about five hundred years till today in the hearts of millions who sing it on festive occasions. It is a story about royal romance between a tribal prince and princess. Owing to the universality of the themes of love and romance, parallels have been drawn between *Adam Khan-Durkhani* and Shakespearean tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*.[2] The historical context, thematic universality, stylistic evolution, and content variations of the tale have been widely studied by various researchers. Most of the romance took place in the villages of Bazdarra Payan and Bazdarra Bala in Sawat. It ends, however, in the village of Misri Banda on the banks of the River Kabul.[3]

Travelling via oral traditions, this love tale first appeared in a poem by Saddar Khushhal Khan[4] in 1118 H.[5] While this version of the tale still enjoys great critical acclaim, the one composed by Sayyid Abu Ali Shah in the 19th century commands more popular acclaim. The first prose version of *Adam Khan-Durkhani* was written by a Pashto prose writer, Masood, in 1130 H.[6] Second

---

[1] This spelling has been adopted from: Khattak, K. K. (Ed.). (1991). Qissa Da Adam Khan Au Durkhani. Peshawar: Khalid Kitab Khana.
[2] Tair, M. N. (1981). Adam Durkhani: Yava serrana. Peshawar: Pashto Academy.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Abid, A. J. (2012). Pashto Zuban-o-Adab ki Mukhtasar Tareekh. Peshawar: University Publishers. "H" refers to the Hijri calendar.
[6] Rashteen, S. U. (n.d.). Da Pashto Nasar Hindara. Peshawar: University Book Agency.

prose version of the tale was written by Moulvie Ahmad of Tangi[7]. Publication of the first edition was arranged by a Christian missionary, Hues, in 1872. The second edition was published by Khalid Khattak in 1991.[8] Owing to its colloquial language, it is more popular than the earlier prose version. Several other versions of *Adam Khan-Durkhani* are also available in Pashto prose and poetry, including those by Shaukat Ullah Akbar, Munshi Ahmad Jan, Hamesh Khalil, Fakhr-ud-Din Sahibzada, Muhammad Gul Khan Noori, Akbar Shah Peshawari, Burhan, Mulla Nemat Ullah, Fida Mutahar and Mulla Saidan[9].

Adam Khan-Durkhani has also been translated into Urdu by various translators, including Sahibzada Hameed Ullah Pasheenvi[10], Farigh Bukhari and Raza Hamdani[11] and, more, recently by Shafi Aqeel.[12] An online version of an English translation has also been made available by Afaq Shariq.[13]

My translation of *Adam Khan-Durkhani* into English benefits from all the above-mentioned versions of the tale available in poetry and prose in Pashto and Urdu. The primary source text for this is, however, Shafi Aqeel's *Pakistan kee Lok Dastanain* (Folk Tales of Pakistan).

In 1971, the legendary tale was made into a film called "Adam Khan aw Durkhaniye" that stars Badar Munir and Yasmin.[14] It was also made into a play

---

[7] Abid, A. J. (2012).
[8] Abid, A. J. (2012).
[9] Ibid.
[10] Pasheenvi, S. H. U. (1970). Pashto ke Roomaan. Quetta: Published by the author.
[11] Bukhari, F. & Hamdani, R. (1955). Pathanoon ke Roomaan. Peshawar: Naya Maktaba.
[12] Aqeel, S. (2008). Pakistan ki Lok Dastanain. Islamabad: National Language Authority.
[13] See http://kaliwaltaki.blogspot.com/2013/07/amazing-love.html
[14] https://en.wiki2.org/wiki/Adam_Khan_Dukhaniye

called *Adam Khan Durkhani,* written by Arbab Abdul Wakeel. A dramatized version is also available in book form.[15]

Translation:

Adam Khan was the most handsome man in his village, Upper Bazdarra. He was the only son of a tribal chief, Hassan Khan, and thus wealthy and worry-free. His passion was playing the *rubab*,[16] the sweet melodies of which echoed all over Swat Valley. With masterful strokes of his fingers would magically spring mellow songs that could seize flying birds and move the still trees. Beautifully blending with music from the *rubab*, the words of his *tappas*[17] would turn the whole aura of the valley charmingly exotic. Adam became prince of all girls' hearts. His songs sweetened their dreams. Indifferent to them, Adam Khan remained drunk with love for his *rubab* and an imaginary beloved.

His parents were proud of him, but they knew he was grown up now. It was time they searched for the most beautiful woman who would bring joy to their home. A bride who would lighten up Adam Khan's heart and give them grandchildren. One day they sent for him and said: "Son, you have grown up so handsome. We are proud that this brave generation of tribal chiefs is going to continue through you. It is time for you to get married." Adam Khan gracefully declined their advice. He wanted to wait for his imaginary beloved who was the reason behind the creation of his songs and the pain and pleasure in them. His parents decided not to press him while he kept playing his *rubab* to the one he had neither seen nor known.

Lost in thought, daydreaming about his imaginary beloved, one day, Adam Khan overheard someone whispering in his house. He learnt that it was an old woman from Lower Bazdarra. She was trying to describe the beauty of the only daughter of the chief of her village, Taus Khan: "Malik Taus Khan's

---

[15] Wakeel, A. A. (2011). Da Pashto Drama Adam Khan Durkhani. Peshawar: Art Point.

[16] A musical instrument with great significance in Pashto music.

[17] *Tappa* is one of the oldest genres of poetry in Pashto. It consists of two unequal lines and reflects human feelings and emotions.

daughter, Durkhani, is one in millions. You look at her and you can't take your eyes off her. I have never seen such a beautiful girl in my life," Adam Khan heard.

He had heard words of praise for other girls, too, but this time it was different. The very name 'Durkhani' captured his mind. And his heart! It was as if this was the princess of his heart, the one for whom his melodies were waiting for, the one whom his *tappas* had always invoked. He sent for the old woman and interviewed her.

"Does she have a mole on her left cheek?"

"Yes," said a surprised old woman.

"Is there a scar on her forehead?"

"Yes, yes," the old woman said. "Have you seen her, Adam Khan?"

"No!" a jubilant Adam Khan said, "just heard about her from you."

The old woman smiled.

"In fact, this is how she looks like in my dreams. This is the face that stimulates my songs. This is the beauty that listens to them."

The old woman was suddenly sad: "Probably you don't know that she is engaged to Payo."

Adam Khan felt devastated, as if struck by lightning. As if Payo had stabbed him un-warned. He turned pale. For a while he was paralyzed, but like all brave men of his tribe he soon recovered. However, instead of shrugging away her thoughts, he decided to go after her. His *rubab* turned sadder. His *tappas* and songs were soaked in pain. His heart was heavy! For the first time in his life, he began singing war epics!

They say the fire of love is never one-sided. It burns in two hearts. Its flames burn on both sides.

The old woman returned to her village to break some lovely news to Durkhani. She described the power of Durkhani's beauty and Adam Khan's love by relating what she had heard from him.

"I have never set foot out of this *haveli*[18]. How does he know about the mole on my cheek and the scar on my forehead?" Durkhani was surprised.

Within moments the light glow of love in her heart turned into a bright flame of *ishq*[19]. She had already heard about the love songs from the most handsome youth in Upper Bazdarra. Now she learned who these songs were meant for.

Then and there arrived the gift of that pleasing pain in Durkhani's heart.

"Looks like I have seen him too. He has full lips. Right?"

"Right."

"Does he have large blue eyes?"

"Yes, yes."

"Is Adam Khan's right cheek dimpled?" Durkhani buried her finger into her right cheek and the old woman almost fainted.

Durkhani was beside herself. She could see Adam Khan playing his *rubab* to her, singing his *tappas*. Her eyes started day dreaming the one who had stolen her sleep. She began talking to him, from far away.

One day, as Adam Khan was stitching beads from his *tappas* onto the strings of his *rubab*, he saw the old woman approaching him. This messenger of love revealed that Durkhani was listening to his songs. She sees him in the flowers of her *haveli*. The old woman gave him a bouquet, saying: "This is a token of her love for you. She is soon coming to grace a wedding in your village.

---

[18] A mansion
[19] Deep passionate love

Coming out of her home for the first time since early childhood ... the rest is up to you."

The news gave added life to Adam Khan's love, a new tune to his songs, and a new edge to his tone. He was about to see the queen of his dreams. Time passed, slowly. The wait was endless. Finally, the day arrived. He was invited to play his *rubab* during the ceremony. There, they saw each other. Neither of them saw anyone else. She was exactly as he had imagined. Same youthfulness, same delicacy. His music had always maddened its listeners. All were convinced of its magic. Today his strings had attracted their real recipient. The tunes touched her ears and went on dancing, round and round. Adam Khan touched the strings and all hearts danced. The excitement of the listeners knew no bounds. He had played his masterpiece! Everyone thought he was celebrating the wedding. Only Durkhani knew he was celebrating her!

The wedding ceremony ended. All the guests left, one by one, including Durkhani. They took away with them all of Adam Khan's songs and their cheerfulness. He was left with heartache, loneliness. He had been burning the candle of her love for an eternity, but now, after having seen her, and seen her go away, he began burning himself. Within a few days, he looked pale. His parents thought he was sick. They called for *hakeems*[20]. But his cure lay with no physician. It lay with Durkhani, whom he was unable to reach. When his condition grew worse, two of his close friends, Mehru and Balu, planned to rescue him from this madness. They worked out a plan, and on a moonless night under the thick shawl of darkness, they transported him to his beloved. On the other side of the twin villages, Durkhani had the support of the old woman, the messenger of their love, and reached a prearranged point.

The restless souls met and the pain of being separated turned into pleasure. If it had been in his control, he would have hidden Durkhani in the strings of his *rubab*. If it had been in her control she would have hidden Adam Khan behind the mole of her left cheek. Both were now unable to bear further separation.

---

[20] Experts of traditional healing practices

"You are engaged. You will be someone else's bride. Won't all my songs die forever?" Adam whispered into her ear.

"Don't forget that, apart from a *rubab* you possess a gun. We are made for each other." Durkhani tapped his gun.

Now, after this meeting, it was Durkhani's turn to being lovesick. Her condition became a serious concern for her family. She was put on bed rest. She was glad her sickness had postponed her wedding. But she was wrong. The elders of the family suggested that marriage was the cure! She tried to convince her mother, her father, everyone! To no avail. She was put in the *doli*[21] and sent away to her in-laws. When they were celebrating her possession, she was lying in the *doli* as if it were her coffin. As she reached the house of her husband, her lovesickness turned into physical sickness. This upset her husband and his family. They tried to treat her disease. *Hakeems*, *Veds*[22], physicians were brought. All tried their best but were unable to diagnose the disease, not to speak of a cure. Eventually, they decided to send her back for a while to her parents' home. The change of climate might work wonders.

Adam Khan received constant updates on Durkhani's health. Her wedding, her sickness, her return; all these events added to his restlessness. He was becoming thinner and paler every passing day. His mother cried for him all the time. His father, Hassan Khan Malik, though a very strong tribal chief, was also unable to bear it anymore. By now he knew what was causing this, and was ready to take any steps to please his son. He wanted the opinion of his friend, Mirmai.

"Mirmai, you are my great friend and well-wisher. You know Adam Khan's condition. I can't bear to see him sick. You tell me what to do."

Mirmai ventured, "We have no choice but to bring Durkhani, by force, to Adam Khan." Hassan Khan Malik agreed with him, and so, one day, accompanied by armed men, they left silently for Lower Bazdarra to attack Taus Khan's house.

---

[21] *Doli* is a colorfully decorated palanquin used to transport the bride from her parents' house to her husband's house at the occasion of her wedding.
[22] A healer

Taus Khan was not ready for this onslaught. Yet, he fought bravely. Hassan Khan Malik had to defeat him. He had to save his son. The heir to his chiefdom. So he took no time to forcefully pick Durkhani up.

Durkhani's arrival let Adam Khan's breathe again. His sadness vanished. Smiles returned. His *rubab* came alive! His lips staged the dance of his *tappas*. Durkhani was also happy. Her rosy cheeks returned. Her love had reached its destination. She had found her Adam Khan. She would sit by his side and listen to songs of love. Her laughter would echo in the valley. Her heart was filled with joy.

Unaware of what was in store for them, they kept playing songs of love. Fate laughed at them as they happily planned their future. Taus Khan was furious at his defeat and disgrace. He was burning in the fire of revenge. Hassan Khan and his companions had dishonoured him. He was planning to take revenge on them. He knew it was impossible to defeat Hassan Khan on the battlefield, so he planned to trick him. Taus Khan had to buy the loyalty of Hassan's friend, Mirmai.

Mirmai was not a poor man, yet he was trapped by his greed for wealth and ready to deceive his faithful friend. He cunningly arranged the return of Durkhani, who still trusted him as Hassan Khan's friend. So Durkhani was once again in the prison of her father. Her health that was improving at Adam Khan's house began deteriorating again. She would curse Mirmai and cry all day in memory of Adam Khan. She was losing hope in life.

Adam Khan's condition was no better. The strings of his *rubab* had broken. He was insensitive to everything. His parents lost hope in him. Everyone on his side was without hope, except for his two friends: Mehru and Ballu. They had faith in Adam Khan's love, and their loyalty. They were certain that, one day, they would fix the broken strings of his *rubab* and bring songs back into Adam Khan's life. They devised a plan and convinced Adam Khan that it would surely work.

All three of them, Mehru, Ballu and Adam Khan, disguised themselves as beggars and *dervishes*[23] and quietly left their village for Durkhani's. They sat outside the village at Shaheed's shrine, and acted as *faqeers*[24]. The news of the arrival of three *faqeers* spread like wildfire in the village. People believed they were spiritually blessed *dervishes* as they had shunned worldly pleasures and preferred sitting at the shrine.

They attracted many people from the village, who came to ask for their blessings. People brought meals for them, and made offerings to them. They were also visited by the old woman, who was the messenger of love. Immediately, she recognized them and resumed her old role of being a confidante.

The old woman went to see Taus Khan one day and said: "Taus Khan you might have heard that some *faqeers* have arrived in our village. They are staying at Shaheed's Shrine. All the people believe that they are very pious and can pray to fulfil everyone's desires and cure all diseases."

"Yes. I too have heard this."

"Why don't you ask these dervishes to pray for Durkhani? Their prayers may bring health back to our child."

Concerned about Durkhani's health, Taus Khan agreed at once. The old woman hurriedly went to Durkhani and broke the great news.

"Congratulations, my daughter! Adam Khan will soon come to see you in the disguise of a *faqeer*. Be careful. No one should doubt it. If a rose falls from your hands this time, every single petal will scatter and you will gather nothing. Decorate this rose flower carefully in your hair and bathe your soul in its fragrance."

The old woman then went running to Shaheed Shrine and said to Adam Khan, "Hurry up and go with me to Durkhani's home. The closed door of your

---

[23] Sages
[24] A mendicant dervish

fate is about to open. The darkness of your fate is about to turn into the dawn of your life. Lady Luck awaits you!"

She brought Adam Khan, disguised as a dervish, to Taus Khan's home. Durkhani was lying on her bed. Her face gloomy. But as soon as she heard Adam Khan's heartbeat, her heart began pounding joyously. Adam Khan's eyes were on his love. She opened hers and stole a quick look at his face. She identified his eyes. A repressed tear from her left eye washed the mole on her cheek, and welcomed him. She had totally changed. Changed so much that he could not bear it. He fell down, senseless. His disguise could no longer work. Taus Khan stood nearby, watching it all. He was enraged to see that Adam Khan had again crept into his house. He stepped forward to behead him with a single flash of his sword. The old woman again jumped at this.

She stopped him and said, "Taus Khan, aren't you in your senses? Why are you inviting disgrace for your family? Do something so that the snake dies and the stick remains intact."

The old woman's piece of advice worked. Taus Khan stopped. Adam Khan came to his senses only to see Tause Khan enraged. The old woman sat there, frightened. Durkhani was crying.

"O you cunning man!" Taus Khan roared, "Your plans have failed. I wanted to kill you at once but I feel mercy for my daughter." Then he said, decidedly, "If you want to stay alive, go back to your village at once."

Adam Khan looked helplessly at Durkhani, half dead on her bed, and left Taus Khan's house. He returned to his friends at Shaheed's Shrine. They were scared to hear about all that had happened to him at Taus Khan's house. Now it was advisable for them to leave Lower Bazdarra at once. As Adam Khan left Durkhani's village, he carried his body but his soul was left behind, he carried his *rubab* but its songs were left behind.

Back in the village, he found himself living aimlessly. He was sick of the world, the distance, the meaningless wars between tribes. Nothing interested him

now. His eyes saw Durkhani. His breath called for Durkhani. He was heading towards death.

The only son of the tribal chief, Hassan Khan Malik, was dying. Hassan Khan Malik was worried about the future of his son, his family, his tribe. The future was Adam Khan. He must revive him. His death had to be avoided. Taus Khan had to be defeated. One possible solution to the situation could be his marriage. Hassan Khan Malik began a search for the prettiest girl for his son. His eyes spotted Gulnaar. She was the most beautiful of all girls of the tribe. As she sat among her friends it looked as if the moon was surrounded by stars. She stood out gracefully, even among a big crowd of young girls. Her eyes were like a deer's, her posture like a cane. When her hair moved in the air, shades of dark clouds descended down to kiss them. Her face bloomed like a rose. She walked like an excited peacock. Whoever saw her fell in love with her. She was in the dreams of all the young men of the tribe. She was their dream! Hassan Khan Malik hoped Adam Khan would forget Durkhani once he was in Gulnaar's company. This might bring him back to life. But he was mistaken. Adam Khan did not even look at her. His eyes were home to Durkhani, no one else could enter them. His heart was filled with pain for Durkhani, nothing could replace it.

Adam Khan's condition worsened every passing day. The love that had added meaning to his life was now slowly killing him. The only remedy was his union with Durkhani. That was impossible now, at least in this world. He was surrendering his life to fate. Every night he had to labour to fetch Durkhani to mind. By the time she came alive Adam Khan was out of breath. For a brief moment, his eyes would light up. A flicker, then all was dark again. As soon as her image vanished, Adam Khan's heart sank. His lungs struggled to catch their fill of oxygen.

One night, the world learned: "Adam Khan has died."

"Bazdarra's melody has died."

"Malik Hassan Khan's dreams have died."

"*Rubab's* strings have broken."

"Beads of Adam Khan's breath have scattered."

The news spread all over the village, and then the whole valley. The valley fell silent. Mountains were awed. Trees were still. Pastures were orphaned: loveless, soulless, rubabless.

Everyone praised the deceased, naming him the *shaheed*[25] of love. It seemed as if life ceased to be. Existence buried itself in silence.

On the other side of the valley, Durkhani was slowly breaking the strings of her breath in Adam Khan's name. She had dreams of eternal union with Adam Khan. Apart from these dreams, she found some solace on the shoulders of the old woman, the messenger of her love.

One day she had a dream. She was in a beautiful garden with her friends when she heard a tune on a *rubab*. She looked toward where the sound was coming from and joyfully spotted Adam Khan in a silver boat floating on a clear water lake. He was singing the song of their love. He spread out his arms to hug her. She swam through the waves and pulled herself into his arms. Then suddenly the lake turned into an ocean. An ocean that was stormy. The boat was jolted by the storm. It shook violently. Durkhani was scared. She gave a loud shriek, and woke up. The old woman was sitting next to her, consoling her. She hugged the old woman and asked, crying: "Mother, Adam Khan's boat has not sunk, has it?"

"Daughter, your Adam Khan is no more. He has given his life to your love." The old woman sobbed.

Scared, Durkhani shrieked and loudly called for him, "Adam Khan, where are you?" The whole village heard her calling Adam Khan. Everyone could see her heading his way!

With this she turned her face away from this world. The old woman shook her hands, attempting to wake her. But she had set out on a journey to where her Adam Khan was.

---

[25] A martyr

Storytellers say that people witnessed the reunion of these true lovers, as there were two dead bodies in Durkhani's grave. Durkhani and Adam Khan's shrine still exists in Swat Valley. People still pay tribute to these martyrs to love. It is also said that two trees grew from their grave. Their branches are in an eternal embrace. They say that people who make a *rubab* with wood from these trees become the best musicians, as their songs have the tunes of Adam Khan's *rubab*.

Acknowledgement: I thank Dr. Abdullah Jan Abid and Dr. Naila Sahar for their valuable discussions and feedback on earlier versions of this translation.