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Faiz Ahmed Faiz: The Worlding of a Lyric Poet[1]

By Amina Yaqin

In a recent article in the *Guardian* Ahdaf Souief discusses the intellectual role and the duty of the fiction writer in times of crisis with reference to the Arab Spring. She asks the question "Should the novel be political?" and her answer emphasises a humanist prose style from the writer that will inspire his or her readership, regardless of political affiliation, to participate in the retelling of the "narrative of the great world". At the heart of Souief's questioning is an affiliation to a worldly Europeanised cosmopolitan stance that recognises the novelist as a citizen of the globalised world. However she sees a disjuncture between this global citizenship and artistic representation in times of national crisis and she says, "[i]n Egypt we novelists all seem to have given up - for the moment – on fiction". Trying to work out how a novelist remains true to their role as a citizen of the world in such a period of trauma she finds an answer in the figure of the major Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (1941-2008) as an example of someone who remained true to his art and to the representation of truth, by moving away from his hometown of Haifa and distancing himself from the immediate place of crisis. In his address to the first Palestinian festival of literature in 2008 he expressed the problem of being a writer who "has to use the word to resist the military occupation, and

[1] This introduction has benefitted from a number presentations over the years, most recently at the World Literature: networks of circulation Conference at SOAS, as a research paper at McGill University, Punjab University, LUMS, Government College University and Oxford University. I am grateful to both students and faculty at all institutions who listened and made suggestions which have been invaluable. I am particularly grateful to the contributors of this volume for giving me a wonderful canvas to build on and indebted to the intellectual generosity of Geeta Patel who gave advice at crucial times. Some of the ideas expressed in this introduction have been developed from an earlier essay entitled, "Variants of Cultural Nationalism in Pakistan: a Reading of Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Jamil Jalibi, and Fahmida Riaz" that appeared in *Shared Idioms, Sacred Symbols: Process, Power, and the Articulation of identities in South Asia* (eds.) Kelly Pemberton and Michael Nijhawan in 2009.

has to resist – on behalf of the word – the danger of the banal and the repetitive". (Souief 2012: 4).

However, unwilling to leave the site of crisis in Cairo herself Souief opines that under such constrained circumstances the writer can't help but report the real world tragedies that they witness at such times and the aesthetics of fiction are less urgent. Souief's concerns have been a key point of consideration in world literature, in particular by diasporic intellectuals such as Erich Auerbach and Edward Said. She re-opens a conversation on literature as aesthetics and literature as politics that has often divided literary critical thinking.

The contemporary context of a revolutionary movement and the return to the real in literary representation is an ideal beginning for looking back to a revolutionary poet: Faiz Ahmad Faiz who also wrote during times of crisis from the 1940s to the early 1980s in India and Pakistan. As such Faiz is not a stranger to World literature but his poetic oeuvre is not canonical. The poet Naomi Lazard who met him at an international literary conference in Honolulu in 1979 first introduced him to an American readership. As a poet she compared him to Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) and Nazim Hikmet (1902-1963). He is popular for being a people's poet and his verse has often been appropriated for revolutionary political activism in Pakistan. In a preface to his second collection of poetry *Dast-e Saba* (The Wind's caress) he said: "It is incumbent upon the artist to not only observe but also to struggle. To observe the restless drops (of life) in his surroundings is dependent upon his vision, to show them to others, upon his artistic abilities and to enter into them, to change the flow (of life) is dependent on the depth of his desire and the passion in his blood". (Hashmi 2012: 4).

There is much to be found in common between the contemplations of Darwish and Faiz on literature, aesthetics and politics. On the question of activism, Souief's reflections as an Egyptian writer can be extended to the writer of Pakistani literature living in a constant state of crisis.–Does the national writer need always to respond to political crises or can he or she preserve an aesthetic that is untouched by the politics of the nation? Can the aesthetic form only be retrieved through a cosmopolitan model of citizenship and worldliness?

————To answer these questions it is necessary to locate the narrative of worldiness and cosmopolitan sensibility that contradicts the national in Faiz's poetry and a useful starting point is to consider the concept of world literature. There are many competing definitions of world literature ranging from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's coinage of the term "Weltliteratur" in 1827 as an active universal space of interaction and transaction of literatures and cultures

in a largely European context, to the more recent writings of Pascale Casanova and Franco Moretti with their respective analyses of the circulation of literary works in transnational and global contexts homing in on London and Paris as the centres of world literature (Casanova 2005; Moretti 2003). A key critique of world literature has been its bias toward a humanist universalism that includes a notable neglect of the global South and a privileging of European and North American contexts in alliance with Renaissance and Enlightenment models of classicism. Both the fields of World literature and Comparative literature incorporate a study of early modernity in European languages such as French and German embracing humanism and cosmopolitanism. Theo D'Haen points out that a noticeable shift in Comparative literary studies toward a non-European focus was first evident in the United States after World War II (D'Haen 2012). Out of this shifting model of Comparative literary studies emerged a new field of Postcolonial literary studies that offered as its point of departure a critique of Enlightenment thought and new ways of understanding colonial rule.

The Palestinian critic Edward Said straddles the two spectrums of Comparative and Postcolonial and his groundbreaking study *Orientalism* has been recognised as a foundational text for colonial and postcolonial studies. For this collection, his essay on "Secular Criticism" introducing his study on *The World, The text and The Critic* is particularly significant with its ruminations on the notion of culture and place where the latter is not just a reflection of the nation but also an expression of *"belonging to* or *in* a place, being *at home in a place*" (Said 1984: 8). In an article tracing the meaning of secular criticism in the work of Edward Said, Aamir Mufti has argued that Said's critical position does not put forward a "contentless cosmopolitanism" but "a secularism imbued with the experience of minority – a secularism for which *minority* is simply not the name of a crisis (Mufti 1998: 96)." In establishing this critical attitude Said turns to Auerbach's essay "Philologie der Weltliteratur" that underwrites the case for homelessness as a way toward worldliness. It is important to consider some of the reasons why Said appropriates Auerbach's philological approach that looks toward the authenticity of historical experience to determine meaning. On history Auerbach is of the opinion that it is "the science of reality that affects us most immediately, stirs us deeply and compels us most forcibly to a consciousness of ourselves. It is the only science in which human beings step before us in their totality" (Auerbach 1969: 4-5). Yet he is convinced modernity can only provide a world culture in which the history of materialism is dominant and standardised and spirituality downgraded and removed. For Auerbach a modern alienation from premodern sensibilities has meant a rejection of those

earlier multiple forms of social identification in favour of a universalising common subjectivity that is hollow. He argues for a return to the method of classical literary philology as a better way of understanding History than the modern "scientifically ordered and conducted research of reality" (1969: 4). As Said forcefully argues Auerbach's methodological approach while inclusive of earlier models of knowledge is itself borne out of a modern intellectual western European tradition of Enlightenment. Toward the end of the essay Auerbach makes clear that he is not after a national history but a world history: "our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation" (1969: 17). While he acknowledges that the philologist's most precious heritage is his national language he is quite certain that it is only when he is separated from that home he comes to recognise that "the spirit [*Geist*] is not national" (1969: 17).

Said analyses Auerbach's essay as a cultural artefact that reaffirms European hegemony. It nuances "belonging, association and community" from his position of exile in Istanbul prefacing his 1946 publication of *Mimesis* which is a successful venture of great cultural importance to European selfhood. Auerbach's cultural identification with Europe while in Turkey represents what Said defines as an affiliation to the homeliness of a place and the felt unhomeliness of the nation. Said identifies Islam as a key cultural signifier of difference for Auerbach's thesis which remains culturally untouched by his location in Istanbul. He articulates the otherness of Turkey, its significant link with Islam and the Orient and its "opposition to Europe" as an absent presence in Auerbach's study of *Mimesis*. Said does not reject the cultural identification that comes from religious identity, indeed Auerbach's own heritage as a Jew is a source of influence to his perception of the world. But in secular criticism Said does not overly dwell on religion and maps his notion of the secular. Having critiqued Auerbach at length he argues instead for a critical secular consciousness that is rooted in humanism. Aamir Mufti suggests that Said's usage of secular is "catachrestic, in the sense that Gayatri Spivak has given to the term – that is, it is a meaningful and productive *mis*use. It is an invitation to rethink, from within the postcolonial present, the narrative of progress that underlies the very notion of secularization" (Mufti 1998: 107). For Mufti, Said's inclusion of the minority question disturbs the experience of majority culture and takes him outside an elite consciousness. Said represents two contrasting visions of culture through Matthew Arnold's idea of the "best that is known and thought" and Michel Foucault's critique of culture as an "institutionalised process" to demonstrate the hegemonic power of majority culture that always overcomes the minority question, in this case Europe and Islamic cultures. A critical Saidian Postcolonial Studies approach

offers a point of departure to think through questions of individual and social transformation in Faiz.

This special issue thus maps a necessary dialogue between the fields of world literature, its liberal viewpoint and postcolonial perspectives looking retrospectively at a poet whose life and work echo those very nuances of home (nation) and homelessness (exile) complicated by a spiritual sense of belonging to the ideological nation of Pakistan – a separate homeland for the Muslims of India that came into being at the time of Indian independence from colonial rule. Decolonisation in the subcontinent is therefore marked by the haunting and violent spectre of Partition and the unfinished project of nationalism. Faiz's poem "Subh-e Azadi" August 1947 (Freedom's Dawn) captures the desolation of independence and Partition:

> Ye dagh dagh ujala, ye shab gazida sahar
> Vo intizar tha jis ka, ye vo sahar to nahin
> Ye vo sahar to nahin jis-ki arzu lekar
> Chale the yar ke mil jae gi kahin na kahin
> […].
> Jigar ki ag, nazar ki umang, dil ki jalan
> Kisi pe chara-e hijran ka kuch asar hi nahin
> Kahan se ai nigar-e saba, kidhar ko ga'i?
> …
> Najat-e-dida-o-dil ki ghari nahin a'I;
> Chale-chalo ke vo manzil abhi nahin a'i.
>
> This stain-covered daybreak, this night-bitten dawn
> This is not the dawn of which there was expectation;
> This is not that dawn with longing for which
> The friends set out, (convinced) that somewhere there would be met with,
> […]
> The fire of the liver, the tumult of the eye, burning of the heart, -
> There is no effect on any of them of (this) cure for separation.
> Whence came that darling of a morning breeze, whither has it gone?
> …
> The hour of the deliverance of eye and heart has not arrived.
> Come, come on, for that goal has still not arrived.
> (tr. Kiernan 1971: 122,127)

It is a lyrical rendition that represents the aesthetic mood of an unrequited love and shies away from the violence and dehumanisation of Partition. Crucially

the journey to freedom remains unfinished. Edward Said understood Faiz as someone whose poetry bridged the worlds of the literary elite and the common man. He marks as his major achievement the creation of "a contrapuntal rhetoric and rhythm" by using classical forms such as the qasida, ghazal, masnavi, qita dramatically changing them for his readers, and acknowledges him as "one of the greatest poets of this century" (Edward Said quoted in Agha Shahid Ali 1991: xiii). Said who had been introduced to Faiz by the scholar and activist Eqbal Ahmed (1934-1999) met him as a poet in exile in Beirut. Said's reading of Palestinian nationalism as a permanent state of exile found a comparative counterpart in the persona of Faiz the poet living in exile from his home country – Pakistan. Taking his cue from Said, Aamir Mufti argues for Faiz as a representative poet of Muslim minoritization in the Indian subcontinent and his love lyrics as an example of "a self in partition". Reading the subjectivity of Faiz through Theodor Adorno's critique of lyric poetry's relationship to society Mufti makes the case that "the social truth embodied in Faiz's lyric poetry is that the emergence of the (modern) self is also its self-division" (Mufti 2007: 212). Mufti rereads Faiz as part of his critique on Enlightenment identifying him as a poet of "a late postcolonial modernity" who "pushes the terms of identity and selfhood to their limits, to the point where they turn upon themselves and reveal the partial nature of postcolonial 'national' experience" (2007: 243). Mufti's reading identifies the Indian Muslim as a permanent minority outcaste from the majoritarian politics of Indian nationalism. He points out that there is a double bind because "Before 'Muslim' could become 'minority', the majority of the Muslims had to be turned into non-Indians" or Pakistanis denying them any stake in the nation. (2007:118)

Mufti offers a compelling reading of Faiz Ahmad Faiz as a representative poet of an unrecognised Indian minority in an essay later developed into a book chapter for *Enlightenment in the Colony* although the existence of the state of Pakistan makes it a difficult position to sustain. An underexplored arena in Mufti's argument is the conflicted space occupied by Faiz's poetry vis-à-vis his public persona in Pakistan. He is particularly interested in a justification of Faiz's appropriation of the classical lyric form. Mufti sees the ghazal as being "inextricably linked with the emergence and development of national culture" and reads Faiz's deployment of the form as a marker of a passage from a specific literary history of Urdu into a "critical space" for the discussion of "Indian literary modernity as a whole" (2007: 218). Writing in Urdu he also inhabits the space of the post-partitioned national sphere in Pakistan, the memory of an ethnic community's mother tongue heritage and the ideology of a new Muslim state. Belonging to what has been described as

a radical cultural movement that was represented mainly by the All India Progressive Writers Association established in 1936 Faiz was deeply invested in the anti-colonial struggle but he also had a very humanist response to the war in Europe and was ultimately unprepared for what Frantz Fanon has referred to in another context as "the pitfalls of national consciousness" when independence finally arrived in 1947 for Indians at the price of a bloody Partition (Gopal 2005).[2] In *Enlightement in the Colony*, Mufti analyses Faiz's public debates on national culture in the 1960s in Pakistan as an example of the "impossible narratives of the nation" where the historical and geographical come head to head and the Muslim and Pakistani narratives are the heritage of "an arbitrary colonial decision". His central theme of Muslim identity as a discourse of minoritisation in an Indian secular critical consciousness is more successfully captured in his close readings of Faiz's lyrics than the foray into the essays on Pakistani culture in which Mufti can only see the "illusion of a national identity". That national identity is an illusion is a foregone conclusion for an ideological state but it is significant when organic intellectuals such as Faiz begin to make that illusion a real occurrence. This is something that Mufti leaves out of his discussion as it takes him away from his central thesis of Muslim minoritisation. In this issue, my essay on "Cosmopolitan ventures in the times of crisis: a postcolonial reading of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's "Dasht-e tanhai" and Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers"* offers a point of departure with a critical intertextual reading of a lyric poet and a diasporic writer. I argue that cosmopolitanism is the glue that binds the writer and the poet and is imbued with a worldliness that is borne out of times of crisis that cripple the national. Pakistan remains a real and imagined central concern in this identification of new value systems.

In his lectures on culture Faiz reviews the etymology of the word culture and tries to find its equivalent in Urdu. In his opinion, at the time of his writing, the word *saqafat* used in Urdu to refer to the English culture is itself a borrowing from Arabic. Faiz defines *tehzib* as a new word for culture in tandem with the modern English word. He also makes the point to dissociate *tehzib* from the older word of civilisation. For him, civilisation is a limited and closed word as it is very exclusive in its meaning whereas culture has equitable open-ended possibilities of plural and diverse societies. Faiz outlines three inter-dependent characteristics of culture, which he says come into focus in every nation: namely personal character, the arts, and society. He reasons that in Pakistan the value system is underwritten by religion and that

[2] See the introduction.

is the real foundation of Pakistani culture. But he finds it problematic to interchange Pakistani *tehzib* for Islamic *tehzib* because Islam extends beyond the territorial boundaries of the nation, while national culture is circumscribed by the geopolitical nation. According to his understanding, the equation of Pakistani *qaumiat* equals *Islamiat* and *Muslimiat* (Faiz 1988: 28). This *qaumiat* defines the morality and etiquette of Pakistan as advocated by Islam and is not a differential or oppositional energy. It connects Pakistan to other Muslim nations in the Middle East and takes on aspects of Arab "*wataniyya"* "which calls for political unity of all the Arab peoples."[3] His difficulty lies in outlining a shared or common memory of the past in Pakistan. According to him, if Islamic countries such as Iran, Turan, Sudan and Egypt can have their indigenous culture as well as their *qaumi* culture of Islam then Pakistan too needs to define its Pakistaniat. He is adamant that Islamic culture cannot be made into national culture because the latter needs to account for everyday life, regional geography and history. As a solution, he proposes an ambiguous compromise which combines general Islamic religious nationalism with specific territorial affiliations, such as the geographic rootedness of the ancient Indus valley civilisation, as well as a materialist understanding of the structures of society. He also wrote an English poem entitled "The Unicorn and the Dancing Girl" which reiterates the sense of cultural identity as primoridial and tied to the historical roots of the territorial nation:

> In Pakistan as elsewhere in Asia
> And Africa, Time Past is Time Present
> And cities rose on the plains
> Attracting an unending caravan
> Of human feet marching in and out of timeless mountains
> Parthians, Bactrians, Huns and Scythians
> Arabs, Tatars, Turks and White Men […].
> (Hashmi 2012: 61)

His vision of a cultural nationalism for Pakistan is fraught with complicated trajectories of belonging that seek to make the secular possible for a religious community that is continually and negatively compared to its successful secular neighbour India. He affiliates with Jinnah's model of secularism and the necessity of a separate nation for Muslims in which they have the status of first class citizens. Bringing together the Indic and the Islamic, the modern

[3] *Encyclopaedia of the Modern Middle East*,Volume 3, MacMillan, New York, 1996, p1322.

and the pre-modern he formulates a plural cosmopolitan subjectivity that does not conform to the singularity of the modern nation-state. He re-opens the debate on *qaumi* culture as a spokesman for the state and offers a liberal understanding of it. Faiz's critical secular thought appears to be informed by Matthew Arnold's nineteenth century idea of "sweetness and light […]. our *best self*" (Arnold 1960: 72, 95).

On the theme of a cultural national language, Faiz debunks the outlook which traces Urdu's origins from India's southern region of the Deccan to its northern homeland of Delhi. He prefers to accord recognition to Urdu in Pakistan as a reflection of an organic everyday spoken language rather than the language of the former courts of Delhi. He aligns his egalitarian principles to a particular pre-modern representation of a historical harmonious Sufi Islam in the subcontinent that bridged cultures. With regards to the conflict between East and West Pakistan over the issue of national language he remained noncommittal and argued for a resolution devoid of emotion and based on logic. On the question of combining Urdu and Bengali to make a third language he opined that such projects if considered viable should be carried out using scientific research methods (Faiz 1988: 48). His emphasis on reason and progress echoes an Enlightenment sensibility that is at odds with his fierce rejection of the colonial occupation of territory. For him Urdu is an essential language for Pakistani nationalism because it offers a canvas, independent from the emotive nature of regional languages, for the construction of new stories of the nation. Thus, Faiz constructs a mythical stance about the nation and its national language.

In this volume a selection of translated verses of Faiz by the Kashmiri American poet Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001) have been reproduced on the topic of Bangladesh and the secession of East Pakistan from West Pakistan in 1971. Faiz in this trilogy of poems represents the separation of 1971 as a violent and bloody parting that poisoned the soul of the nation. The sea of blood that flowed was a permanent loss to be mourned with the recognition that no apology however heartfelt would be enough to repair the division between friends who turned into enemies and strangers. Agha Shahid Ali in the introduction, to his collected translations from Faiz entitled *The Rebel's Silhouette,* speaks of his memory of Faiz being intertwined with that of the light classical singer Begum Akhtar who sang his ghazals and in one of his poems he recalls Faiz's lyric response through the immortal voice of the songstress who was listened to across the divide:

In New Delhi one night
As Begum Akhtar sang, the lights went out.

It was perhaps during the Bangladesh war,
Perhaps there were sirens,
Air-raid warnings
But the audience, hushed did not stir
The microphone was dead, but she went on
Singing and her voice
Was coming from far
Away, as if she had already died.
(Lines 59-68, *Nostalgist's Map*)

It is worth noting that Faiz was introduced to readers in Australia and New Zealand by the anthropologist Estelle Dryland. She was drawn to Faiz on a humanist basis, in particular, the universal play on human emotions in his work. This particular quality to his writing came from a variety of influences including the Progressive Writers Movement of the 1930s. Of his active participation as a Progressive he lays claims to the controversies surrounding the Association commenting that: "At the time, there were two groups among writers: those who believed in literature for the sake of literature and those who maintained that literature had a higher social purpose. Their debates were fiery and I was never far from the scene of action" (Hasan 1988: xxvii). Faiz excelled in interweaving the classical ornamental style of an aristocratic stylised Urdu rhyme and metre with the modern functionality of social realism. He utilised the classical imagery of the lover and the beloved, the literal and metaphorical desolate desert of their separation, and the hopeful metaphor of the morning breeze, to articulate a new expression. There is no better example of this than the *nazm* which launched his career as a poet, *Mujh se pehli si muhabbat mere mahbub na mang* (My Beloved do not ask from me a love like before).

Do not ask from me, my beloved, love like that former one.
I had believed that you are, therefore life is shining;
There is anguish over you, so what wrangle is there over the sorrow of the age?
[…]
There are other sufferings of the time (world) besides love,
There are other pleasures besides the pleasures of union.
The dark beastly spell of countless centuries.
Woven into silk and satin and brocade, -
Bodies sold everywhere in alley and market,
Smeared with dust, washed in blood,

Bodies that have emerged from the ovens of diseases,
Pus flowing from rotten ulcers
[…]
Do not ask from me, my beloved, love like that former one.
(tr. Kiernan 1971: 66-7)

This poem was significant as it changed the perception and representation of the classical beloved for twentieth-century poets. In its refrain it conveyed a farewell to the traditional theme of unrequited love in Urdu poetry and introduced a new self and subjectivity that was to be the driving force for future developments in poetic thought. The real was to be the subject of modern poetry with its dehumanisation of the body and soul.

Faiz was that rare example of a Progressive poet whose poetry was not accused of sloganeering, a label that became attached to Progressive writers for neglecting style over content in their writing (Alam 1983: 78). In this volume Geeta Patel and A Sean Pue consider the divide between Progressive realism and a modernist aesthetic sensibility in Faiz's verse. Sean Pue's essay on "Modernism and Progressivism in Urdu Poetry" looks at the division of *adab bara-e adab* (literature for the sake of art) and *adab bara-e zindagi* (literature for the sake of life)" amongst the Urdu literati. He presents a case study of Faiz Ahmad Faiz and N M Rashed as two poets of the same generation who on the face of it took opposite literary directions. Pue argues that the distinction doesn't hold when measured against the work of either poet but it is retained in the manner that both poets approached their writing and the way in which they perceived each other. If Faiz was alive he may claim "I am a poet with a particular perspective on reality" like his Palestinian counterpart Mahmoud Darwish (Darwish quoted by Muhawi, 1995, Al Qods Al-Arabi, 17 November 1993.)

Geeta Patel's essay "Rumination on Chronopoetics and the Political Subject: Miraji Reads Faiz Ahmed Faiz's Lyric" offers a compelling critique of the division between the *adab bara-e adab* (aesthetes) and *adab bara-e zindagi* (realist) schools of thought and an innovative theoretical understanding of how time and space operate in Faiz's well loved poem "Bol". Putting together romantic realism and what she refers to as fleshed politics, Patel traces the poetics of Faiz's lyrical verse as discussed in a critical essay by Miraji arguing that his reading recognised the creation of a new political subject. Patel builds on Miraji's allegorical reading of Faiz's poem deepening the discussion on technology, labor and temporality with close references to Heidegger and Benjamin.

As a Progressive Faiz was inclined toward themes of realism and modernity but he was also firmly embedded in his poetic practice as a traditionalist often appropriating the ghazal form for his verse. His prose on the other hand was directly implicated by his role as the Chief Editor of a national daily. After all the print media would have a role to play in bringing together the imagined community after the crisis of Partition. Roland Barthes' has suggested that modern poetic language is resistant to myth in contrast to the causality of newspaper journalism which easily lends itself to mythmaking. He says, "Contemporary poetry is *a regressive semiological system"* (Barthes 2000: 133). While myth attaches itself to a system of signification, poetry does otherwise, it seeks to be an "anti-language" outside the realm of reason and logic. Therefore in modern poetry meaning is not a tangible entity which connects itself directly to the sign, the signifier or the signified. It conveys itself as an abstraction and it is this quality which separates it from the factual, value-based understanding that is myth. Faiz's style as a poet is deeply rooted in the genre of the love lyric but the themes of his poetry are often modern. His career trajectory is that of a major poet, a left intellectual, an activist, a nationalist and a cosmopolitan. While his poetic voice may at times transcend the semiotic structures of language his lectures on culture remain embedded in the myth of nationalism and can be seen as tied to a "mythmaking" that was part of his journalistic career. In order to understand the complexity of his individual subjectivity it is useful to briefly summarise his career.

Born in Sialkot in 1911, Faiz received his primary education at Murray College, Sialkot and completed his higher education at Government College, Lahore in Arabic and English literature in pre-Partition Punjab. His ancestory was not aristocratic but his father had served the royal family of Afghanistan and travelled to England to study, to train as a lawyer at Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn in London. In 1935 he joined the staff at Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Amritsar where he taught English. In 1940 he secured a lectureship in English at Hailey College, Lahore. His first collection of poems entitled, *Naqsh-e faryadi* (The protestor's sketch) was published in 1941. In 1942 he joined the British Indian war publicity department in Delhi as captain, and was made a lieutenant colonel in 1944. "No one could have been made less for the army than Faiz, but he felt that in the struggle against Nazism and Fascism, if a uniform had to be worn then a uniform should be worn" (Hasan 1988: xv). He returned to Lahore in 1947 and began a career in journalism as editor of the new national daily *Pakistan Times* and its sister publication in Urdu, *Imroze*.

He was a trade union activist and firmly aligned to the political left. Because of his radical politics he often found himself under constant surveillance by different military regimes, Ayub in the 1960s and Zia in the 1980s. In this issue, the collection of letters from "Letters To Alys" edited by Salima Hashmi give us an insight into the personal life of Faiz, his jovial personality, easy intimacy with his family and the things that moved him and made him laugh. The letters cover mainly the 1950s with a brief span of the 1940s in pre-Partition India, Pakistan in 1972 and his time in Beirut during the Israeli invasion of 1982. In one of his letters he distinguishes between pain and unhappiness as external and internal to the self. Pain has to be suffered but unhappiness can be overcome. Written as words of advice for his daughter these lines give an insight of the inner personal journey through which Faiz reconciled himself to the torn halves of Partition and independence. The letters contain a sense of a travelling body that is never at home in one place, Faiz is often not at home with his family but is more likely to be found visiting them or traversing different parts of the country. Some of his places of travel and exile are not self-chosen, such as Hyderabad jail, but others are self-selected such as the trip to Ziarat and his time in Beirut.

In Pakistan, Faiz with his leftist stance and revolutionary Progressive poetry along with other literary and political activists of the All Pakistan Progressive Writers Association including Sajjad Zaheer was a troublesome figurehead for the post Partition Pakistani state. In a recent book Saadia Toor has argued that in the immediate period after independence East Pakistan was seen as a threat to the corporate interests of the Pakistani establishment and it is through the exchanges between Progressive writers such as Mohammad Hasan Askari and M.D Taseer that she interrogates the rift between the idea of the nation (qaum) as it was being propagated by nationalists and its awam (people) by the Progressives (Toor 2011). The Left came under increasing surveillance and in 1951 Faiz along with army officers and Sajjad Zaheer (founder member of the Progressive Writer's Association) was arrested on a conspiracy charge for his alleged involvement to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. (Dryland 1993: 57-81). This case known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy led to prison sentences for Faiz and Zaheer and marked the beginning of the end of the Progressives Writers Association which was formally closed down in 1954 (Toor 2011: 77). Field Marshal Ayub Khan effectively squeezed out the Communist party in Pakistan and initiated a state project to cleanse the influence of the Progressives in Pakistan. According to Toor this task was made easier by the cooperation of prominent "liberal intellectuals and writers such as M D Taseer and M H Askari [who] consciously aided and abetted this project" (Toor 2011: 78) This

collusion of liberal Progressive intellectuals with state led intervention altered the literary map of Urdu literature in years to come. Faiz continued to write, publishing *Dast-e Saba* and *Zinda nama* (Prison manuscript) in 1952 and 1956, respectively. He spent four years in prison from 1951-1955 and again after Ayub's military coup in 1958 for six months.

Faiz's next big moment was to come under what Hamzi Alavi has referred to as the bureaucratic-military oligarchy of the Pakistan People's Party led by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto openly patronised the arts, he appointed Faiz as the founder and Director of the Pakistan National Council of Arts in 1971 based in Islamabad. Faiz advised the Pakistani government on cultural policy and represented Pakistan in International conferences. He also initiated a Lok Virsa (Folk Heritage) chapter. He resumed his official position as a well-known figure on national radio and television influencing a new generation of broadcasters, writers, intellectuals and artists. He now had an opportunity to consolidate the conversations he had begun on Pakistani culture in the 1950s. In 1977 General Zia-ul Haq came into power and Pakistan reverted to military rule. Faiz resigned from his position, and exiled himself to Beirut in 1978. He chose to live there because he had been offered the role of editor-in-chief of *Lotus*, an Afro-Asian Writers' journal. Whilst in Beirut he became passionately involved in the Palestinian struggle for freedom. After the Israeli attack on Beirut in 1982 Faiz departed a war ravaged Beirut amid fears for his safety and died in 1984 in Lahore. (Dryland 1993; Hasan 1988). Whilst based in Beirut Faiz travelled frequently to London and Moscow. In this volume, Iftikhar Arif's panoramic essay in Urdu highlights some of the major poems of Faiz's poetic career and particularly ones that were written in London such as "Koi 'ashiq apni mahbuba se" (A lover to his beloved) and "wa yaqba wajuh rabbika" more popularly recognised from its first line "Ham dekhen gai". The title comes from Sura-e Rahman (Quran 55:26,27). This poem was written in the wake of the Iranian revolution and adopted a people's voice. Arif argues that Faiz's poetry has elements of the egalitarian tradition of French republicanism. It can be further suggested that the borrowing of the Arabic in "wa yaqba wajuh rabbika" is not just a linguistic device in his poetry but that it conveys an attachment to the sacred and firmly ties it to the political. Faiz's ways of loving as a poet are constantly evolving and are also reflective of absorbed influences from the places he inhabited in exile. His poem "A Song for the Warriors of Palestine" is a tribute to his affiliation with the cause of Palestinian independence and his personal friendship with a fellow poet in exile, Mahmoud Darwish:

We will win

One day, in truth, we will win
At last, one day we will win
What do we fear the onslaught of enemies
Every warrior stands straight and tall
(tr. Hashmi 2012: 73)

Faiz who was equally at home in Punjabi embraced Urdu as a global language reflective of multilingual cultures and in his practice imbued it with the spirit of a cosmopolitan world literature, a quality that had defined the work of his predecessors. He was also a translator forming international allegiances with the Left beyond his immediate national location of Pakistan looking toward the Soviet Union. In 1962 he was awarded the Lenin Peace prize. As such Faiz is not a stranger to the World literature stage but his presence has not been as widely felt as those with whom he has been compared, Pablo Neruda and Nazim Hikmet.

In this volume Christina Oesterheld's essay on "Faiz's internationalist poetics: selected translations and free verses" explores his trajectory of travel and contact with English poetry as a common feature shared with late nineteenth century poets as well as contemporaries such as N. M. Rashed, Saqi Faruqi and others. Oesterheld turns her focus to that part of Faiz's travels which brought him into contact with delegations from the Soviet Union and came out of his connection with the Progressive Writers Association of the 1930s. She discusses his affiliation with internationalism as a premise of communist ideology and the co-option of literature for the purposes of political mobilisation of the masses. A point of departure suggested by Oesterheld is the close bond that developed as a result of this internationalism between established and well-received poets such as Nazim Hikmet and Pablo Neruda. Her paper explores the aesthetic implications of Faiz's exposure to fellow writers in the Soviet Union as well as in the wider world that he travelled. She traces a fascinating journey in his *Mah-o sal-i asnai* (Months and years of acquaintance) from Moscow to Turkey drawing out the regard that Faiz held for Nazim Hikmet. She offers close readings of his translations of Russian poems and confirms that although there is no known method behind his translations he often relied on interpreters or the authors to convey a sense of the original to him in Urdu or English before he embarked on his own translation. Referring to the modern poetic forms of free verse and the paband nazm deployed by Faiz she offers a different and unique understanding of his poetic style. Her identification of the period of the 1960s and 1970s as key for Faiz links his later writing to a very purposeful nature. Her close readings of the free verse poems' present a view of Faiz that is

collective, political and reformist in contrast to the nebulous quality of his ghazals. She also traces a reverse Pan-Islamism in Faiz's work as he dedicated himself to the Palestinian cause particularly during his period of exile in Beirut and his editorship of *Lotus*. Her paper argues that the poet of a late modernity is unable to preserve the aesthetic qualities of his verse in the face of a brutal postcolonial condition of an ongoing violent struggle for freedom from colonial heritage.

In contrast to Oesterheld's look toward the East, Laurel Steele's essay on "Finding Faiz at Berkeley: Room for a celebration" evocatively details how the study of Faiz has travelled institutionally in the West. Her essay gives a rich intertextual reading of Faiz offering a critique of a centenary celebration at Berkeley and a reflective contemplation of the deeper resonances that mark such big occasions. The Faiz celebration at Berkeley launched both an Urdu and Pakistan studies initiative, something that is lauded by the author but is also a cause for concern with regards to long term viability for students because of the politically fraught history between the two nations and the bugbear that is Homeland Security controlled by the US Department of State which circumscribes the way we live modern lives in a global world. Steele usefully compares the output of Urdu scholars and the study of Pakistan at Berkeley with that done at Wisconsin, Chicago, Texas and confirms that there are fewer graduate dissertations on the region coming out of Berkeley posing a key question of relevance for the new initiative. She finds that the library in Berkeley is well resourced for scholars who wish to undertake new initiatives in the field of Urdu studies and Faiz has a formidable reputation amongst Urdu intellectuals. What we miss, notes Steele, is a biography that captures the heart and soul of Faiz in English making him accessible to a world readership. Appreciating the worldliness of Faiz as a writer she traces references to his work in the writings of acclaimed English and Urdu writers such as Salman Rushdie, Qurratul Ain Hyder and Ammer Hussein.

Aamer Hussein's essay "The Colour of My Heart: on Reading Faiz" gives a rich autobiographical account of how he lost and found the verse of Faiz in his intellectual and territorial journey from Pakistan to England, and from adolescence to adult life. Hussein's essay begins with memories of an array of well-known verses that have been immortalised in sung renditions by singers of trained gharanas as well as modern appropriations. Over time he develops a fondness for and a closeness to the verses that he grew up with. The essay ends on the memory of an encounter with the poet in London. Hussein's account gives witness to the significant role music and classically trained singers in Pakistan have given to Faiz, including verses sung by the Queen of ghazal Farida Khanum (b.1935) and Malika-e tarannum (The Queen

of Melody) late Madame Noorjehan (1926-2000). Noorjehan had a high regard for Faiz and in an interview commented that she would have given up singing if he had asked her to, so moved was she by his verse.[4] Faiz's poems, lovingly sung by iconic songstresses of his time continue to inspire a new generation of singers. As an unofficial poet laureate of Pakistan Faiz won the heart of millions with his deeply popular lyrical verse, and remains a figurehead for the present generation of Urdu poets (Coppola 1975; Kiernan 1971: 21-44; Sadiq 1995: 548-50; Zaidi 1993: 362-55). Hussein's essay registers this key detail about the attraction of Faiz for the global and the local listener and captures the alienation of the strange and the comfort of the familiar in Faiz's poetry. As an English writer he finds himself growing closer to Faiz's verse as he grows older.

Hussein's essay is about the rediscovery of Faiz in a metropolitan location. The worlding of Faiz Ahmad Faiz's poetry has taken many forms beyond its original composition and classical renditions in music. For instance the 1994 filmic adaptation of Anita Desai's *In Custody*, directed by Ismail Merchant, narrates the story of Urdu as a dying language in India. Retold in Urdu it draws on the stereotype of an Urdu poet marked by brilliance and with a taste for excess. Building on the novel's minor mention of Faiz the film deploys selected verses by Faiz Ahmad Faiz to enhance the lyrical theme of nostalgia and loss for a filmic audience. In this special issue Shahrukh Husain shares a personal view on translating Faiz's verse for the Merchant-Ivory film *Muhafiz* based on the novel *In Custody* by Anita Desai. She highlights the highs and lows of the translator's task from the mundane to the sublime. Husain conveys the universal appeal of Faiz beyond that of a national icon, a poet whose verse represents the many possibilities of linguistic and cultural interpretation on a world stage.

The SOAS student Forum on Faiz edited by Samreen Kazmi brings together a diverse set of student responses on Faiz ranging from; the revolutionary appeal of Faiz for those who were actively involved in the lawyers movement in Pakistan; a personal aesthetic connectivity with the theme of love in his verse; a historical return to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 and the cultural heritage of Faiz in India. It shows the depth of student engagement with the legacy of Faiz and the desire to understand the specific contexts that make him a national icon and a popular cross-border poet.

In seeking to remember and honour the work of Faiz Ahmad Faiz this special issue has tried to convey the depth and variety of Faiz's intellectual

[4] http://www.madamnoorjehan.com/her-life-and-art/interviews-58/62-bbc-interview.html. Accessed 13 December 2012.

engagement with poetry, politics, culture, the national and the worldly. His death in 1984 left a void in the Urdu literary landscape. His legacy as an unofficial poet laureatue for Pakistan has been lovingly recreated by his family in the Lahore museum dedicated to his memory, Faiz ghar (The house of Faiz). The main consumers of the cultural events held at the Centre are the urban elite although it hosts a variety of performers and artists from different class backgrounds. His poetry is a testimony to his humanist ideals and his poetic aesthetic was often guided by the theme of exile and separation. As a cultural commentator he had a vision to offer for the future of Pakistani culture and society, one that tried to blend the secular with the religious and not to see them as two separate entities. He was committed to the national project as an essential route to the recovery of human dignity lost during the colonial period but his left politics meant that he would remain on the fringes of the cultural life of the nation. Toward the latter part of his career he seemed to shift his poetic ideals from a revolutionary national politics to an aesthetic of Worldiness that rejuvenated his faith in human life.

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Rethinking Modernism and Progressivism in Urdu Poetry: Faiz Ahmed Faiz and N. M. Rashed

By A. Sean Pue

Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) and N. M. Rashed (1910-1975) are two of the most celebrated twentieth-century Urdu poets. Born within a year of each other, both poets began their literary careers at Government College in Lahore in the 1930s, yet took seemingly opposite literary paths. Commenting on their critical reception, Asif Farrukhi recently observed, "the two of them still seem to be interlocked with each other like Siamese twins, the kind of colliding and contrasting pairs Urdu critics love to compare, right from Mir and Sauda to Zauq and Ghalib and Nasikh and Atash down to Anis and Dabeer." Whereas Farrukhi sees Rashed as the "closest parallel to Faiz," most Urdu critics rather see them as fundamentally different.[1]

When contrasting Faiz and Rashed, critics frequently rehearse a favored dichotomy used to understand modern Urdu literature that divides writers into two camps—progressives, who favor "art for life's sake," and modernists, for whom "art is for art's sake alone." Faiz is always taken as representative of the former, while Rashed is frequently grouped with the latter. The distinction between *adab barā-e adab* (literature for literature's sake) and *adab barā-e zindagī* (literature for life's sake), as well as of *taraqqī pasand* (progressive) and *rajʿat pasand* (retrogressive), first developed in the 1930s and 40s by the generally secular nationalist and frequently Marxist critics associated with the Progressive Writers Association. Dividing writers into two camps, progressive criticism generated a layered system of binary oppositions that all mirrored this basic categorical distinction. Though originally grounded in specific debates in the late-colonial period, these categories have had a remarkable staying power.[2]

As this paper will argue, this distinction does not hold when measured against the work of either poet. However, that does not mean it should be discarded, because the distinction became central to the ways that both poets thought about their own work and, especially, the work of the other. This essay

[1] Asif Farrukhi, "Among his Contemporaries," Dawn Centenary Special, *Dawn* (13 February 2011), 23.

[2] For the history of the Progressive Writers' Association and its criticism, see Ḳhalīl ul-Rahman ʿĀzmī, *Urdū meñ taraqqī pasand adabī tahrīk* (Aligarh: Educational Book House, 1996 [1957]).

therefore considers the role literary interpretation plays in literary production, meaning, it will look at the way that poets shape their own work in accordance to the way it is received. In the case of Faiz and Rashed, their critical appraisals of one another are unusually revealing. Discussion of the way they understood one another, and the role played in that understanding by progressive criticism, form the first sections of this paper. Then, I will turn to their poetry itself, and consider two thematically related poems to see how these critical distinctions and the poets' assessments of each other withstand consideration of the texts themselves.

Faiz on Rashed

In a speech shortly after Rashed's death in 1975, Faiz states that while at Government College Rashed showed him the possibilities of poetry and greatly influenced his own style. Faiz describes Rashed's voice as always separate and individual, both on account of his temperament and the fact that "he would not stay at one place." While it might seem that Faiz is commenting on Rashed's peripatetic lifestyle, Faiz clarifies here that he is talking about Rashed poems—how they would change even in the course of one volume, let alone over two or three. As to their different styles, Faiz reports with humor that he would say to Rashed, "whatever the topic is you make it a thesis," to which Rashed would retort, "no matter what the topic, you make it a ghazal." In Faiz's words, Rashed continues, "no matter how complex and deep a topic … you abbreviate or simplify it before presenting it so that people would understand it and people could praise it." To this, Faiz would respond, "whatever you present, we can't simplify."[3] Through this dialogue, Faiz outlines an opposition that many of the poets' critics would recognize. Unlike Rashed's, Faiz describes his own language and poems as more simple and oriented towards the common man.

On a more somber note, Faiz continues by noting the length of time Rashed had spent outside of Pakistan, since joining the United Nations in 1952. Faiz speaks of the "distance" between the poet and his public as a loss, not only to the Urdu literary community but also to Rashed himself. "When a man is overseas," Faiz states, "then his own self (*zāt*) cannot stand in for society (*anjuman*) and, in a way, his own self becomes a separate country." Instead of focusing on his own society, such a poet becomes at once too preoccupied with

[3] Faiz, Ahmed Faiz, "N. M. Rashid," *Kitab* 10.3 (December 1975): 20-21. This article is a transcript of a commemorative address given by Faiz at the Pakistan National Center, Lahore. All translations are my own.

"looking inside his self" (*darūñ bīnī*) and too prone to transcendent pronouncements. Rashed's cosmopolitanism, Faiz asserts, left him disconnected from the specific concerns of his people. He became focused on his own estranged self and on the "international problems" of man in an almost existential manner, devoid of any particularity.[4]

Faiz's argument is organized around a distinction between "outer-looking" (*jahāñ bīnī*) and "inner-looking" (*darūñ bīnī*) poetry that is a central dichotomy of progressive literary criticism. The opposition between the inside and the outside is also frequently marked as that between the "*zāhir*" (evident) and the "*bātin*" (the hidden, or internal). The progressive critics who translated the principles of Soviet socialist realism into Urdu frequently used these terms, inverting their usual Sufi connotations. When applied to the interpretation of classical Urdu or Persian poetry, the '*zāhir*'—the outward depictions of wine drinking, rakishness, and lust—are contrasted to the more privileged '*bātinī*' meaning of such verse—the internal, spiritual meaning of otherwise disreputable statements. Progressive critics, reversing this evaluation, argued that writers should focus on the "real" entirely, and not on psychic life. "*Darūñ bīnī*" was therefore as much a sign of European bourgeois decadence as of an excessively mystical or escapist "oriental" understanding—a product of literature's relationship to the feudal court—as earlier outlined by *ashrāf* literary reformers, such as Hali and Azad.[5] For socialist realist critics—and certainly not all progressives were of this persuasion—a focus on the real allowed for the exposure of the dialectic—the processes of history—without a thorough theoretical understanding of the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism.

Faiz adopts the categories of progressive criticism when he describes Rashed's late poetry, composed for the most part outside of South Asia. Unlike his own work, Faiz sees Rashed's poetry in general as difficult to understand. He explains this complexity as a result of its being more inner-focused than outer-focused. Finally, he attributes this feature to Rashed's own physical and mental distance from his people.

[4] Ibid. 21-22.

[5] For Hali and Azad, see Frances W. Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and Its Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

Rashed on Faiz

N. M. Rashed wrote of Faiz in 1941, 1950, and 1969, and the progression in these statements shows not only Rashed's changing opinion of the other poet but also the increasing role of the categories of progressive criticism in his analysis. In each treatment, he sets Faiz against these categories and puts forth a theory of literary creation at odds with them. In the process, the categories of progressive criticism remain the base against which Rashed articulates his own position.

In his 1941 introduction to Faiz's first collection, *Naqsh-e Faryādī*, Rashed describes Faiz as standing at the "junction of Romance and Reality" — driven by love but induced to stare at "life's nakedness and bitterness." Rashed characterizes Faiz's earliest work as especially concerned with beauty while lacking a direct connection with life. He sees this feature as common to most of the writers of their generation. In the volume's later poems, Rashed sees a noticeable change. Faiz did not "say goodbye to romanticism and take the progressive road," but instead showed maturity in his thoughts, as though he "entered a world in which the shadows are deeper and the path rockier." Rashed argues that Faiz's poetry is purposely not a revolt against tradition. The "worn-out symbols" of the executioner and the rival appear in his poetry, and there is no major break with traditional meters and rhymes. Yet Faiz's poems appear to Rashed as completely different and disconnected from those of tradition. Rashed attributes this in part to Faiz's appreciation of beauty, which he argues was absent in the traditional poets, who praised beauty but could not experience it. Faiz instead wanted to create a paradise of beauty, which he comes close to but from which he would then withdraw in order to look at life in all its ugliness. Rashed describes Faiz's early poetry as the story of retreating from this "*tilismī haqīqat*" (illusory reality). He concludes that Faiz is not a centrally ideological poet but a poet of experiences, and he joins those strong experiences with beautiful words.[6] By emphasizing the categories of both experience and beauty, Rashed disrupts a reading of Faiz's poetry that would use the terms of progressive criticism.

In 1950, Rashed wrote an English article for Ahmed Ali's *Pakistan PEN Miscellany* in which he describes Faiz's poetry in decidedly negative terms. He writes,

> Faiz Ahmed Faiz is fundamentally a poet with an introspective romantic bent of mind and a keen poetic sensibility, who has abandoned himself to

[6] N. M. Rashid, "Muqaddimah-e Naqsh-e Faryādī," *Maqalat-e N. M. Rashid*. Ed. Shima Majid (Islamabad: al-Hamra, 2002), 375-381.

> the so-called 'leftist realism.' In his early poetry, particularly in his 'Tanhai' (Loneliness) and 'Mauzu-e Sakhun' (Theme of Poetry) he stands out as an imagist who is almost sensuous, but the ideological change that came over him some eight years ago has brought about a noticeable decline in his poetic expression. Although he has all along been suffering from a cleavage within himself, yet he is one of the few poets of our age who had once successfully fused their personal experiences with a social philosophy of life. Today neither his experiences are immediately personal nor his philosophy of life varied and original. He had an undoubted capacity for writing poetry of permanent value, but since he has identified himself with the group of writers who only speak under the inspiration that comes from outside he has been lost to the cause of poetry.[7]

In this statement, we see a very clear condemnation of art written for the sake of ideology in, of course, the context of the Cold War. Rashed's charges against Faiz's artistic production, however, seem to be more ideological than based in any substantial way in an analysis of Faiz's poetry itself. Rashed's description of Faiz as "lost to the cause of poetry" for writing "under the inspiration that comes from outside" marks an absence of personal experience in Faiz's poetry. While fermenting in Rashed's 1941 introduction, this critique becomes much more explicit by the 1950s. Writing under "outside" influence, Rashed argues, limits the effectiveness of the artist's work by establishing a limitation on his freedom of personal expression.

Rashed's final major statement on Faiz is found in an interview with American Urdu scholars for the journal *Mahfil* that also formed the preface, in Urdu translation, for his 1969 *Lā=Insān* (X=Man). In it, Rashed states that he still stands by his 1941 statement that, "Faiz stands at the junction of romanticism and realism." He adds that Faiz "borrowed the whole complex of symbolism, myth and even phraseology" from the Persian and Urdu ghazal, but unlike the traditional poet, he did not seek a "personal catharsis." Rather, he worked to "awaken first within himself and then in the mind of his reader a pain and pathos which would link his experience with the experience of mankind as a whole." Rashed here adopts a universalist rhetoric found in much of his writing from the 1960s onwards. He adds that Faiz also reaches this universal level by recharging

[7] Rashed, N M. "On Some Urdu Poets of Today," *Pakistan PEN Miscellany*. ed. Ahmed Ali (Karachi: Kitab Publishing, 1950), 92.

the "clichés of the Persian and Urdu ghazal" so that the "solitary suffering of the disappointed romantic lover is transformed into the suffering of humanity at large." Unlike the "traditional poet," Faiz thus writes "with a clear awareness of a multitude behind him."[8]

While in 1950 Rashed had condemned Faiz for falling in line with "leftist realism," in this later interview he states that while Faiz is indeed a "Progressive poet" he has not made his poetry "serve a functional purpose." Unlike other Progressives, Faiz does not resort to "oratorical outbursts" or make himself accessible to ordinary readers through "the idiom of everyday speech, or by more direct expression, or by simple oratory." Instead, Faiz uses the "familiar phraseology of the ghazal" and images that are "largely ornate" to approach his reader in such a way that he manages to "create a single emotional experience."[9]

Rashed concludes that Faiz gains an approach to his readers on two levels simultaneously. The first is "the level of the ordinary lyrical poet, with a direct emotional appeal." The second level is that of "a socially conscious poet, in terms of a political metaphor." Rashed adds that "his reader has thus to make a slight mental adjustment to arrive at the underlying meaning of his poetry, particularly when Faiz's poetry is not a poetry of intensely subtle personal experience, which the ordinary reader would find difficult to share with him."[10] Rashed's criticism of Faiz is that the reader just has to make a *slight* mental adjustment to understand his poetry, while in his own poetry, Rashed believes, individual, personal experience itself produces an encounter with difference that compels the readers towards critical reflection.

Whereas Faiz saw Rashed's poetry as too internally focused, Rashed saw Faiz's poetry as limited by its lack of personal experience. Rashed grounded his entire critical apparatus in opposition to what he understood as the overvaluation of "external" influence in progressive criticism. In his early 1941 assessment, Rashed described Faiz as able to join personal experience with a social philosophy in a way that compromised neither beauty nor individuality. By 1950, Rashed viewed Faiz as too driven to outside forces at the expense of his own personal interpretation. In his last statements from the 1960s, Rashed evaluated Faiz's poetry as still somewhat lacking in the breadth of personal experience and

[8] Rashed, N. M., "Interview with N. M. Rashed," *Mahfil* 7 (1971): 8. See also Rāshid, N. M., "Ek Musāhibah," *Lā=Insān* (Lahore: al-Misāl, 1969), 23-26.
[9] Rashed, N. M., "Interview with N. M. Rashed," 8-9.
[10] Ibid., 9.

limited by its sentimental ornateness but still able to form a bridge between lyrical experience and universal human suffering.

The Speaking Subject

While Faiz and Rashed are frequently held as fundamentally opposed, a comparative study of their poetry often reveals remarkable similarities in their message, if not their style. In the section that follows, I will compare two thematically similar poems that the address the topic of speaking truth to power. Though a small sample, an analysis of even two poems can complicate the categories of progressive criticism as applied to these poets.

The poem by Faiz, "Bol" (Speak), from his first collection, is among his best known. The poem reads:

Bol

bol, kih lab āzād haiñ tere
bol, zabāñ ab tak terī hai
terā sutvāñ jism hai terā
bol kih jāñ ab tak terī hai
dekh kih āhangar kī dukāñ meñ
tund haiñ shuʿle, surḳh hai āhan
khulne lage qufloñ ke dahāne
phailā har ik zanjīr kā dāman
bol, yih thoṛā vaqt bahut hai
jism o zabāñ kī maut se pahle
bol, kih sach zindah hai ab tak
bol, jo kuchh kahnā hai kah le[11]

Speak

Speak, for your lips are free
Speak, for your tongue is still yours
Your long-suffering body is yours
Speak, for your life is still your own
Speak, for in the blacksmith's shop

[11] Faiz Ahmed Faiz, "Bol" *Nuskhah-ha-e vafa* (Lahore: Maktabah-e Karavan, n.d.), 81.

The flames are fierce, the iron red
The mouths of locks have begun to open
The skirt of every chain is outspread
Speak, this little time is enough
Before the death of the body and tongue
Speak, for truth is still alive
Speak, say what must be said

Using relatively simple language, Faiz's poem is instantly accessible to a wide-range of both Hindi and Urdu speakers. The poem is a *pāband nazm* ("bound" verse), which has an accessible meter. Its message is perfectly clear: don't be afraid to express yourself, the time to speak is at hand. The images of the blacksmith's shop—of locks opening their mouths, and of chains spreading out their *dāman* (garment's skirt), as if in supplication, amidst blazing flames and hot iron—bring to mind an urban proletariat, their labor, and their tools. They point to the social collectivity of "the oppressed," whose time for freedom has come. Yet the poem does not clearly identify who is addressed; it leaves it open to the listener's social imagination. This flexibility is one of the reasons this poem remains so popular today. Although the Progressive critic ʿAlī Sardār Jaʿfrī would at one time accuse Faiz of being an "unprogressive poet" (*ġhair-taraqqī pasand shāʿir*) for "putting curtains of metaphors into his poems such that no one knows who is sitting behind them," part of the strength and appeal of Faiz's poetry is exactly this metaphorical instability, the resolution of which is left open to the listener.[12]

Rashed's poem "Ḥarf-e nāguftah" (The Unsaid Word) is on a similar theme. He composed it in the early 1960s and added it to the fourth edition of *Irān meñ ajnabī*. It reads:

Ḥarf-e nāguftah

ḥarf-e nā-guftah ke āzār se hushyār raho
kūʾe o barzan ko,
dar o bām ko,
shuʿloñ kī zabāñ chāṭtī ho,

[12] Sardār Jaʿfrī, "Taraqqī pasandī ke baʿẓ bunyādī misāʾil," *Shāhrāh* 2; quoted in Khalil ul-Rahman ʿAzmī, *Urdū meñ taraqqī pasand adabī tahrīk* (Aligarh: Educational Book House, 1996 [1957]), 97.

vuh dahan-bastah o lab-doḳhtah ho—
aise gunah-gār se hushyār raho!

shaḥnah-e shahr ho, yā bandah-e sulṭāñ ho
agar tum se kahe: "lab nah hilāʾo"
lab hilāʾo, nahīñ lab hī nah hilāʾo
dast o bāzū bhī hilāʾo
dast o bāzū ko zabān o lab-e guftār banāʾo
aisā kuhrām machāʾo kih sadā yād rahe,
ahl-e darbār ke aṭvār se hushyār raho!

in ke lamḥāt ke āfāq nahīñ—
ḥarf-e nā-guftah se jo laḥẓah guzar jāʾe
shab-e vaqt kā pāyāñ hai vuhī!
hāʾe vuh zahr jo ṣadiyoñ ke rag o pai meñ samā jāʾe
kih jis kā koʾī tiryāq nahīñ!
āj is zahr ke baṛhte huʾe
āṡār se hushyār raho
ḥarf-e nā-guftah ke āzār se hushyār raho![13]

The Unsaid Word

Beware of the sickness of the unsaid word
If as the streets and lanes,
the doors and rooftops
are being licked by a tongue of flames,
someone would have a closed mouth and sealed lips,
beware of such a sinner!
Whether it's the city's sheriff, or the king's henchman,
if he says to you, "Don't move your lips"
move your lips, no, not just your lips
move your fists and arms as well,
make your fists and arms the tongue and lips of speech,
raise a cry that will be remembered forever,
beware of the ways of the people of the court!

[13] N. M. Rāshid, "Harf-e nāguftah," *Irān meñ ajnabī*, 4th ed. (Lahore: al-Misal, 1969), 74-75.

Their moments have no horizons—
a moment that passes with an unsaid word,
is itself the end of the night of time!
Alas, it's that poison which, if it enter the veins and fibers of centuries,
has no cure!
Today beware of
the advancing symptoms of this poison,
beware of the sickness of the unsaid word!

Rashed's poem, like that of Faiz, is a call for protest. It is an *āzād naẓm* (free-verse poem), but it still has a discernible meter, with variations, and obvious rhyming elements. In the first stanza, the devastating "tongue of flames" points, through synecdoche, to any injustice perpetrated against a populace. The "sinner," whose mouth is closed and whose lips are literally "sewn together" (*lab-doḳhtah*), suggests someone who silently ignores this injustice. The message of the second stanza is clear: if you are being oppressed and an authority tells you to remain quiet, speak up and revolt. Yet the offices of the authoritarian characters referred to, the "*shaḥnah-e shahr*" and the "*bandah-e sultāñ,*" which I translate as city's sheriff and king's henchman, are not terms from the contemporary world. They refer instead to a past world of feudal monarchies, as does the stanza's final line, "*ahl-e darbār ke aṭyār se hushyār raho*!" (Beware of the ways of the people of the court). This stanza's final line cautions that one must be weary of monarchs and courtiers, the "*ahl-e darbār*," referencing a stereotype of the feudal court, rife with assassinations and duplicity.

The final stanza explores the consequences of not speaking out. These consequences have something to do with time. The moments of unsaid words "have no horizons," that is, no limits. Words that are not spoken do not rise into history and establish their eventness, their temporality. Instead, they seep, unrealized and unspoken, into the past, like a poison for which there is no antidote. While the second stanza, with its feudal nomenclature appears to be set in the medieval past, the third stanza proposes a universal, transhistorical continuity for the demand for dissent: when flames of injustice are burning the populace and yet people are silenced by authoritarian structures, people must rise up, seize the moment, and bring their protest into history. Despite its different level of abstraction and more complex vocabulary, Rashed's poems share the same message as that of Faiz's: don't be afraid to speak up right now.

The formal differences between these two poems suggest the question of the presumed audiences for these works, and—in a slightly different register—

their relationship to the categories of progressive criticism. One way in which modern Urdu poets have come to be categorized by literary critics is in terms of traditions. Through this strategy, Faiz is linked to a "*musalsal rivāyat*" (continuous tradition) that runs from "Mīr to Firāq," in which, to quote Āftāb Aḥmad, "the language of common speech (*rozmarrah kī bol chāl*) has a fundamental position. It is familiar and idiomatic, flowing and easily accessible, and has the traits of the living language of everyday speech." Rashed, by contrast, is linked to a tradition of difficult (*mushkil-pasand*), intellectual (*ʿaql-parast*), and Persianate poetry associated with Ġhālib, Iqbāl, and Bedil.[14] The invention of new literary traditions and schools for Urdu poetry has been a preoccupation of Urdu literary critics since the late nineteenth century. Though taking literary traditions as an exclusive form of categorization does not necessarily make for good analysis, the underlying point made by the reference to tradition is of some use in understanding the reception of these two poets. While Faiz's poetry, in general, is certainly not "common speech," his poetry does settle neatly within a horizon of expectations about what Urdu poetry should be, as he in general draws heavily on the vocabulary and imagery of the Urdu ghazal. Neither bombastic nor harshly realistic, it frequently uses sensuous language to explore subjective emotional states. In his own words, "The construction of beauty is not just an ornamental action; it is also a utilitarian one,"[15] and for Faiz, "The true subject of poetry is the loss of the beloved."[16] Yet, frequently in orthodox progressive readings of his poetry, every mention of the beloved is viewed only as a symbol of the revolution. This approach can certainly be supplanted by more heterodox readings, such as Aamir Mufti's recent reading of Faiz's poetry as focused on the meaning and legacy of partition.[17] Indeed, part of the political significance of Faiz's poetry is that, despite or perhaps because of its use of ghazal imagery, it is accessible to a variety of readers, and not bound to the fixities of the nation-state.

The poetry of Rashed, on the other hand, is marked by a continuous evolution in form and a greater rejection of the ghazal and its sensuous language. Yet despite Rashed's later claims to be writing of the situation of "modern man,"

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[14] Āftāb Aḥmad, "N. M. Rāshid: shāʿiroñ kā shāʿir," *N. M. Rāshid: shāʿir o shaḳhs* (Lahore: Māvarā, 1989), 55.

[15] Faiẓ Aḥmad Faiẓ, "Naʾe chirāġh," *Adab-e laṭīf* (September 1954), quoted in Khalil ul-Rahman ʿAzmi, *Urdu men taraqqi pasand adabi tahrik*, 138.

[16] Faiz Ahmed Faiz, *The True Subject: Selected Poems of Faiz Ahmed Faiz*, trans. Naomi Lazard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), v.

[17] Aamir R. Mufti, "Towards a Lyric History of India," *Boundary 2* 31.2 (2004): 245-274.

his poetry remained oriented towards a particular audience, who had access to his more belletristic language and whom he envisioned as largely to be found in Pakistan. However, even in his complex diasporic late poetry, Rashed is working allegorically, seizing elements from Urdu poetic tradition and, rendering them in a new context, disruptively investing them with new meanings that aim to upset traditional understandings.

While Faiz has typically been treated, following progressive criticism, as a poet concerned with the politics of "external" social life, Rashed has been frequently and unnecessarily excluded from such a reading.[18] And yet, a poem such as "The Unsaid Word" has both an explicit political message—a call to expression—and a covert critique of the forms of expression available at present. Otherwise, what are we to make of his establishing continuity between pathological feudal forms of government and contemporary political conditions? This poem could as surely be read as a critique of present politics as that of Faiz.

Similarly, while in Urdu literary criticism Rashed seems to be universally accepted as a pillar of Urdu modernism, the question remains, what of Faiz? While no one would ever deny that Faiz is a modern poet, the place of his literary production within the field of literary modernism in Urdu has generally been ignored. Yet the literary production of Faiz—and, one may argue, of the Progressive movement as a whole—is by its very nature a modernist enterprise; it is no less of an attempt to seek new modes of expression than is Rashed's poetry.

Conclusion

The categories of progressive criticism have failed to recognize the extent of Faiz and Rashed writing. Faiz is read as a poet concerned with the external world of society above all. Rashed is considered obsessed with poetic form in itself with no connection to reality. In understanding each other's poetry, both writers make reference to the tenets of progressive criticism. However, they do make some headway in advancing an interpretation of each other's poetry beyond these categories.

In describing Rashed's poetry, Faiz emphasizes the differences in their style. Faiz sees Rashed's poetry as resistant to simple explanation—a statement that is by no means universally true but that does certainly describe a considerable

[18] In more recent scholarship produced in connection with Rashed's birth centenary in 2009, this is not necessarily the case. See, for example, Fatah Muhammad Malik, *N. M Rāshid: Siyāst aur shā'irī* (Islamabad: Dost Publications, 2010).

amount of Rashed's literary output, particularly from his later years. He interprets this feature of Rashed's poetry as a product of his "inner looking" or introspection into the self, which he attributes to the author's experience living abroad. But Faiz fails to see that Rashed's poetry continues to draw on both collective experience and literary conventions, although perhaps more obliquely than his own. Despite his physical distance from Pakistan and his own universalistic rhetoric, Rashed's poetry remains embedded in Urdu literary tradition. He continues his relationship with his Urdu literary community through an allegorical disruption of literary conventions.[19]

In 1950, Rashed accuses Faiz of being overly ideological. But both earlier and later, he contradicts himself to insist that Faiz is not a fundamentally ideological poet but instead focused on individual experience. Rashed's description of Faiz joining lyrical individual experience with collective suffering steps beyond the most common reading of Faiz, which values most his image as a poet of the collective. In a 2011 article in *Tehelka*, for example, Javed Akhtar writes of Faiz, "The word *mein*, me, never made an appearance in his poems."[20] This claim is obviously not actually correct; Faiz made no real effort to avoid the personal pronoun. What Javed Akhtar seems to really value is something closer to Rashed's interpretation of Faiz's poetry, which focuses on the manner in which he represents the collectivity through his own personal experience.

An example of this individual but also collective experience is found in Faiz's short poem "Mire dard ko jo zabāñ mile" (If My Pain Would Find a Voice):

mirā dard naġhmah-e be-sadā
mirī zāt zarrah-e be-nishāñ
mire dard ko jo zabāñ mile
mujhe apnā nām o nishāñ mile
mirī zāt kā jo zabāñ mile

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[19] This modern form of allegory gathers images from literary tradition but deprives them of their symbolic authority through unusual juxtapositions and reinterpretations. Craig Owens has identified this form of allegory as central to postmodern art in the "West." Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism" *October* 12 (Spring, 1980): 67-86; "The Allegorical Impulse: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism Part 2," *October* 13 (Summer, 1980): 58-80. Iftikhar Dadi has argued for its utility in understanding "postcolonial" art. Iftikhar Dadi, "Shirin Neshat's Photographs as Postcolonial Allegories," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 34.1 (2008): 125-150.

[20] Javed Akhtar, "Do You Dar Snuff Out the Moon?" *Tehelka* 8:6 (12 February 2011). Web. 12 February 2011. <http://www.tehelka.com/story_main48.asp?filename=hub120211DO_YOU.asp>

mujhe rāz-e nazm-e jahāñ mile
jo mujhe yih rāz-e nihāñ mile
mirī khāmoshī jo bayāñ mile
mujhe kā'ināt kī sarvarī
mujhe daulat-e do jahāñ mile

My pain, a song without a voice
My self, a speck without a trace
If my pain would find a voice,
I would discover a trace of myself
If my self would find a voice,
I would discover the secret of the world's order
If I found this hidden secret,
If my silence would find message,
I would have sovereignty over the universe,
I would find the treasures of both the worlds.

In this short poem, Faiz celebrates individual experience, describing its necessity. For, as he writes, the individual's experience of suffering is what opens up the possibility for a transformative self-awareness. This awareness is first of the individual self, the "I," not of the collective. However, an appreciation of the individual reveals the nature of the "outer" world—the "world's order" (*nazm-e jahāñ*)—while also unveiling the other "inner" world, as well. In this poem, as well as in his oeuvre on the whole, Faiz clearly transverses the internal and the external, the individual and the collective. And so it would be a mistake to see this poet as ignoring the individual in favor of the collective; in fact, what he does is to articulate the relationship between the two.

Though the categories derived from progressive criticism do not encapsulate the work of either poet, they remain important as a historical fact. They were constitutive of the discourse through which both poets understood their own work and that of their contemporaries, and they provided terms for both poets to write against. In his poetry and commentary, Rashed insists that through an encounter with a poet's subtle, individual personal experience a reader's critical consciousness can be raised. His disruptive use of Urdu poetic tradition, however, implies a collective experience. For his part, Faiz insists on his address to and comradeship with the common man. However, he does so largely through lyrical depictions of individual experience. Faiz did not consider breaking with conventional poetic language as imperative as did Rashed, who increasingly

sought new modes of expression. But Faiz's poetry, like progressivism as a whole, still represents a degree of formal and thematic experimentation that can be more productively understood as a part of Urdu modernism, than its opposite.

While Urdu modernism remains vital to the Urdu literary community, offering extraordinary pleasures, the clarity of hindsight must now prompt a reevaluation of the terms of Urdu literary discourse. In particular, the division between progressive and modernist poets seems increasingly to be a hindrance to the interpretation of poetry—especially, it seems, the poetry of the most treasured exemplars of these positions. This essay attempts to consider again what role that division might play in a revisionist view of that crucial historical period.

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Rumination on Chronopoetics and the Political Subject: Miraji Reads Faiz Ahmed Faiz's Lyric

By Geeta Patel

Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Miraji are at two supposedly diametrically opposed ends of lyric practice in Urdu, Miraji was a so-called art for art's sake poet, the other a resolute political lyricist, so most writers or readers might not imagine them inhabiting the same space, might not see that the two poets would have something to offer one another. Miraji was known for his poetry as well as this prose on poetry and it is to his essays that I turn for another way of portraying Faiz; bringing the two writers together tenders unexpected vantage points into Faiz's aesthetic. Using the Urdu modernist poet Miraji's short exegesis of the Faiz's poem *Intebāh* (warning or alarm), popularly known only by its opening word, *bol* (speak), this paper will parse a small entry into Faiz's poetics. What did this curious imbrication of modernist exegesis with political poetics allow us to see?

In this paper I suggest that Miraji's analysis, which pries opens its final unpacking of Faiz's lyric by turning it through chronopoetics allows us to see anew the ways in which romantic realism and fleshed politics come together to craft the political subject. Miraji's essay gives me the content: the material that provides the ground and theoretical impetus which lead me to thinkers whose work might be productive for this essay. Miraji's style also informs my own. His essay on Faiz's work takes the shape of an unfolding that reveals the heart of a poem rather than a linear unidirectional narrative which begins its labor by laying out a series of hypotheses on poetry that the poetry then helps to illustrate. Analysis then, for Miraji, is a way of seeing into something and opening out what is present in poetry into prose, but for him prose itself was a profoundly lyric enterprise. If theory is taken into this genre of analysis, it is theory as poetics: theoretical approaches are poetic approaches. I look at theory, in the ways suggested by Miraji, the Urdu has primacy and the theory dances off it. Urdu poetics gives me the turns of intellectual movement through which to see the theory. And theory then also offers playful invitations that I pick up in my readings; theory and poetry are in a pas de deux. So the form I seize from Miraji also shapes itself into content.

I have chosen to deploy my own formulation of chronopoetics here, rather than resorting to Mikhail Bakhtin's more familiar chronotope, because Bakhtin

holds the chronotope to the more stringent demands of prose, whereas I bring poetry towards itself through prose. In his descriptions of prose, Bakhtin tends to separate time (the catalogue of the temporality of a series of scenes or events) from space (the parsing of the spatial as contingent upon the form or genre of prose) even though different sorts of time are often elaborated by him as different sorts of space; both time and space are under the command of genre specificities (such as romance or adventure) that also texture the lineaments of particular sorts of protagonists. Poetry for Bakhtin does something else, something other than prose. Lyric is abstracted away from prose and appears to carry a kind of universal generality—a kind of generality that one might imagine Miraji was attempting to provide for the lyrical subject in this essay. But Miraji's essay, which was written just a few years after Bakhtin's, brings poetry to prose as a necessity where the general can only texture itself through fleshed, sedimented particulars. The poetic for him makes its case in prose—through the chronos, amalgamated into the scene, the topos, and towards the subject in a way that does not quite work with the Bakhtinian exegeses. Miraji's more allegorical readings on a poem such as this, one which images making and takes some of its tropes from quotidian technologies to presage the labor of crafting lyric and one that proposes the incipient politics of temporality in hiatuses of time lingering into the futurity of political possibility through violence embedded colonial pasts, make better sense if they are angled through Heidegger's discussions of technology as technae, Heidegger's method of getting to the subject and Benjamin's portrayals of historical materialism.

I stage my openings into chronopoetics through Martin Heidegger and Walter Benjamin, choreographing my analyses through their evocations of technology, labor and temporality. I turn then to Jacques Ranciére to trace the gestures that dance chronopoetics into the case of political aesthetic. Ranciére's invocation of political aesthetic notates or enables us to catch Miraji's attunement to what has been occluded or excluded as gestures through which lyrical and prose must be heard. Keying my exegesis to chronopoetics in this way gives readers another take on Faiz's luminous political corpus.

The modernist Urdu poet Miraji published only one essay on Faiz Ahmad Faiz's poems. As I have explored in my earlier book on him, Miraji was known for a particular style and form of reading contemporary poetry. (Patel 2001) He took the style as a form from Roger Fry's translations of Mallarme's opaque or mubham poetry. These are translations that Fry had annotated; folding them into a clarifying exegesis, a slow nuanced unpacking of the blanked shadows in Mallarme's opaque/dense poetry. This style as form, unraveling a poem as translated shadow and innuendo, interpreting it as a genre of translation that

attends to shade and hue, this form was one that Miraji carried over into a series of essays on the work of his contemporaries, commentaries he wrote on poems just as they came out, immediately following publication or soon after they had been sent to Miraji for comments often before they were out in print.

Miraji's essays were collected in a volume called "Is nazm men" (in this poem) in 1944. Miraji wanted his particular adā to pose a kind of model for how to read contemporary poetry; a model that composed critique to enter the space-time of the poem and inhabit its bones and sinew; what Gayatri Spivak would now perhaps call an ethical habitation (Spivak 2010). As I have indicated in my much longer exposition on him, Miraji used this reading of Mallarme as the method for grappling with any analysis. In other words, for Miraji, all poetry and prose had to be treated as though it were dense, opaque, full of shadowy space. Translation was the form that a clarification of a writer's work had to take. And in order to get to the meat of a writer's oeuvre, a critic had to enter the words, live in them and open them up slowly, attending to even what seemed to be easily comprehensible as though it were something that demanded a slow unfolding. That unfolding was transmuted into prose by a critic, the prose a translation of the original that transformed what the original was, enabling a reader to see it anew.

Miraji's essays on his contemporaries can only really be understood in the ecology of his prose, which includes long full, dense renditions of history, place, life and poetry that open out into guldastās of contemporary European and American lyricists, early Japanese, Chinese, Greek (Sappho among them), Korean women poets, Sanskrit and Bihari love lyric. The other essays, of which the piece on Faiz is one, are deliberately not that. They are not the prolonged assays through which one gets a sense of an entire corpus—a 'shaksiyat aur fann' (personality and style) finessed in Miraji's inimitable style. Baudelaire, for example, gets sent all the way to Calcutta where he stumbles upon precolonial or pre-European poetic lineages that lengthen to the portrayals of the Devi and flesh nature into desire; the poet finds tropes that render his lover Jeanne Duval in the racialized hues of deep skinned Bengali beauty. The poet of the intestines caved into the city returning through colonial travel narrative in a peculiarly French vein to the expanse of the pre-colonial: only through this, suggested Miraji, could the life of the curves of femininity be sought in lyric, in their pointed contrast with the pulsating syncopations of the street, the stark solicitations, the solaces and angles of the madhouse, hospital, prison, whorehouse. Here lay the alchemical incorporation of poetry. (Patel 2001, 161)

The long essays were a kind of destining, an inevitable pulling towards bringing forth as poeisis: a path opening up, revealing the lyrical being of the poet in and through their compositions. One might describe their arc, what these essays were intended for, through the German verb stellen that Heidegger parsed in the

essay "The Question Concerning Technology." Stellen with its resonances reaching towards placing or positioning as a kind of rootedness is reminiscent of the Sanskrit root sthā (Heidegger was versed in Sanskrit and Miraji translated kāvya): producing and presenting her-stellen and dar-stellen were akin to utThita or samud, upsthita, emerging, manifesting, arising for action, coming forth, being produced, being ready for, its time having come. (Heidegger 1982, 21) Flowering into being is the method of grounding, a way of habitation for a person, an object, a thing. The essays Miraji wrote brought their object into unconcealment, brought them forth, and flowered them into themselves in the ways that Heidegger suggested through the catalogue of stellen. This bringing forth, this showing the poet Miraji was describing fully as she really was, efflorescing something into being with a nuanced clarity, her time having come—this was about time, was about chronopoetics but as Walter Benjamin may have envisioned as the poeisis of historical materialism.

For Benjamin, speaking of historical materialism, in the now well mined montage-like "Theses of History," it was, in the images from Thesis VI, the matériel thrown up in the now as a moment of danger. (Benjamin 1986, 2003, 391) Danger as Heidegger might have conceived in his essay on technology. And here is where Heidegger and Benjamin come into conversation.

What was danger—intebāh— for Heidegger? In the essay on technology Heidegger speaks about the moment of unconcealment as a moment when one could also quail at that possibility. That was a moment, a chronos, where technology could reveal a thing in itself but also enable it to become a commodity through a process that converted the world into commodity, in the Marxist sense, with everything awaiting its consumption. For Heidegger these ways of being, of living and their counterpoint, these pathways of practice, were deeply imbricated in the idea of history and the aesthetic.[1]

On one hand lay history, as historicism, the world portrayed as world picture, typologies of objectifying representation that foreclosed what had been

[1] The aesthetic here was not transcendental, not Kantian. Nor is it Kantian when I speak of its other registers further on in this essay, in my discussions of Ranciére, or Miraji or Faiz. In each of these instances the aesthetic is corporeal, located practice that cannot be apriori or understood as a science flowering from transcendental principles however much it might be concerned with perceptions by the senses. Even Miraji, who was frequently bundled into a parsimonious categorization of the aesthete, was, as I show in my work on him, very much a political aesthete whose essays and lyric were deliberately and specifically grounded.

chronicled. On the other hand was an aesthetic that provided an opening perhaps as a form of chronicle**.** History as historicism was what was mined as standing reserve, a kind of instrumentalist practice, a technology that tuned time into a perfectly parceled out set piece that was one way of bringing technology to view where everything even perhaps humans were for use, to be put to use.[2] Historical materialism, as Benjamin described it, was precisely not this kind of history; it was history as another technae, as a genre of Heidegger's aesthetic perhaps.

For some of his elaborations on what constituted historical materialism, Benjamin engaged with nature and technology in the ways that Heidegger did years later; "Theses of History" might have been the technology essay's historical materialist past, its moment of danger. Benjamin however brings labor more explicitly into this equation. When workers are enticed by a future that offers to redeem them, liberate their grandchildren, promise them a better life is precisely when they are put to work to convert nature into standing reserve, and that is when they become standing reserve. On the other hand, when workers face backwards and taste the rage that sparks from remembering their enslaved ancestors they enter into a kinship with nature.

Thesis XI telescopes technology and nature to attend to that particular stance which misrecognizes the appropriately ordained properties of labor, and in doing so puts labor in the service of standing reserve. This stand "recognizes only progress in the mastery of nature, not the retrogression of society; it already displays the technocratic features later encountered in Fascism. … The new conception of labor amounts to the exploitation of nature, which with naïve complacency is contrasted with the exploitation of the proletariat." (Benjamin 2003, 393) Here, in this thesis, Benjamin turns to Fourier's allegorical fantasies [which we would now view as an exploitation of nature] but which Benjamin sketches, as Heidegger did, as illustrations of a kinship with nature that brings nature to its own fruition: "the kind of labor, which, far from exploiting nature, is capable of delivering her of the creations which lie dormant in her womb as potentials." (Benjamin 2003, 394)

This is the point of danger that is necessarily double sided, one face tilted in "naïve complacency" towards fascism the other to the birthing womb, out of which one must face the past. This occasion is an instance when the working class

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[2] Technology in this essay captures the more capacious sense of the word that both Benjamin and Heidegger intend—poetics as materiel—while paying heed to its quotidian realist invocations in literal apparatuses such as the camera, or the forge. For both philosophers the mundane use of the word summoned up its evocative, productive aspects: the optical unconscious as technology materialized through the physical apparatuses of viewing for example. (Benjamin 1969, 188)

is likely to forget, and must be asked to remember again what made it what it was, "both its hatred and its spirit of sacrifice, for both are nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than that of liberated grandchildren. (Benjamin 2003, 393) In Thesis XII, as "the redeemer of future generations," the role assigned to them by Social Democracy, working classes had had the "sinews of their greatest strength" sliced open. Here lie the schisms as the entanglements between historicism and historical materialism—between world picture and aesthetic, between technology as standing reserve and technae as a kind of flowering as ges- and her- stellen, as sthā. Rather than as the oft rematerialized lines about historicism from Thesis XVII---"no theoretical armature. Its method is additive; it musters a mass of data to fill the homogenous empty time"—historical materialism is a "unique experience of the past." (Benjamin 2002, 396) It is about the abrupt halt into a "constellation saturated with tension," shocking the configuration, crystallizing it into a monad or William Blake's infinity in the palm of your hand, Gottfried Leibniz's everything cupped in a sudden drop; moments making infinity. (Benjamin 2003, 396)

If one sends Benjamin and Heidegger's invocations of technology and nature, the lineaments of labor facing forward to Fascism or backwards towards enslavement into colonial India, in the form of idioms that must be translated rather than as unembellished parcels of fact that make up a world picture, then something else reveals itself. Miraji translated Baudelaire into the alleys of Calcutta and so turned back Baudelaire's historical chronology to a moment seen in the angled streets of an Indian colonial present. Labor and technology as allegorical idioms speak about the work of the artist and the mechanisms that compose this work either into the aesthetic or into a world picture. It makes the poet-critic living in the depredations wrought by colonial representational politics, residing in danger either the laborer facing back to confront a legacy of loss or the worker turning to lose himself in promises held out for a better life whose product is the world as commodity.

Labor and technology are what Miraji the critic transmutes into the tools of his trade. "Blasting a specific life out of an era or a specific work out of the work," Miraji's essay on Baudelaire, in a fun house mirror image of Benjamin's, "preserves the life work in this work and at the same time cancels it." It "grasps the constellation which his own era has entered, along with a very specific earlier one" and in doing so Miraji's essay "ceases to tell the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary." (Thesis XVIII A) (Benjamin 2003, 397)

Miraji's essay on Baudelaire reaches out for historical materialism as aesthetic, eschewing the world picture. And in doing the same thing with the essays on women poets and writers, on languages such as Bihari that had been

absorbed into the ambit of Bengali, Miraji fleshed out a political mandate. His analyses tracked the vicissitudes of what Jacques Ranciére would have called the "distribution of the sensible" for each writer—the history of their presence or occlusion in the ways that the senses came to be organized so that writers and languages were or were not seen, heard, felt, spoken, scented, sensed. Miraji's writings were intended to seed challenges to this distribution for each writer. This is where his politics lay, and in the sense that Ranciére meant, was a politics of aesthetics, a politics of the senses. This was not where his contemporaries in the Progressive Writer's Association would have put politics, nor how they might have understood what the work, the labor of the political, as an idiom, might be. For the Progressives labor in its literal modality, the life of a factory worker, a mazdūr, the life of a farmer, a kisān, was the proper place where politics could be sought or represented.

The abbreviated pieces, such as those on the poem "Intebāh" were not meant to pan through an entire oeuvre sent astray so that each poem rose from the longue durée of a life settled into materialist history as political economy, caught at the cusp of Miraji's particular now; one could almost conceive of them instead as quick takes of just one poem. But even in their differences from the fuller presentations of poetic oeuvre, they still carry with them a bit of the charge of the essays: they reveal a little of Heidegger's sense of showing something clearly, are historically materialist in a Benjaminian vein where the past is seen through the legacies of seduction, violence and terror that pulls at it and reorients the distribution of the sensible. Aesthetics as Ranciére posed it, in relation to time and technae as Heidegger and Benjamin imaged, is what I will go on to texture in this essay – as the place of the political.

When I first presented this piece on Faiz at the Faiz Centenary in London at SOAS in the fall of 2011, I began with a lovely sung rendition of "Bol" by Tina Sani, a Pakistani singer of classical and semi classical ghazals. As you may have gathered from this and other sung versions with which many audiences are familiar, what I will speak to is the poem many only know by the first word in its opening stanza –bol—speak. This is the one poem of Faiz's that Miraji parsed in his 1944 essay collection. That Miraji wrote only on one poem by Faiz is unusual for Miraji because he usually commented on at least 2-3 poems by each poet of Faiz's caliber. But for Miraji this essay on Faiz condensed everything that needed to be said. It stood in as a case study of Faiz: only if it were parsed, read, unpacked to render what lay on its surface as mystery. In the ways in which Lauren Berlant has spoken of the revenant of a case as an event: as a moment, as an opening into a sort of incompleteness, one that leads a reader to linger on the mystery of that incompleteness (a mystery without a complete resolution), a case of symptoms that might never be cured, but also paradoxically as a case of

something that stands in for a more general elaboration. While holding onto many of the other tonalities of cases from different epistemic genres that Berlant explores and that are elaborated in the collection that follows her introductory piece on "the case," the reading of this particular poem composed the case as a statement of the work of the poet Faiz in general. This reading then tunes into discussions of Faiz's work, its lyricism, politics and subjectivity. Miraji's colorations of the subject in this poem, both as the figure of politics and the presence whose being stretched into the political, choreographs the case of Faiz as the poet of the political metric. Every poem that Miraji explores endures a process of reading that unravels the poem's project unwinding the knots on its surfaces for the cues offered in order to tease out meaning; little is left self-evident. And this Faiz essay itself, in the way that Ranciére suggests, is also a political aesthetic symphonic.

The title that Miraji knew this poem under is "intebāh" warning, or alarm, which is also the title that opens his short exegesis on Faiz, a title that has often been lost, as this, one of Faiz's many popular, populist poems, has traveled over the years. My own style here is an echo of Miraji's andāz e bayān, the fairly spare lyrical essay to which I will now turn to allow me a small opening into Faiz's aesthetics:

> Speak, for your lips are free.
> Speak, it's your own tongue.
> Speak, it's your own body muscled with health
> Speak, for your life is still yours.
>
> See how in the blacksmith's shop
> Flames burn wild as iron glows bloody;
> Locks pry open their jaws,
> And every chain spread out like a skirt falling across a slope begins to splinter/split open/break/tear/shred.
>
> Speak, this small hour is long enough
> before body and tongue die/fail/fade:
> Speak, because the truth isn't dead yet,
> Speak, speak, whatever you must.[3]

[3] In this translation I play with Naomi Lazard's translations in *The True Subject*, which I, as a young graduate student was assigned to be her factotum on, and Azfar Hussain's translations.

Intebāh, like bol carries a charge with it— it puts something on notice. The alarm has been sounded, you have been warned, a notification has been issued, this alarm voices Benjamin's moment of danger. Bol, the exhortation to speak, a vocative, in direct address, issues a kind of intimate generality as intebāh does, its abstract distance registers closeness, perhaps in some of the ways that Aamir Mufti in bringing Adorno's analytic to Faiz's corpus has pointed to in his work on Faiz. (Mufti 2007, 211)

Miraji stays with intebāh, putting it to task, pulling at it, translating it through a sequence of interrogations. The questions that Miraji asks flesh out the intimacies between what is close and what is far, what is the general and who is the one, the particular. For Miraji this poem opens mysteries, something mysterious, and in doing so makes its case, becomes a case, a kind of case study that a reader could parse for the *nuances* that animate, blow its language into life.

Now, if you are familiar with the poem, or even if you have read it for the first time today, it would not strike you as a poem suffused with nuance. It speaks directly, baldly, without hesitation. It exhorts, it pushes into demands. Its language is commonplace cadenced into a chant that could so easily, as many commentators have suggested, mobilize gatherings fighting for political space.[4] Its language does not seem to call out for a listener who needs to be educated in the silsilā of Urdu poetics.

Intebāh is an ur haqīqat parast's poem; it carries itself in its urgency to something outside of itself, a command to a "real" world venture. This is perhaps why Miraji chose to bring it to a different kind of life in his analysis. Because in the form of the case it makes, it is a case, an instance of progressive poetry, the poetry for lovers of truth, those who live in the flesh of truth's present.

So what does Miraji tell us is present and what through that telling do we learn to discern about Faiz? Bol, ki lab āzād hain tere—for Miraji this utterly matter of fact opening line is a fleshy present absence—carried in the repetitive grammatical form of tere. It is a kind of mystery whose solution makes the case for progressive poetry. What is present is ensconced in a series of bodily images: lab, zabān, jism, jān–lips, voice/language, corpe, life/love. Flesh, abstraction,

[4] The Delhi University students at my talk were familiar with the first and last verse but not really cognizant of the middle. The weekend immediately following my talk there, in February 2012, a political symposium and gathering was organized in Delhi under the nomenclature provided by "Bol." On March 4, 2012 a program, which revisited the massacres of Muslims in Gujarat 10 years after the events, was organized in New Delhi under the title "Bol is sach zindaa hai ab tak-Ten years of Gujarat 2002. http://www.anhadin.net/article153.html

flesh abstraction. But the person who possesses these—the person warranted by the possessives "tere" lab, tere zabān, tere jism, terī jān—the "tere" has no content. So also the one speaking, for whom they speak, the one who must listen; they are all ironically absent. In other words: We know a voice speaks, and we know that a voice is commanding another to speak. We don't know at this opening enunciation who speaks, who is spoken to and where or when the speaking might sit itself into place or through time. I say place or time --jahān ya kahān, because for Miraji we are led to the what, and then onto a kind of tentative why, through the who into the when and then the where. The where and the what flesh out the mystery, the missing beats, the syncopation between presence and absence.

The poem's subtlety is in the grammar of its timings: time its Benjaminian nuance. A small portion of its resonances are carried, according to Miraji in its chronopoetics. And those chronopoetics lead you forward inexorably through the first litany of exhortations:

> Speak, for your lips are free.
> Speak, it's your own tongue.
> Speak, it's your own body muscled with health
> Speak, for your life is still yours.
>
> bol ki lab āzād hain tere
> bol zabān ab tak terī hai
> terā sutawāN jism hai terā
> bol ki jāN ab tak terī hai

What the poem starts with is a command–speak—shaped in a future that is very close by, a proximate futurity. But the temporal grammar of each line closes with hai – is, the present, the now. And this present is sutured to the possessive, tere, each of the first four lines ending with an alternating hai or tere. What's missing is what's implied by these lines, till now – ab tak – the past, what happened until the moment of directive, what came before. And carried in the 'ab tak' is the question: until when shall one speak, kab tak? The when which is the where: is duration that assembles itself in space. The presence of "As long as" – 'jab tak ki' – slinks like a reminder behind the lines and yields a duration of space, the where, where voice, language, body, life live. Its gradations lie in the chronopoetics of the when, the answer given in time lengthening into the lines that begin the final stanza: Thodā vaqt bahot hai, a small time is a lot. Maut se pahele, before death, zindān hai ab tak, before death, you are still, yet alive. The

registers of chronopoetics are those when time transmutes to a where. But not anywhere, the where is precisely where time is pulled open, stretched apart to live at the hiatus of danger between death and life, to live where the smallest thing is more than big enough, where the moment encounters infinity. This is where the jigsaw slips into what has felt so potently and powerfully bereft of the mysterious: the mystery that must be unfurled in order to know the poem as taraqqī pasand adab, as progressive versification.

But for Miraji, who will not fold the entire poem, as so many Progressive readers and reciters have, into just the speaking—intebāh cannot be tuned into just bol. 'Bol, ki lab āzād hain tere.' These are readers, whatever their political will to transformation, who Benjamin might have imagined as bereft workers. Nourished by the vision of their liberated grandchildren rather than their enslaved past, they have lost their way. These are the readers for whom all the poem contains moves into the inexorability of its chronology as historicism, the future that pushes forward into the past. 'Bol, ki lab āzād hain tere.' But Miraji wants to stay with alarm, with intebāh and its historicism is not a sufficient response to the mystery of its meaning, the absent presence who is to be put on notice. 'Bol, ki lab āzād hain tere.' For Miraji the poem's meaning is not merely contained within and by its chronos as history but in what's still left unfinished by the chronology, historical materialism, figured into its poetics—where does this time reside and 'kis ke lab,' whose lips? The query settled into the 'kis,' the whose, fleshes temporality in the image of a 'might be,' possibility living in the open question. In his essay Miraji asks: So, then where is the where? Does this where give us a who (whose lips)—the who of the political subject? One might use this poem, speak it to time when one marches, but what does it mean?

Where might we go? The poem gives us a scene from which to unwind its meaning. The chains being prepared in the smithy suggest the poem's meaning as content; the corpus of the mystery might lie here. Miraji says that the chains may offer a probable speaker; one who may be a prisoner laden with the past of enslavement, invoking Benjamin's working class facing backwards, facing down the temporal direction of a truly released future. But if the temporal grammar embedded in the image of tund shole and surkh āhan, 'flames burn wild and iron glows bloody, if their chronopoetics, also suggests that the chains are unfinished, they are still unmolded material, in the process of being forged, voh tayyār ho rahe hain, the person speaking is perhaps still free. The work of the forge, materialized through the substance that is the process of being cast, the āhan, the piercing flames that melt the iron to be pressed into shape, is in process. If this is the case, then, says Miraji, the speaker couldn't really be a prisoner yet. But the poem carries a frisson of someone who is in danger -- shakhs khatare men hai. The speaking verses suggest, says Miraji, that the peril may lie here - that

someone is close to having their mobility, their movements, their voice bound, closed off. Is this the notification, the warning the poet gives in the title—intebāh**.** Is this, Miraji asks, the futurity that the poem intends?

How does this futurity move from the necessary past of enslavement to a possible politics: the harbinger of danger for Benjamin and in culling that khatarā through the opulence of technology also the precise place of danger for Heidegger? Is this futurity, then, not to be pressed into service, bound merely, to a past of enslavement?

"Your lips are free," says the person writing. But is the object of the poem, the poem's intent, its intentionality, this person whose lips are free, who the poet notifies, warns? "Dekh ki" the poet says. What if we were to look where our gaze might be led as the second verse opens? What if we were to look where the poet turns our eyes? What might we see? What if the object, that is the subject of the poem were the blacksmith's shop, what if the poem were to lead us here, as it does after its bald calls, to this ordinary place mā'mūlī jagah, a place without much import. What then would be the story, the qissā that the poem reveals, the mystery it incants?

Here is the story, the qissā, that Miraji goes onto to make for Faiz, the elucidation offered for the case of the mysterious speaker: The poet, says Miraji, looks at the chains being forged there, is nihāyat mā'mūlī dukān meN, its commonplace place brings to mind, suggests the ordinary locations many writers of realism take as their mauzu', their theme**.** But this poet is a muhibb-e vatan, a patriot of a particular genre: a lover whose feelings pull him willy nilly towards his nation. So instead of falling into the seductions promised by the intimacies of the ordinary as such, instead of being drawn into the feeling that through the ordinary we will enter a political life yielded to us through subjects who have hitherto for been accorded no representational space, the poet as lover transforms the image into something else.[5] The ordinary metastasizes into allegory.[6] The

[5] Danger, as Heidegger phrases it in the technology essay, lies between this sentence and the next. One is world picture the other is the aesthetic. And it is love that pulls open the place between one technology and another. Miraji also, in many of the essays in *Mashriq o Maghrib* (1958), thinks of this as a moment of danger for progressive writers. For him these images of women and workers are so seductive that in succumbing to them without attending to the violence associated with the long colonial history of their deployment (as tropes) writers often lose their political emphasis. Many of the essays, such as the one on Baudelaire, or those on women writers speak directly to other lineages through which progressives ought to craft their political lyric and prose.

labor of the images in this scenario is allegorical and the poet takes the ordinary into the allegorical work of poeisis.[7] The allegorical performs its task in two ways. It is literal, in that technology stands for itself.[8] Making chains is the work of the laborer blacksmith that can also be translated in a fairly quotidian fashion into the forging through which a poet crafts his metaphor: the āhangar ki dukān is the space of the poem. But the chains can also refuse the spare form of commodification. In being turned/tuned/ torqued/ molded/rehoned through the aesthetic, through the allegorical, they cannot just service standing reserve; they are put to other ends, to 'showing as,' to unconcealment. What they show is through the other allegorical charge, which is carried in the staging of this scene: the act of 'being in making' shuttles this metaphor towards temporality; the scene's metaphorics are time whose imaged labor galvanizes and thus becomes chronopoetics.[9]

A poet sees the chains being made, and imagines that, perhaps even knows that these things are being forged to close off those who fight for freedom. And another person, a mujāhid, someone who strives, labors or struggles and hence is a warrior for the faith, this vatan ke kis mujāhid appears before the poet-lover like

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[6] I am obviously invoking here, through two other thinkers, and through Miraji's rendering of Faiz, the long history of Marx's engagement with use value and with the dance between corporeality and abstraction. The commodity here can point to something else precisely because it has not been fully made yet. And this is where, before its making, that it can be put to another use. And alchemy is obviously at stake in the scene's transmuted mechanisms and dramatis personae. (Taussig 1997, 140) Death is also pulled into the equation but not in the form of dead labor, labor cannot be tallied up, accounted for as abstract labor power. Surplus is something else again because money never enters the picture. Nor does exchange or capital, even as political capital.

[7] That the quotidian is allegorical and not just naturalized into political facticity is the issue that Miraji takes up with the Progressives. For Miraji the mistaken vision meted out in Progressive manifestos about the nature of art, literature, lyric binds images to a fantasy that the only value these images have for political versification lies in the semantics of their realness, not in the lyrically prolific, opulent splay of the allegorical.

[8] I am obviously playing across Ranciére's assays into nineteenth century historical realism in French narrative forms.

[9] I don't intend transport in the sense of moving over, being carried over. Rather, it provokes the more mystical sense of being carried away that can been seen in elaborations of ghazal: majāzī is haq, and not translated into haq, (Derrida 1974, 26)

a spirit to whom he speaks. And this is the specter who must be warned, to whom the intebāh is issued as title and as opening—to whom the poet must say that as long as you are free you are really alive. When you are closed off from moving, speaking, walking, that is true death. So, because of this imminent jeopardy, the khatarā, the danger of life and death—speak, 'bol'.

What Miraji tells us then is that the poem's import, its meaning does not reside in the frame, the opening and closing calls to arms. Rather it lives in the cusp, in the staging cupped in the differences between the repetition of beginning and end, between bol and bol--between bol of the command to an immediate future and bol of the past 'ab tak,' till this time of the command. Bol, yeh thodā sā vaqt bahut hai: speak this small hour is long enough. This is the time of danger for Benjamin, the chronos of historical materialism, a small segment that is also a great deal. It is the time in which we enter the scene of the ordinary as metaphor that yields absent subjects to us, the poet/blacksmith, lover/patriot and the laborer/fighter all of whose labor is united around the small absent lafz the critic appends, the word "vatan" the nation. This is the time that yields the technology of casting the story net which will lead us to the work of political aesthetic—this is the other place of chronopoetics, the time of the scene.

The poet, whose imagination ignites this scene of lives turning future into the past, brings this picture to life, a tableau that brings a listener to stand before him. This poet is both Faiz in the particular and any poet fired up by love, by political sentiment. The poet is the protagonist alighting in a smithy, catching sight of chains not yet ready, a metaphor metonymy both for a future, for time and for the person he brings before him to whom he, Faiz, any lover in love with a beloved absolutely must speak. For what is at stake is a death not yet come. For what is at stake is a time of colonialism when the future offers death. What is at stake is a life still lived truly. This is when prison doors will fly open, keys turn in their locks and chains fail their task. And the scene brings a poet to a place, a hiatus, between the chains being forged and springing open. This is a place where a poet can speak to halt time, to pull a fighter back into life and away from the binds of death that await him. Death itself is a metaphor metonymy – for a living death, the death of a political life. This was the possible death that Benjamin portended for the working classes whose sinews would be sliced open if they acceded to a future of capitulation. And in a readerly tour de force that turns politics through the lens of the aesthetic a seemingly simple poem has yielded surprising subtleties.

What other lessons might this sort of reading give us about how to understand what Faiz is doing, tell us about the content of the work that Faiz as a poet does? How is the situation laid out before us that the poem elucidates, the instance of the

absent speaker and listener, the case that stands in for the unfinished business of this sort of progressive, haqīqī-parast lyric? What is the proposition as a kind of opening out?

The first lesson is that the haq the truth of the poem lies in love – lies not merely in a scene, not merely in time but in muhabbat. And it is the truth of this love, its haqīqat that turns time and the scene into majāzī the allegorical metaphor that will release the truth. The poet is a ghazal go, a political romantic, in the unfinished business of feeling his emotional force, the country his beloved. The second lesson speaks to Faiz's poetry as the poetry of realism, bearing witness to a kind of transportation that occurs with metaphor, with the majāzī, something that Benjamin believed lay in the crevices of historical materialism. That lesson can only be grasped when metaphor can be seen as aesthetic labor whose purpose is the political philosophical.

Realism, then, as Faiz's particular aesthetic is not to be parsed, as realism sometimes is, merely as a one to one relationship between an outside and an aesthetic object. Nor is it to be handed over to a litany of so called realist subjects treated as though they were the release of fact, such as a mazdūr, whose salvation from depredation would buy political consolation.[10] Nor is it to be found just in a command to history as a way of placing an aesthetic object,

It is to be found instead in the somewhere else of historical materialism, in the small space of time, the spacing between life and death that is big enough for its charge. It is located in the somatics of love and the flesh of a scene. The poet's labor is in the forge, Heidegger's proper technology that will bring a thing to itself, to its own being. The poet labors in the time between before the thing is made and after it falls apart. In entering the scene of technology he provokes a story pressed into shape through a chronos that will make over any ordinary scene, ek mā'mūlī sī jagah, the quotidian aesthetics that animate realist narrations, turn the flesh of that scene through the delicacy of its careful music to the unfinished business of the political. This is chronopoetics—the third lesson. And the unfinished business of the political, as Benjamin so poignantly put it, must not face the lambent seductions of the seemingly unfinished dangerous promise: the certainty of a better life. Instead time must face death. Because the political is precisely about an uncertain future, a life released to uncertainty.

The lyric tale's protagonist is always the poet. Not the poet as Faiz the historical personage, but the poet as Faiz the general lover, the political romantic, enlivening a triangle. The third person in the triangle is a presence who lives only in absence, the political subject whose being resides only in the form of the possessive – possessed of life to come and possessed by death.

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[10] Ranciére's work offers apposite lessons here.

The mujāhid, the third being, is conjoined to the speaker through the love object they both share, the nation to be. This poem could stand for any poem, which is composed painstakingly and spoken on behalf of this person. The person isomeone whose generality is brought close in by the intimacy of the poet's love, so close that anyone of us here can become that person. But this love is not just ishq, love, ārzū, longing, taras; thirst seized from the corpus of ghazal and turned to political realist ends, a well-worn metaphor transmuted into a new philosophical topos. (Derrida 1974) In the essay, Miraji brings love in through a metaphoric scene seemingly denuded of it; the critic storyteller's political aesthetic turns a poem that drums/galvanizes political gatherings into a poem about the socius of the lover. The curious case of a critic vilified for his stance on jadīdīyāt, for his jāmūliyat, parsing the ur-taraqqī pasand poet, resolves into political resonances that gather us all through the fleshed abstractions of the lyrical.

So that, it is to each one of us that Faiz always speaks, igniting us to live. And this is the final lesson. We compose the profound sociality that Mufti says mediates the political for Faiz. We are the mujāhid, the political subjects that Faiz commands to life in the years before independence. Our sweat the labor we put towards the aesthetic, which in turn orchestrates us as and in the syncopations of the political. But *this* is still our immediate future as the chronopoetics of its constant continual truth. *This* is still the unfinished business of a life, thodā vaqt bahut hai, which we have precisely because we push out against the pressure, the khatarā, of our death, an opening. This is political aesthetic poised in the question of effacement: that we make a space against brutal endangerment of our death as a speaking, to mobilize, always as a dangerous political subject. With an uncertain future our only salvation is in the violence that lies behind us.

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Intebāh

bol ki lab āzād haiṇ tere
bol zabāṇ ab tak terī hai
terā sutawāṇ jism hai terā
bol ki jāṇ ab tak terī hai
dekh ke āhaṇgar kī dukāṇ me ṇ
tuṇd haiṇ shole surKh hai āhan
khulane lage quffaloṇ ke dahāne
phailā har ek zanjīr kā dāman
bol ye tho.Dā waqt bahot hai
jism-o-zabāṇ kī maut se pahale
bol ki sach ziṇdā hai ab tak
bol jo kuchh kahane hai kah le

Faiz's "Internationalist" Poetics: Selected Translations and Free Verses

By Christina Oesterheld

Indian poets had come into close contact with English poetry in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and in the years to come English translations opened up literature in other western languages such as French, German and Russian to Urdu writers, poets and critics. In the twentieth century this contact with western literature was furthered by travelling to the west, particularly to Great Britain, and after 1947 London became an important meeting point for authors from the Subcontinent. The great pioneer of modern Urdu poetry, N.M. Rashed, settled down in London and attracted a number of younger poets, for instance Saqi Faruqi, who also made London his home. Zehra Nigah provided another meeting point for Urdu literati, and Iftikhar Arif for many years supported literary activities as director of the Urdu Markaz.

Faiz was a frequent guest in London, but in contrast to his contemporaries he also had very close contacts with the Soviet Union. In 1949 for the first time he came into contact with a Soviet delegation that had arrived late for the Progressive Writers' Association's Conference in Lahore. He again met a Soviet delegation when he was allowed to take part in a conference of Asian writers in Delhi in 1956. The Soviets strongly voted for a resolution for the creation of a regular organisation including African writers to which the Hindi writers, especially Agyeya[1] were opposed. The disagreement ended on the compromise to postpone any such decisions until the next conference which would take place in Tashkent at the invitation of the Soviet delegates. Thus in 1958 Faiz together with Hafiz Jalandhari visited the Soviet Union for the first time. He kept visiting the country until the end of the 1970s, and from 1978 until 1983 he edited *Lotus*, the literary journal of the Afro-Asian Writers' Association, mostly from Beirut. These intensive contacts with a number of Soviet authors and non-Western authors whom he met through his Soviet hosts and with the Palestinians clearly left visible traces on

[1] Pseudonym of Sachidananda Vatsyayan (1911-1987), eminent Hindi poet, novelist, freedom fighter and journalist. His autobiographical novel *Shekhar ek jivani* (1941/1944) is regarded as one of the milestones of modern novel writing in Hindi. Faiz has reported the heated debate on the question of the necessity of a final document and a permanent organization in an article which was re-published in English translation in *Lotus* No. 57 (1986), p. 8.

his thinking and writing and thus distinguishes him from other Urdu poets and writers of his time.

Internationalism was one of the premises of communist ideology, proclaiming the solidarity of the working class all over the world which was then extended to the solidarity with peoples fighting for the freedom from colonialism. Literature was seen as a means to further this ideology which explains the Soviet support for the Afro-Asian Writers' Association. One may also cynically regard these efforts as part of the Big Game of the Cold War period with the Soviet Union trying to co-opt the newly independent African and Asian countries into its sphere of power, but in the 1960s many intellectuals all over the world sincerely believed in the possibility of a better and more peaceful world which would be free from colonial exploitation and from war. Hence, while looking at Faiz's literary and editorial activities of those years one needs to keep the atmosphere of that period in mind. Thus, internationalism to him probably meant to engage with the struggle for peace and for a better, more equitable and just society everywhere in the world. In a way it was also an extension of the concept of exchange between different Indian literatures advocated by the Progressive Writers' Association in the 1930s, that is, at a time when many Indian intellectuals were well aware of writing in metropolitan languages such as English, French and Russian but knew next to nothing about contemporary writing in Indian languages. Whatever their intention, there can be no doubt that Soviet publishers undertook an unprecedented project of getting literature from the periphery translated and published and of furthering cultural exchange between the countries of their bloc and countries of the Third World. Faiz's close contacts with Nazim Hikmet and Pablo Neruda would have been unthinkable without this policy.

The focus of the present paper, however, will be limited to the following three aspects of Faiz's engagement with contemporary Soviet and other authors whom he met in the 1960s and 1970s: discussions of questions such as literature and life, commitment and aesthetics, poetics; Faiz's literary translations and selected poetry inspired by poets of other languages.

1. Exchanges on the Representation of Life in Literature, Commitment and Aesthetics, Poetics of Committed Literature

Faiz has reported a number of discussions with fellow writers in his reminiscences, particularly about the Soviet Union, in Urdu prose which he wrote in 1974-75 at the request of Progress Publishers, Moscow who published them in

1979 under the title *Mah-o-sal-i ashna'i* (Months and years of acquaintance).[2] In the second part of this book Faiz has recollected his meetings with Nazim Hikmet, Ilja Ehrenburg, Jean Paul Sartre, the Kazakh writer Umar Ali Sulaimanof and Chingiz Aitmatow. Faiz claims that these reports are based on memory since he did not make any notes during his talks. Of all the meetings and discussions mentioned in the book, those with Nazim Hikmet seem to have been most important to Faiz, and only these will be discussed in the present essay.

Nazim Hikmet (1902-1963) was one of the first Turkish poets to use more or less free verse. During his lifetime he became the best-known Turkish poet in the West, and his works have been translated into more than fifty languages. He had joined the Turkish Communist Party in 1920 and studied Sociology and Economics in Moscow from 1922-1928. After his return to Turkey he spent 17 years in prison until he was released in 1950 due to massive international protests but was again persecuted, and when he finally fled from Turkey in 1951 he had to leave his wife and son behind. In 1951 he was deprived of Turkish citizenship. He took refuge in Moscow and spent the rest of his life in the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia. In 1963 he died in Moscow of a third heart attack.

Faiz had read a slim volume of Hikmet's poetry in English translation in Lahore. It consisted mainly of prison poems. When Nazim Hikmet escaped from prison he got asylum in the Soviet Union but despite leading a comfortable life there his heart always longed for his home which turned many of his poems into sad elegies (MoS: 75). Faiz met Nazim Hikmet for the first time at the Afro-Asian Writers' Conference at Tashkent in 1958 where a *mushaira* had been organised which was a new thing for most of the participants. They became friends and remained friends until Hikmet's sudden death. Faiz had long discussions with him about poetics, style, language usage etc.

Faiz reports that Hikmet believed a poem could never be completely free, there would always be a specific word order which would set certain limits and a particular harmony/inner linkage of words which distinguishes poetry from prose, but the first requirement of poetry would be rhythm which again should correspond with the theme or content of the poem. He rejected the concept that poetry could only be created in the traditional patterns and forms. Hikmet believed in the poetic potential of colloquial language. Poets should try to discover the natural rhythm and melodiousness of the spoken language and bring their poetry as close as possible to it. He specifically criticised the custom to follow Arabic prosody in

[2] A Pakistani edition appeared in Karachi, Maktaba-yi Daniyal, 1981.

languages such as Urdu or Turkish. Hikmet tried to free himself from the fetters of Arabic prosody and thus arrived at a new rhythm and at free verse. This was a view adopted later by many modern Turkish poets (MoS: 76-77).

Hikmet did not, however, advocate a complete break with the poetic tradition. He wanted to establish a link with the older indigenous tradition of folk songs, *dāstān* and epics. He linked the shift to Arabic prosody with changes in society, as a move away from the older sovereign tribal order to forms of feudalism. He speaks of a long phase of stagnation in society and literature, perhaps following Marx. But now a new era has dawned, the industrial era which brings about fundamental changes in all aspects of life and necessitates new approaches and techniques in literature. However, realism alone is not enough, aesthetic qualities are essential for works of art. Hikmet now thought that his earliest poetry which was predominantly political and used in mass meetings and rallies was one-dimensional and could only fulfill short-term needs, but its language and diction did not reflect the depth and intricacy of human experience (MoS: 77-78). Hikmet stressed the inseparableness of tradition, form and subject. When it was suited to the material, he also used strict formal patterns, local language or expressions of the past. He compares the form to a silk stocking on a beautiful woman's white leg/shank–it should enhance the leg's beauty but should itself not be too visible (MoS: 78).
These ideas seem to correspond to most of Faiz's poetic practice. Much of his poetry owes its effect to the intense human experience it expresses. Faiz also deemed these ideas important enough to repeat them in his book. We will never know to what extent they were colored by his own views—at least he did not voice any disagreement here. It is astonishing how far he initially deviated from this stress on personal experience and the aesthetic in a discussion with fellow poets and writers recorded by Radio Pakistan on 5 October 1974[3], that is in the same year in which he started to put together *Mah-o-sāl*. Here he went on to underline the importance of collective experience, almost to the exclusion of the personal, individual element, until one of his interlocutors reminded him that his poetry would lose most of his impact without the personal involvement felt in it. Faiz then argued that when he became more mature he realized that political or ideological commitment can only be integrated into poetry when it forms part of the poet's personality. Only if it is an inseparable aspect of his inner life and his emotional experience can it find aesthetic expression. He named the period of his confinement in jail as the turning point in this regard. In a way, this statement mirrors Hikmet's perspective paraphrased above.

[3] Part 4 of the interview, available at: http://www.youtube.com/user/radiopakistanonline. This interview has recently been made available to the public by Radio Pakistan on YouTube.

During their meetings Hikmet occasionally also recited some verses. Faiz mentions that he included some translations although he was conscious of the fact that they could hardly convey the beauty of the original (*"tarjume men un kā husn kyā dikhā'ī degā. bahar hāl do cār tarājim agle bāb men śāmil hain."*, MoS: 79). Faiz goes on to say that several poems he wrote in Moscow and published in *Mah-o-sāl* are probably a result of these discussions with Nazim Hikmet. ("*Is mauzū^{c} par hamārī ka'ī bār guftugū hu'ī aur ba^{c}z nazmen jo main ne māsko men likhī thin aur is kitāb men dūsrī jagah darj hain ġāliban inhī suhbaton se mutāsir hain*." , MoS: 77).

2. Translations

Before turning to Faiz's translations in his various collections, I would like to focus on two translations of Russian poems from *Mah-o-sāl* which are embedded in the text and were not included in Faiz's collected works but which are nevertheless worth mentioning. As far as I know Faiz has not left any note on his method as a translator. He did not know Russian or any of the other languages whose poetry he translated. But as I assumed, which was recently confirmed by Iftikhar Arif[4], he had the poems translated by his interpreters or sometimes by the authors, perhaps into English or even Urdu, and then produced his own poetic translation on the basis of those literal translations. In spite of this indirect mode of translation through the medium of a third language, some of the results work remarkably well and faithfully capture the mood of the original. Faiz was well aware of the problems of literary translations, and particularly of poetry. He was actively involved in translating Urdu poetry into English, and this experience probably helped him in working on his own Urdu translations.

In the following examples Faiz's translations will be contrasted with English translations of the original poems so that the reader can have an overview of Faiz's achievement. The first example is not very remarkable as far as its poetic quality is concerned. It simply conveys the basic meaning of the immensely popular Russian children's song 'Pust' vsegda budet solntse' composed by Lev Oshanin in 1962. Reportedly, the foundation for the song had been the four lines of the refrain, which were composed in 1928 by a four-year-old boy Kostya

[4] Oral communication on the occasion of the Faiz Centennial Seminar at the SOAS, London, on September the 17th, 2011.

Barannikov.[5] Faiz has also added a concept which is missing from the original—that of the homeland which makes his translation sound more patriotic than the original:

Faiz's Translation (MoS: 59)	**English (Literal)** [6]
یہ آ	A sunny disk,
	the sky's around (it);
یہ ؔ	This is a drawing by a young boy.
	He drew it on a sheet (of paper),
یہ ج	And signed in the corner:
میرا	Chorus:
	May there always be sun
میں	May there always be sky,
	May there always be mama,
میرا	May there always be me!

A much more poetic and creative translation is the following, and here, although Zoe Ansari's version of the title is more catchy, Faiz captured the atmosphere of the original somewhat better than Ansari, whose translation at places appears rather pedestrian in comparison to Faiz's although he knew Russian very well and translated from the original. It is the famous anti-war poem by Yevgeny Yevtushenko (1961):

Translation by Faiz (MoS: 60)	**Translation by Zoe Ansari** (Ansari: 147-148)	**English Translation by Leonard Lehrman**[7]
کیا ہم روسی جنگ طلب ہیں؟	چاہتے ہیں کیا روسی جنگ؟	**Do The Russians Want War?**
	پوچھو اس خاموشیٔ اس سناٹے	O, do the Russians
جا		long for war?
		Ask of the stillness

[5] http://www.songlexikon.de/songlexikon/songs/maytherealways, retrieved 11.01.2013.
[6] Ibid.
[7] http://ljlehrman.artists-in-residence.com/translations/DoTheRussiansWantWar.html, retrieved 15 September 2011.

evermore,	اَ
Ask of the field, or	سے
ask the breeze,	جو دور تلک بچھے کھیتوں،
And ask the birch and	میدانوں پر،
poplar trees.	پھیلا ہے دیوداروں اور کھلیانوں
Ask of the soldiers	پر
who now lie	
Beneath the birch	
trees and the sky,	
And let their sons tell	
you once more	
Whether the Russians	
long	
Whether the Russians	
long	
Whether the Russians	
long for war.	

	اس مغموم فضا سے پوچھو، اس
	خاموش ہوا سے پوچھو،
	جس میں جھول رہے ہیں پودے،
	دیودار اور چنار،
	جا ان کے نیچے کام آئے تھے بانکے کئی
	جو ہزار
	ال ان کی جگہ ان کے بچّے پل کر ہیں
	سا تیّار
	چا پہلے سے بھی جانتے ہو، اب جان لو
	پھر ایک بار
	کیا ہم روسی جنگ طلب ہیں؟

It needs to be mentioned, however, that Faiz translated only the first stanza, whereas Zoe Ansari translated the whole song. Both translators have used considerable poetic license, but how far have they succeeded in conveying the mood and the central ideas of the poem? As far as I can judge, Faiz has done quite well. His translation has a poetic quality of its own. The Russian original has a strict pattern of meter and rhyme which Faiz has tried to retain. Zoe Ansari took more freedom with the rhythm of the poem, but his translation is more faithful to the original wording of the poem. In one case this clearly is an advantage: The question "Do the Russians (really) want war?" in the Russian original does not include the speaker/lyrical voice, the Russians are named in the third person. It is difficult to judge why Faiz changed this line. Perhaps the translated version with which he worked created such a wrong impression, or he intended to intensify the impact of the line? As it is, to me Zoe Ansari's version appears more powerful. Urdu speakers, however, should better judge this.

From these two minor attempts we will now turn to Faiz's better known translations and adaptations most of which are included in *Nuskhahā-i vafā*. It is to Faiz's credit that he acquainted Urdu readers with the Soviet poets Rasul Hamza-

tof and Olzhaz Omar Ali Sulaiman to whom they would otherwise not have had access. Without the original poems to refer to I am unable to judge how faithful Faiz has been to the Russian[8] originals, but the translations are fine poems in their own right.[9] The fact that Zoe Ansari who knew Russian included Faiz's translations in his own collection[10] may also indicate that he approved of Faiz' renderings. No doubt Zoe Ansari put before the Urdu public a broader range of eminent Soviet poets, but his work probably reached far fewer readers than Faiz's select but few translations.

Poems by Rasul Hamzatof (1923-2003) form the final chapter of *Sar-i vādī-i Sīnā* (1971) which bears the title "*Dāġistān ke maliku-ś-śuᶜarā Rasūl H,amza ke afkār*" (Thoughts/Ideas of the Dagestani poet Rasul Hamza, NV: 465-473). There are a few deviations in the versions published in *Mah-o-sāl* under the heading "*Rasūl Ḥamzātof ke tarājim*" (NV: 115-122), and *Mah-o-sāl* contains one additional poem: *"Imdādī fanḍ keli'e sifāriś*" (Recommendation for a relief fund, MoS: 123). In *Mah-o-sāl* Faiz has reported that he grew so close to Hamza's poetry that he translated several of his poems almost in one sitting ("*… Rasūl Hamza kā kalām to itnā mānūs ho gayā ki main ne qarīb qarīb ek hī naśast men un kī cand nazmon kā tarjuma mukammal kar liyā"*, 97). When we look at the poems he has chosen for his translations we cannot fail to notice that with few exceptions they express very individual, subjective concerns, emotions and yearnings, dealing mainly with subjects such as love and death. Social aspects do, however, surface in some poems. One of them, "*Ba nok-i śamśīr"* (At the sword's point) is reminiscent of Ghalib's utterance about the martial tradition of his family, contrasting it with his

[8] Both poets dealt with here write in Russian.

[9] Tracing the original texts and comparing them with the translations would no doubt provide an interesting field for further study. What can be safely said about the translations, however, is that they seem to reflect a reader-oriented approach, reproducing some of the alien ideas and images of the original but presenting them in a familiar idiom. Translating through a third language may have watered down some of the original concepts and images but without having all versions before us this really cannot be judged. As I have noticed while comparing German translations of Premchand's stories from Hindi/Urdu with those from English, a translation from English does not necessarily produce inferior results as long as the translator is well-versed in both the source as well as the target culture. Hence the fact that all translated authors discussed in this chapter were Muslims probably made the process of cultural translation easier for Faiz.

[10] This fact has created some confusion about the authorship of several translations in Faiz's collections. Zoe Ansari, however states very clearly in his selection of translations from Russian that he has included Faiz's translations in his book: *'Rasūl Ḥamzātof ke dost Faiz Ahmad Faiz ne un men baᶜz ko urdū libās ᶜatā kiyā thā aur ham ne vah bhī śāmil kar liye*' *Soviyat yūniyan ke pandrah śāᶜiron kā muntakẖaba kalām*, Māsko 1974, 108. He has not marked the respective translations, hence one may assume that they consist of those which were later included in Faiz's own collections of poetry.

own career as a soldier of the pen. It is quite possible that Faiz translated this very poem because the similarity in thought and expression held a special appeal for him. This is his translation (NV: 468, MoS: 118):

بہ نوکِ شمشیر **At the point of the sword**[11]

میرے آبا کہ تھے نا محرمِ طوق و زنجیر	My forefathers who were strangers to yoke and chain
وہ مضامین جو ادا کرتا ہے اب میرا قلم	Wrote on the point of the sword with
نوکِ شمشیر پہ لکھتے تھے بہ نوکِ شمشیر	the point of their sword
روشنائی سے جو میں کرتا ہوں کاغذ پہ رقم	The themes which I write down with my pen.
سنگ و صحرا پہ کرتے تھے لہو سے تحریر	What I put to paper with ink
	They inscribed on the rocks with their blood.

The first line, "my forefathers who were strangers to yoke and chain" may point at the strong sense of pride, freedom and independence of the poet's tribe. He makes it quite clear that, although writing in Russian, he belongs to a culture which is distinctly different from the Russian culture of the centre. On the other hand, like all Soviet peoples his tribe took part in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. He refers to it in his touching poem "*Bhā'ī*" (Brother, NV 466, MoS: 116):

بھائی **My Brother**

آج سے بارہ برس پہلے بڑا بھائی مرا	Twelve years ago from today
اسٹالن گراڈ کی جنگاہ میں کام آیا تھا	My elder brother was killed in Stalin-grad
میری ماں اب بھی لئے پھرتی ہے پہلو میں غم	My mother is still nurturing her pain
جب سے اب تک ہے وہی تن پہ ردائے ماتم	Is still wearing the dress of mourning
اور اس دکھ سے میری آنکھ کا گوشہ تر ہے	And my eyes fill with tears when I re-member
اب مری عمر بڑے بھائی سے بڑھ کر ہے	That I am older now than he could ever be.

[11] Unless otherwise indicated, the English translations are mine. No attempt has been made to arrive at a poetical rendition as this would be beyond my capacities.

So while stressing a distinct cultural identity, the poet sees his family firmly grounded in the Soviet mainstream through the sacrifice of his brother's life in the battle of Stalingrad which formed the turning point in the war against the German aggressor, with his mother sharing the grief of millions of other mothers.

In the poem "*Sālgirah*" (Birthday, NV: 470, MoS: 120) we may detect a satirical aside against poets which are celebrated by the regime but are devoid of any literary merit:

سالگرہ **Birthday**

شاعر کا جشنِ سالگرہ ہے، شراب لا
دولت ہو یا خطاب، انہیں کیا نہیں ملا
بس نقص ہے تو اتنا کہ ممدوح نے کوئی
مصرعہ کسی کتاب کے شایان نہیں لکھا

It is a poet's birthday, bring wine,
Riches and fame, what has he not
The only flaw in his career is this:
Not a single line of his is worthy
of publication.

Also written in an ironic/mocking way is the poem "*Imdādī fand ke li'e sifāriś"* (Recommendation for the relief fund, MoS: 123):

امدادی فنڈ کے لئے سفارش **Recommendation for a relief fund**

فنڈ والوں سے گزارش ہے کہ کچھ صدقۂ زر
سائل محولہ بالا کو ملے بار دگر
پوچ لکھتے ہیں جو وہ لکھتے ہیں تسلیم مگر
ان کی اولاد و اعزاء کو نہیں اس کی خبر
آل بیہودہ نویساں کے لئے نانِ جویں
ٹالسٹائے کے گھرانے سے اہم کم تو نہیں

The undersigned requests the allocators
of funding
To kindly bestow some financial aid
Again to the applicant mentioned below.
His writing is mediocre no doubt, but
then
His children and relatives don't know
about that.
The dependents of useless writers are
As needy as Tolstoy's descendents.

This tongue-in-cheek reference to the equal bodily needs of great and mediocre (or even worthless) writers and their dear ones may be based on the use and misuse of cultural institutions and official/state funding or also on the poor living conditions of unacknowledged writers.

Some of the translations have a *gīt*-like quality, combining a good share of New Indo-Aryan/Indic vocabulary with a melodious, mellow rhythm, such as in the poem "*Main tere sapne dekhūn*" (I dream of you, NV: 465, MoS: 115):

میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	I shall dream of you
برکھا برسے چھت پر، میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	May the rain beat on the roof, I shall dream of you
برف گرے پربت پر، میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	May the snow fall on the hill, I shall dream of you
صبح کی نیل پری، میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	May the blue dawn break, I shall dream of you
کوئل دھوم مچائے، میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	May the cuckoo shout, I shall dream of you
آئے اور اڑ جائے، میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	May he come and fly away, I shall dream of you
باغوں میں پتّے مہکیں، میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	May the scent of leaves fill the garden, I shall dream of you
شبنم کے موتی دہکیں، میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	May the dew drops shimmer, I shall dream of you
اس پیار میں کوئی دھوکا ہے	You are not a female, but some other thing Otherwise
تو نار نہیں کچھ اور ہے شے	Why would I dream of you all the time
ورنہ کیوں ہر ایک سمے	
میں تیرے سپنے دیکھوں	

As you see, it is full of references to the changing seasons as they are presented in the *bārahmāsa* tradition (the romantic image of the falling rain and the cry of the *ko'il*), added by a feature from the poet's *vatan*: snowfall in the mountains. Contrary to the Indic tradition, however, the poetic self, the lover, is a man, and the object of his love is not simply a "*nār*" (woman) but a rather elusive "*śai*" (thing). The poem thus presents a charming combination of the familiar with the unfamiliar, slightly opaque, all of it couched in an easy-flowing, soothing rhythm with an almost folksy air. Two of the poems given above, on the other hand, are much

closer to the Persianate diction of classical Urdu poetry. In the case of "Ba nok-i śamśīr" (Written with the sword) this may be attributed to the historical reference in the poem and perhaps also to the assumed link with Ghalib. With "Imdādī fand" the lofty, heavily Persianied and Arabisized wording highlights the ironic mode of the poem, contrasting the verbose language with very down-to-earth, materialistic concerns. In the brief poem "*Dāġistānī khātūn aur śāᶜir betā*" (A Dagestani lady and her poet son, NV: 467, MoS: 117) again the language is very simple and colloquial in accordance with the persona of the poem, a mother who confesses to be unable to understand her grown-up, famous son's words:

داغستانی خاتون اور شاعر بیٹا **A Dagestani lady and her son, the poet**

اس نے جب بولنا نہ سیکھا تھا	When he learned to speak
اس کی ہر بات میں سمجھتی تھی	I understood every word of his
اب وہ شاعر بنا ہے نام خدا	Now he has become a poet, God preserve him
لیکن افسوس کوئی بات اس کی	But alas
میرے پلّے ذرا نہیں پڑتی	I don't understand a word he writes.

This alienation, which is a common enough experience, would have been brought about by the generation gap, enhanced by the gap in education and by an upward social mobility facilitated by changes in the social system. The pedestrian language of the poem is in line with the professed ignorance of the first person persona. An interesting rhetorical device is the paradoxical contrast between the possibility of communication between mother and son before he learned to speak, that is on a non-verbal plane, and the complete lack of understanding now that he has mastered the language.

Out of two translations of poems by the Kazakh poet Olzhaz Omar Ali Sulaiman (Sulaimanof, born in 1936) in *Mah-o-sāl* only "Sahrā kī (ek) rāt" (A night in the desert, 124-125) has been reproduced in *Śām-i śahr-i yārān* (NV: 587-588). There are considerable differences between these two versions, perhaps based on a thorough revision by Faiz before *Śām-i śahr-i yārān* was published in 1978. The poem does not contain any reference to revolution, social change or state ideology. It could have been written by any poet anywhere in a similar setting, combining images of the surrounding nature with the inner landscape of man.

It is interesting to also look at the content of the second poem by Sulaimanof in *Mah-o-sāl*, "*Lailatu'l-qadr*" (The night of power, 126-127). Here the poet has taken up an important Islamic concept, again combining (partly personified) elements of nature (the moon, a river, rocks, trees, meadows etc.) with human activities (contemplation, devotion, prayer), ending on a lyrical note when the poetic persona voices its own concern—that its prayer may be heard and answered by the beloved (who seems to be more *majāzī* than *haqīqī*; MoS: 127):

۔۔۔یہ دعائیں سنے جانے کی رات ہے	…This is the night when prayers are answered
اور میں بھی بزرگوں کے مانند	And I, like my forefathers,
سڑکوں کے سیمنٹ	Walking on the prayer mat
کی جا نمازوں پہ چلتے ہوئے	of concrete roads,
زیرِ لب کچھ دعا کر رہا ہوں	pray under my breath,
اور یہ دعا تیرا نام ہے	and my prayer is your name.
کاش میری دعا آج مقبول ہو	If only my prayer will be answered today!

As mentioned above, it is striking that the poems chosen by Faiz do not contain any conspicuous "Soviet" element. He might have kept the Urdu reading public in mind, but first and foremost his choices would have been based on a pre-selection by the authors and on his own poetic preferences. His choice of authors, in a way, may be seen to reflect his own attitude toward the Soviet system and the socialist ideology of the Progressives. Rasul Hamzatof and Olzhaz Sulaimanof were both honoured members of the pan-Soviet literary establishment which guaranteed them "the right to limited dissent"—perhaps "the most beguiling of permitted privileges" (Ram: 292). Another important aspect of their work is the tension between writing in Russian, the mainstream, metropolitan language, and yet representing the periphery. Thus traces of their non-Russian identity are easily detected in their poetry and are much more pronounced in their prose writings. Hamzatof celebrated his homeland in the lyrical novel *My Dagestan* (1967-1971) which is a poetic blending of historiography, genealogy, literary history, general knowledge about the region and folklore. Sulaimanof in a talk with Faiz described the Kazakh people as a blend of "Turk traditionalism, Buddhist contemplation, Muslim collectivism and Western individualism" (MoS: 87). He "scandalized the Soviet

Academy of Sciences with the semi-academic tract *Az i Ia* (1975)"[12] in which he tried to trace Turkic elements in the language of the Russian epic "Slovo o polku Igoreve" (The song of Igor's campaign). Harsha Ram reads it as a "cultural manifesto" (Ram: 289) echoing third-world-nationalism and pleading for the ethnic dignity of his people within a culture of "'synthesis' and 'interdependence' between Slav and Turk" (Ibid.).

When we add to this concern with identity the common Muslim cultural background of the three poets and some shared literary traditions due to the strong influence of Persian on Indian as well as Turkic literatures it is easy to understand why Faiz was drawn to these authors with whom he perhaps felt a kind of communion. The tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar between Faiz's own reality and poetic context and that of his fellow writers may have generated an additional attraction. Thus we find in Faiz's renderings a vast repertoire of familiar tropes and images which are, however, combined with new, fresh images from a different geographical as well as literary landscape. To give only a few examples: In Sulaimanof's poems we come across rocks at the bottom of a mountain waterfall which appear to perform perpetual ablutions ("*ābśāron tale/ caṭānen hameśa se dn rāt/jaise vuẓū*^{c} *kar rahī hain",* MoS: 126), or a rivulet is compared to a silken turban which has been opened and unfolded ("*jaise reśm kī dastār ke sāre bal khul ga'e ho",* MoS: 127).

Now we will turn to poetry by Nazim Hikmet in whom Faiz apparently saw a kindred spirit. In Turkey the ban on Nazim Hikmet's works was lifted only in 1965, but his poetry was again suppressed after 1980. Despite political suppression and exile he is not only regarded as the greatest Turkish poet of the twentieth century and is revered as the national poet of modern Turkey, but also is the most widely read modern poet.[13] In the afterword of a recent German edition of Nazim Hikmet's selected verses, the editor and translator quotes the romantic German poet Novalis who called poetry "the self-awareness of the universe" (Kraft: 312), thus underscoring the importance of retrieving Hikmet's poetry for the present and future generations. It is a poetry based on the experiences of an extraordinary life and an exemplary dedication to freedom and equality, expressed in a very individual, intensely personal manner. And yet most of Nazim Hikmet's poems are sufficiently removed from the concrete experience, are abstract to such an extent that they acquire a universal appeal. Although his poetics is quite different

[12] http://www.erlanidrissov.com/?p=148, retrieved 14.10.2011. The title consists of two Russian forms, one archaic and one modern, of the first person pronoun 'I'.

[13] A brief, but comprehensive biography of the poet is available at: http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/nazim_hikmet/biography

form that of Faiz, at least of Faiz as a ghazal poet, they share this element of poetic abstraction or generalization which may be the reason for their popularity among a wide audience many of whose members have differing political commitments and don't always share the ideological persuasions of the two poets.

Apart from publishing the poems in *Mah-o-sāl*, Faiz also included three of his Nazim Hikmet translations in his collection *Śām-i śahr-i yārān* (1978, NV: 583-586). There are some minor differences between the earlier and the later versions, suggesting that Faiz slightly revised them after the first publication. The first example is not included in *Nuskha hā-i vafā*. There are several English translations of this poem which is part of a much longer piece. Here are two of them:

3[14]

Sunday today.
Today they took me out in the sun for the first time.
And I just stood there, struck for the first time in my life
by how far away the sky is,
how blue
and how wide.
Then I respectfully sat down on the earth.
I leaned back against the wall.
For a moment no trap to fall into,
no struggle, no freedom, no wife.
Only earth, sun, and me...
I am happy.

Today Is Sunday (Bugün Pazar)
(**Letters From A Man In Solitary Confinement, Part 3)** [15]

Today is Sunday.
For the first time they took me out into the sun today.
And for the first time in my life I was aghast
that the sky is so far away
and so blue
and so vast
I stood there without a motion.
Then I sat on the ground with respectful devotion
leaning against the white wall.
Who cares about the waves with which I yearn to roll
Or about strife or freedom or my wife right now.
The soil, the sun and me...
I feel joyful and how
(1938)

[14] Trans. by Randy Blasing and Mutlu Konuk (1993), retrieved from http://www.cs.rpi.edu/~sibel/poetry/nazim_hikmet.html, 15 September 2011.
[15] Translated by Talat Sait Halman. (Literature East & West, March 1973), retrieved from http://www.cs.rpi.edu/~sibel/poetry/nazim_hikmet.html, 15 September 2011.

Now look at Faiz's translation (MoS: 134-135):

جیل سے خط:۲	A letter from prison: 2
آج پیر کا دن ہے	Today is Monday,
اور آج پہلی بار	And today for the first time
وہ مجھے باہر کھلی ہوا میں لے کر گئے	They have taken me out into the open.
آج زندگی میں پہلی بار	Today for the first time in my life
میں نے بہت حیرت سے دیکھا	I saw with wonder
کہ آسمان کتنا نیلا ہے	How blue the sky is
اور کتنا دور	And how far away
میں دھوپ میں ساکت کھڑا رہا	I stood in the sun, motionless,
اور پھر ادب سے سر جھکا کر	And then with my head bent respectful-
پتّھر کی دیوار سے ٹیک لگا کر	ly
بیٹھ گیا،	leaning against the wall
اور پھر یکبارگی سب کچھ بھول گیا	I sat down,
خوابیں بھی	And suddenly I forgot everything
آزادی بھی	My dreams
اور تم بھی مری جان	Freedom
بس اک سورج، دھرتی اور میں	Even you, my dear.
اُف کتنا سُکھ ہے، کتنا سُکھ ہے	Only the sun, the soil and I
	What a bliss, what a bliss

This passage is part of one of the numerous prison poems of Nazim Hikmet. You will notice that there are two minor mistakes (the number of the poem and the

name of the day), probably caused by misunderstanding the literal translation on which Faiz based his adaptation. Apart from these deviations, he successfully captured the mood and central ideas of the poem, at least as far as can be judged from the English translations[16]. The second English version has some end rhyme, trying to imitate the rhyme structure of the original, which does not necessarily make it a better rendition of the text. It is also more literal. In Faiz's rendition, on the other hand, apart from two lines there is no attempt to reproduce the rhyme structure of the original.

Solitary confinement and exile were shared experiences of both authors, as was their commitment to ideals of freedom and social justice. In part 4 of the interview with Radio Pakistan Faiz mentions the sense of wonder at simple, everyday experiences he regained when he was in solitary confinement, without access to the outside world, to newspapers, books and a writing pad, and he compares it with the innocent impressions experienced by a child. Thus the joyful experience expressed by Hikmet was something he was familiar with, and Hikmet's poem probably revived this memory in him. From Faiz's reminiscences and his translations one gets the impression that with Nazim Hikmet he felt connected by a much stronger emotional bond than with the other foreign poets he had met in the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence.

One of Nazim Hikmet's latest poems, composed shortly before his death, is addressed to his Russian wife Vera (Hikmet: 298)[17]:

Faiz:	ویرا کے نام	**Vera'ya**	**To Vera**
She said come	اس نے کہا آؤ	Gelsene dedi bana	Come, she said to me
Then she said stay	پھر اس نے کہا	Kalsana dedi bana	Stay, she said to me
Smile, she said	ٹھہرو	Gülsene dedi bana	Smile, she said to me
Die, she said	مسکاؤ کہا اس نے	Ölsene dedi bana	Die, she said to me
I came	مر جاؤ کہا اس نے	Geldim	I came

[16] Unfortunately I do not know the Turkish language and can therefore, apart from recognizing the rhyme structure, not compare the translations with the original.

[17] Faiz's translation is to be found in *Nuskhahā-i vafā*, 585. The Turkish original was taken from Nâzım Hikmet, *Hasretlerin Adi. Die Namen der Sehnsucht*, 298. The English translations are my own.

I stayed	میں آیا	Kaldim		I stayed
(I) smiled	میں ٹھہر گیا	Güldüm		I smiled
And also died	مسکایا	Öldüm	(1963)	I died
	اور مر بھی گیا			

Here the contrast in form and structure is obvious. Hikmet's poem is austere and laconic to the extreme. Not a single word could be removed without destroying the effect of the text. The parallelism of the lines creates an impact which one is bound to feel but which is hard to define. The very regular rhythm creates a solemn, hammering beat which almost announces/suggests inevitability. The rigid sequence of verbs denotes a sequence of events and at the same time may be understood to hint at a causality which the lyrical self is not able or/and not willing to escape. The ambiguity between the metaphorical and the literal meaning of "to die (for somebody)" opens up a number of associations: A lover may profess his willingness to die for the beloved, or he may let his old/previous self die and leave his past behind to start a new life with the beloved, and, more literally, it may refer to Nazim Hikmet's knowledge that after two heart attacks the third could occur at any time. Thus the somewhat mystifying effect of these few lines relies on the unsaid which allows for several interpretations. And finally the minimalistic form also evokes the sense of time running out for saying what one wants to say. Faiz's translation has mellowed down the harshness and austerity of the original. Perhaps he was not aware of the original form and thus could not aim to reproduce it. It is also possible that he felt the Urdu verbs would not allow a similar parallelism in sound. Whatever the reason, Faiz's changes have considerably reduced the impact of the poem.

The last piece in Faiz's collection which refers to Nazim Hikmet is "*Turk śā*^{c}*ir Nāzim Hikmat ke kuch afkār*" (Some thoughts of the Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet, NV: 694). Here Faiz has freely summarized some of Nazim Hikmet's—and probably, at least partly, his own—ideas and ideals. The first stanza corresponds with two lines from Hikmat's poem "Hymn to life" (Yasamak kasideleri):

Faiz:		Nazim Hikmet:
	جینے کے لیے مرنا	... not to live in order to die
What a pleasure it is		
	یہ کیسی سعادت ہے	but to die to live..."[18]
To die for living		
	مرنے کے لیے جینا	
And what a folly		
	یہ کیسی حماقت ہے	
To live for dying		

The second stanza is taken from Hikmet's famous "Epic of the War of Independence" which he began to write in 1941 and which refers to the liberation war of 1924. It appeared separately under the title "Invitation" (Davet) in 1947. These lines have since turned into a proverb in Turkish:

Faiz:		Nazim Hikmet:
	اکیلے جیو	
Live alone	ایک شمشاد تن کی	To live like a tree alone and free
Like a box tree		Like a forest in brotherhood
	طرح	
And live in company		This is our dream.[19]
Like a forest		
	اور مل کر جیو	
	ایک بن کی طرح	

The final three lines are close to and yet not identical with ideas Faiz had expressed in several poems about the dilemma of warring loyalties. For Nazim Hikmet living life in its fullest sense and loving as much and as many times as possible went hand-in-hand:

Faiz:
Sustained by hope
I lived life with as much

[18] The preceding lines provide a context for this idea: "My hand thinking on my wife's flesh/is the hand of the first man./Like a root that finds water underground,/it says to me:/"To eat, drink, cold, hot, struggle, smell, color ... not to live in order to die/but to die to live...", retrieved from: http://www.sanjeev.net/poetry/hikmet-nazim/hymn-to-life-184211.html, 24.11.2011.

[19] Retrieved from: http://www.nazimhikmet.org.tr/kronolojik3-en.asp, 15 September 2011. I was unable to trace the translator of these lines. They have become so popular and have been translated into so many languages that they have really turned into a proverbial saying and as a slogan have been used by many different movements and individuals.

intensity As I loved you[20]	ٹو جِ

So far I have not been able to match the last stanza with any particular passage from Hikmet's poetry, but since I do not have the whole corpus of Hikmet's poetry before me in English or German translation it is quite possible that Faiz's lines are more or less closely based on Hikmet. But even if this is not the case, they beautifully sum up Hikmet's passionate dedication to life (including his political commitment) and love and his irrepressible hope and steadfastness against all odds.

As I have demonstrated, Faiz's rendering in Urdu works very well. However, the context was different for Faiz than it was for Nazim Hikmet. While Hikmet wrote poems on theses lines in the 1930s and 1940s, these themes are found in Faiz's later poems published after his death and can thus be regarded partly as homage to Hikmet and also as part of Faiz's legacy. One cannot fail to notice the marked difference between Hikmet and Faiz, who had his poetic persona declare time and again that the affairs of the world did not allow for complete dedication to love and that it left both tasks incomplete, as summed up in the following lines[21]:

کام عشق کے آڑے آتا رہا	Work got in the way of love
اور عشق سے کام الجھتا رہا	And love in the way of work
پھر آخر تنگ آ کر ہم نے	Fed up I finally
دونوں کو ادھورا چھوڑ دیا	Left both unfinished

Faiz clearly attributes the thought of a perfect blending of both aspects to Hikmet, but perhaps he finally arrived at a more conciliatory judgment also with regard to his own life.

As has been discussed, apart from the short translation of Russian songs mentioned above all translations are of poetry by Muslim writers. I would attribute this to a cultural and particularly literary affinity Faiz perhaps felt with these writers. Most probably none of them was eager to stress the religious aspect of his

[20] Here the translation is mine.
[21] From "*Kuch ᶜiśq kiyā, kuch kām kiyā*", *Nuskhahā-i vafā*, 542.

identity and their exchanges took place in an overall secular setting and atmosphere. Yet one cannot help feeling that Faiz took a deeper interest in Turkey and in the Muslim republics of the Soviet Union that he several times compared with the Northern Areas of Pakistan. To this was later added a strong involvement with the Palestinian cause.

3. Selected Free Verse inspired by Foreign Poets

Is there a marked difference between Faiz's ghazals and most of his *pāband nazm*s on the one hand and his free verse on the other? His free verses form the smaller part of his poetic oeuvre, and as far as popularity is concerned, with some exceptions they are at the lower end of the scale. While this can be said about free verse in Urdu in general which has never gained much popularity outside the inner circles of fellow poets and literary critics, it is particularly true for Faiz who owes most of his fame to his ghazals. His ghazals are praised for their "mysteriousness", their "transcendental" and "dreamlike" atmosphere[22], and in Aamir Mufti's words:

> At its best, the Urdu lyric verse of Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) can make available to the reader a disconcerting form of ecstasy, a sense of elation at the self being put in question, giving even the thoroughly secular reader the taste of an affective utopia not entirely distinguishable from religious feeling. (Mufti: 210)

In contrast, is it just the "sober[23] intellectual effort and didactic purpose called for in the 'new' world" (Ibid.) that we find in Faiz's free verse, transposed from the concerns of the late nineteenth century into those of the 1960s and 1970s? Or can the lyric element, the deep personal involvement of the poet be traced in his free verse as well? Aamir Mufti states that Faiz's "most intense poetic accomplishments are examinations of subjective states" (Mufti: 211) which seems obvious enough and he demonstrates how Faiz achieves this lyric quality in poems written on topics such as the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 (Mufti: 226-230). Do we find the same lyric intensity and intimacy in Faiz's "internationalist" poems? An interesting idea voiced by Aamir Mufti and corroborated by Faiz's own statements and poetic practice is that his poetry "pushes towards ending the inwardness of the Urdu poetic tradition" (Mufti: 218) How much was he influenced in this by keep-

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[22] "*pur asrāriyat, mā varā'iyat, khvābnākī*", Mujtabā Husain in "*Surx bar siyāh*", in *Faiz Ahmad Faiz. Faiẓ Sadī: muntakhab mazāmīn*, p. 75.

[23] How "sober" the poetic products in Urdu of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries really were is debatable, though. Whatever the underlying purposes, the results were often highly emotional, not seldom bordering on the sentimental.

ing company with other writers? As he states in *Mah-o-sāl*, the most important factor was the company of Soviet and other writers which also served as an impetus and inspiration and provided new perspectives and patterns of writing. The poem "*Intisāb*", for instance, written over a span of several months, partly in Moscow, partly in Sochi, was inspired by Pablo Neruda. "*Rang hai dil kā mire*", "*Āhista*" and some others were written in the mode (*rang*) of Nazim Hikmet.

There can be no doubt that the number of free verse or less *pāband* poems increased in Faiz's collections published from the 1960s onward. It seems quite likely that this was in part due to his longer stays in London and his frequent visits to Moscow and other countries and his close contact with writers of other languages. Free verse had been practiced in Urdu before, but perhaps Faiz's poetic temperament was more inclined to classical forms which he continued to write until the end of his life. Was there any marked difference between poems in more rigidly structured forms and his free verse? The answer is yes and no. It really depended on the theme and content of the poems which I will try to illustrate by a few examples.

The poems "*Rang hai dil kā mire*" (Such is the color of my heart, Moscow 1963) and "*Manzar*" (A scene, Moscow 1964) which according to Faiz were written in Nazim Hikmet's *rang* are very personal, intimate poems about human relationships, loneliness, separation and longing. They are indeed quite close to the mode and atmosphere of many corresponding poems by Nazim Hikmet, but at the same time deeply steeped in the classical tradition of Urdu. As in the poems discussed by Aamir Mufti (Mufti: 240), here again we find quotations from and allusions to Ghalib (Faiz: "*rang hai dil kā mire 'khūn-i jigar hone tak*'", NV: 360, Ghalib: "*dil kā kyā rang karūn khūn-i jigar hone tak"*), also in the poem "Pās raho"[24] (Stay close, Moscow 1963, NV: 362-363, MoS: 100-101) following immediately after "Rang hai dil kā mere" (Ghalib: "*kām vah ān parā hai ki banā'e na bane"*, from the ghazal "*Nukta cīn hai ġam-i dil"*, Faiz: "*jab ko'ī bāt banā'e na bane"*, NV: 363, etc). And see how beautifully Faiz's "*Manzar*" echoes Valī Dakhinī's famous ghazal "*Kiyā mujh ᶜiśq ne zālim kū̃ āb āhista āhista"*. It is interesting to see how successfully Faiz has combined conventional Perso-Arabic poetic expressions such as *mahtāb, halqa-i bām, qabā, śīśa–o-jām* with more colloquial Indic words such as *jhīl, nīl, cupke se, pal* and verbs such as *tairnā, phūtnā, dhalnā*, thus creating a very mellow, intimate atmosphere (NV: 368-369):

[24] In *Mah-o-sāl* the title was changed to "*Tum mire pās raho*".

رہ گزر، سائے، شجر، منزل و در، حلقہ بام	A road, shadows, trees, houses and doors, a roof
بام پر سینہ مہتاب کھلا، آہستہ	The moon rose over the edge of the roof, slowly
جس طرح کھولے کوئی بند قبا، آہستہ۔۔۔	Like a closed gown opens up, slowly
دل نے دہرایا کوئی حرفِ وفا آہستہ	My heart repeated a pledge of faithfulness quietly
تم نے کہا، "آہستہ"	You said: "Softly!"
چاند نے جھک کے کہا	The moon bent down and said:
، "اور ذرا آہستہ"	"More softly!"

Iftikhar Jalib in 1966 had aptly described Faiz's use of the word *āhista* in the poem as a descend in nine stages from the rooftop to the interior of the house and the meeting place of lovers.[25]

The poems mentioned above are lyric poems in the best sense, expressive of intense personal feelings. Similarly emotional and intense, but on another plane, is the slightly later poem "*Socne do*" (Let me think, Moscow 1967, NV: 417-419) which is dedicated to the eminently unconventional experimental Russian poet Andrey Voznesensky (1933-2010)[26]. In this poem, the personal anguish extends to conditions beyond the private sphere which are only subtly implied in the poems mentioned above, but explicitly named here (NV: 417-418):

خون کا قحط پڑا	There is a scarcity of blood
گل کی شہ رگ پے	The artery of the rose
کڑا وقت پڑا	Is facing hard times
سوچنے دو	Let me think

[25] Cf. his article in Iftikhār Jālib (ed.), *Na'ī śā'irī*, Lāhaur: Idāra Na'ī Matbū'āt, 1966, 263-264; quoted from: *Bunyad*, Vol. 2:1 (2011), Lahore: LUMS, 51-53.
[26] English translations of some of his poems can be found at: http://vagalecs.narod.ru/Voznсoll.htm#THE%20%20ANTIWORLDS

I do not know the exact circumstances under which the poem was composed or the question(s) it answers, but without knowing the context one may relate it to the political conditions in Pakistan, the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 or to the events of the Subcontinent's partition. It can have a universal appeal referring to situations of estrangement, disillusionment, or homelessness, most directly in the following lines (NV: 418):

ہم سے اس دیس کا تم نام و نشاں پوچھتے ہو	You ask me about a country
جس کی تاریخ نہ جغرافیہ اب یاد آئے	Whose name and geography I no longer remember
اور یاد آئے تو محبوب گزشتہ کی طرح	And should I ever remember it would be as embarrassing
رو برو آنے سے جی گھبرائے۔۔۔	As meeting a former beloved

Whatever you may read in the poem, it successfully evokes a sense of sadness, regret or resignation. The answers given in the poem are deliberately ambivalent. As in any good poem, it is impossible to extract any single meaning from the text or to paraphrase its impact on the reader. An even more personal note is struck in the final lines of the poem (NV: 419):

ہم اب اس عمر کو آ پہنچے ہیں جب ہم بھی یونہی	I have now reached an age which makes me meet
دل سے مل لیتے ہیں بس رسم نبھانے کے لیے	My heart just for the sake of propriety
دل کی کیا پوچھتے ہو	What do you sask about my heart
سوچنے دو	Let me think

In contrast to the poems mentioned right now, a similar lyric quality and emotional intensity are hardly to be found in the famous "Intisāb*"* (Dedication, NV: 389-392) which according to Faiz was inspired by the famous Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904-1973). It is a kind of confession, a political statement, enumerating the underprivileged of Pakistan and the world and describing their grievances, but the personal touch is missing. It is a popular poem, no doubt, and has been used as a

kind of political weapon to make a statement, for instance by Sheema Kirmani[27] in one of her dance performances. This type of poetry has a practical value of its own, as had the *Agit-Prop-Literatur* of Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. The poem expresses a deeply felt pain about the wrongs done to the common people, and yet it feels more intellectual than emotional, perhaps because of the missing link to the poetic persona. Does the fact that the poem is incomplete perhaps indicate that Faiz was aware of this? Whatever the reason, this poem has a "Gebrauchswert" (practical value, Bertolt Brecht) which is completely different from his lyrical poems. It can easily be utilized for mobilization in public functions, rallies and the like—a function the other poems quoted above would hardly lend themselves to. It is thus much closer to the "sober intellectual effort and didactic purpose" of earlier reformist and revolutionary Urdu poetry. The lyrical poems, on the other hand, are perfect material for an individual reading which would allow the reader to reread any line as often as she/he wants and to ponder about them at her/his own leisure. There are no other poems said to be inspired by Pablo Neruda in Faiz's collections. Neruda besides being a very versatile, highly acclaimed poet enjoyed much respect and sympathy for his clear political stance, his courage and steadfastness. He had turned into a legend already in his lifetime. That Faiz did not try to translate any of his poetry may point to the fact that he did not establish as close a personal accord with him as with Nazim Hikmet, Rasul Hamza or Olzhas Sulaimanov, but this is only guesswork.

Quite a substantial part of Faiz's poetry is dedicated to the Palestinian cause with which he came into even more immediate contact when he shifted to Beirut as editor of *Lotus*. Faiz had been "a passionate advocate" of the idea of an Afro-Asian literary journal and already in 1963 had toured a number of countries to explore possibilities of its publication (Faiz 1986: 9). When the journal was finally founded in 1968 he was unable to leave Pakistan, but later on he established contacts with many Afro-Asian writers even before becoming the editor of *Lotus* in 1979. He was well aware of the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and other Palestinian writers whose works were regularly published in *Lotus* in English and French translations. In Beirut the editorial offices of Lotus were housed in the premises of the PLO which also provided equipment and transport as well as residential accommodation for the Chief Editor (Faiz 1983; 16). This arrangement lasted until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the sack of Beirut in 1982. The

[27] Sheema Kirmani is a famous classical dancer from Pakistan who is committed to the freedom of art and culture and the empowerment of women and is one of the founder-members of the theatre group Tahrik-i Niswan (Women's Movement).

offices were then shifted to Tunis, but by that time Faiz had already returned to Pakistan.

In some of his poems dealing with Palestine the imagery includes a high amount of Arabic and Persian expressions, thus for instance in the title poem of "*Sar-i vādī-i sīnā*" (At the Sinai, written after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, NV: 461-462), and sometimes also allusions to Muslim prayers and other religious vocabulary, as in "*Ek tarāna mujāhidīn-i falistīn keli'e*" (A hymn for the fighters of Palestine, Beirut, 15th June 1983, NV: 680-681). This text which right from the first line onward asserts the final victory ("*ham jīten* ge" – we will win) abounds in the terminology of holy war, martyrdom etc. Faiz's Palestine poems deserve a separate study which is beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice it to say that Faiz had already used religious vocabulary in other contexts, with "Ham dekhen ge" (We shall see) perhaps being the most popular example where the idea of overcoming tyranny and injustice and establishing equality and peace is linked with the concept of a righteous, divinely-ordained order as the final destiny of man. Interestingly, these allusions were missing in an earlier version ("*Tarāna*" (Hymn) published in *Dast-i sabā*, 1952, NV: 138) where there also is more stress on personal action and defiance, expressed in a number of imperatives (*uth baitho, calo, kholo*), advocating protest as in "*Bol*" (Speak, NV: 81-82). In the earlier poem the overall setting is thus more secular than in "*Vayaqba vajhu rabbika*", the famous hymn with the refrain "*ham dekhen ge*". It seems that with maturity Faiz returned to popular images and cultural symbols of his upbringing and his original surroundings. In an interview he stressed that "The actual meaning of religion is that it should be for the better and welfare of the common people." ("*Dīn ke sahīh maᶜnī yahī hain ki vah khalq-i khudā kī bahtarī aur bahbūd ke liye hai.*", Faiz 2010: 603) There can be no doubt that he was aware of the mass appeal of religious concepts, particularly of a popular Sufi variety, and several remarks in *Mah-o-sāl* indicate that he felt comfortably at home in a Muslim cultural environment. In Beirut he witnessed the Palestinian struggle very closely, and particularly the merciless bombing of Beirut and the Palestinian camps by the Israeli army in 1982 in which the offices of *Lotus* were razed to the ground. For several days he stayed in the house of the Palestinian poet Mouin Besieso where they were also joined by Mahmoud Darwish who had come from Paris[28]. The years in Beirut probably intensified Faiz's identification with the Palestinians which made him couch their battles in the terminology of a holy war. But as stated above, the whole corpus of Faiz's Palestine poems calls for a separate analysis.

[28] Faiz has given an eye-witness account of the events in an interview with Safdar Mir and others, see Faiz 2010: 589-616. In this interview he sharply criticized the inaction of other Arab countries.

Conclusion

To sum up, it appears that Faiz was extraordinarily successful in translating or adapting poetry of those writers with whom he shared personal experiences, commitments and persuasions, and was able to incorporate himself in the translation. Rasul Hamza's, Olzhas Sulaimanof's and Nazim Hikmet's works are a good case in point. The resultant texts are Urdu poetry without any trace of peculiarity or strangeness. Faiz picked up some new ideas and images from the originals, sometimes he also tried to recreate the rhyming patterns, but inevitably put the stamp of his own poetic sensibility on every text. In doing so he deployed the whole range of the Urdu lexicon, choosing words and tropes according to the theme and the persona of the poem. The authors whose works he chose for his translations and as a source of inspiration were either critical members of the Soviet literary establishment or communist writers and activists such as Nazim Hikmet and Pablo Neruda, but barring the Neruda inspired example the texts he engaged with were not overtly propagandistic or ideological. He thus succeeded in creating highly lyrical, sensual and deeply humane poems which could appeal to readers across a wide spectrum of persuasions and worldviews. And yet one never loses sight of a fundamental critical undercurrent which appears in the form of an absence. The sense of loss, separation, incompleteness and estrangement which pervades most of Faiz's lyric poems, apart from strictly personal deprivations and separations, is to a great deal based on dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in our world, and this is also the main factor providing the common ground for our appreciation of his melancholy and sadness, sharing which strangely enough is a source of aesthetic pleasure, catharsis and a feeling of communion.

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Cosmopolitan ventures during times of crisis: a postcolonial reading of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's "Dasht-e tanhai" and Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*[1]

By Amina Yaqin

In this essay I engage with two writers whose work includes elements of both internationalism and cosmopolitanism. Generations apart they connect with the idea of the national from positions of exile igniting a very contemporary and historical debate on the position of faith and the location of culture in the modern postcolonial nation. I argue that exile in the case of the Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz is informed by an internationalism tied to national sovereignty, whereas the British Pakistani novelist Nadeem Aslam responding to a post 9/11 world turns to a utopian model of cosmopolitanism, looking for the universal theme of love to repair a dysfunctional society. Since the terrorist attacks of September 2011, an international media response has overwhelmingly focused on the position of Pakistan as the most dangerous country in the world with headline framing narratives of terrorism and gender inequities forming key perceptions of its culture and society".[2] In the subsequent representations of Pakistan's political failure its lack of progress is often partly attributed to a deep-rooted cultural malaise that comes from a pre modern feudal society rejecting the call of modernity. Historically literary responses have offered a reflective counterpoint to such stereotypes. Diasporic writers such as Nadeem Aslam play an interesting role with Pakistan themed novels in English for consumption in a globalised world with their position as speaking subjects, whose narrative voice brings an authentic Pakistani perspective to the international stage with anthropologically styled narratives. While Aslam's 2004 novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* is not particularly invested in the idea of retrieving a core national identity as was Faiz, the resident poet of the immediate post national moment with his lyric poems, it is concerned with the depleted value system of Pakistani society at home and abroad. Early on in the novel we are told: "Perspective tricks the eyes and makes the snowflakes falling in the far distance appear as they are falling slower than

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[1] This essay borrows key ideas from my chapter entitled "Muslims as Multicultural Misfits in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*" in *Culture, Diaspora and Modernity in Muslim Writing* (Eds. Rehana Ahmed, Peter Morey, Amina Yaqin). New York: Routledge, 2012, pp.101-116.

[2] See Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin. *Framing Muslims: stereotyping and representation after 9/11*, Cambridge, Massachussetts: Harvard University Press, 2011.

those nearby" (Alsam 2004: 5). It is this idea of perspective that requires further contemplation. The novel offers many perspectives yet it also privileges certain views over others. Perspective is also something that Faiz with his views on Pakistani culture felt passionately about. My aim in this essay is to try and trace the trajectory of perspectives in specific contributions by Aslam and Faiz, both of whom share a radical heritage of Progressive modernism in Urdu literature. The Progressive Writers Movement in India in the 1930s drew its inspiration largely from a spirit of internationalism and left activism on a world stage. This international outlook reflected a cosmopolitan sensibility that is the glue that binds the postcolonial novelist and the lyric poet although both offer different contexts for it. Therefore it is necessary to situate the idea of the cosmopolitan in a contemporary context. I begin with an interrogation of some recent theoretical concepts on cosmopolitanism by scholars in the field of postcolonial studies; the cosmo-theory of Timothy Brennan that offers a materialist approach alongside the partial cosmopolitanism put forward by Kwame Anthony Appiah, based on a model of shared values, in order to develop a deeper cultural understanding of the common and divergent perspectives of the lyric poet and the postcolonial British Pakistani novelist in English.

In his book *Wars of Position: the cultural politics of left and right* Timothy Brennan in a chapter on "Cosmo-Theory" attributes a proliferation of writing on cosmopolitanism as a direct consequence of the fall of communism. He identifies cosmopolitanism as a local American idea embedded in liberalism and a material culture tying it to Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony and an "imperial cosmopolitanism". Brennan looks back to Gramsci's reading of Italian Catholicism as a model for "imperial cosmopolitanism" and a resonant example for the United States as a nation with imperial power. His key argument is that cosmopolitanism is tied to American corporate interests and offers a complacent depoliticised response to the inequities of globalisation. He puts forward a new term "cosmo-theory" as an alternative to what he considers an outdated model of cosmopolitanism. Cosmo-theory, critical of the American state project aligns itself with cosmopolitan intellectuals as a group and recognises a "natural alliance between the American cultural Left and Third World constituencies on whose behalf the former speaks in domestic contexts, and whose presence (imaginary of actual) is marshalled for salutary means at home" (Brennan 2006: 228). It is, he says, "generally aware of the danger of imperial apologetics. The critic states his or her opposition to 'reckless American expansion' and is vocal about the dangers of an uncritical multiculturalism" (Brennan 2006: 227).

A contrasting viewpoint on cosmopolitan as a desired for contemporary subjectivity is suggested by Kwame Anthony Appiah in his book on *Cosmopolitanism: ethics in a world of strangers*. He favours this term over

globalization and multiculturalism and sets out to "rescue" it from its "posture of superiority toward the putative provincial" (Appiah 2006: xi). In contrast to Brennan's materialist approach Appiah relies on a philosophic trajectory of relativism and rationality to argue for a figuration of the cosmopolitan that is more attuned to difference and tries to understand that through the difference of value systems. Drawing on themes of morality and values borrowing from the 3rd Century C.E. Stoic ideas of cosmopolitanism and a critique of eighteenth century positivism he specifies his position of "partial cosmopolitanism" as follows: "the one thought that cosmopolitans share is that no local loyalty can every justify forgetting that each human being has responsibilities to every other. Fortunately, we need take sides neither with the nationalist who abandons all foreigners nor with the hard-core cosmopolitan who regards her friends and fellow citizens with icy impartiality. The position worth defending might be called (in both senses) a *partial cosmopolitanism*." (Appiah 2006: xv)

He refers to the clash of positions in a post 9/11 world between "us" and "them" suggesting that such conflicts have hardened around the "fixity" of values. Appiah's conceptualisation of moral philosophy is a series of mirrors reflecting many truths rather than a singular image that divides the world into two halves. His view of the "partial cosmopolitan" is one who has to learn the art of conversation and to coexist alongside difference amongst fellow citizens. Appiah makes a distinctive separation between what can be identified as a community conscious metropolitan cosmopolitanism, that embraces values common to the western world, and what he calls a counter-cosmopolitanism, representative of the extremist elements of an Islamist globalisation exemplified by groups such as Al-Qaeda and linked to Hitler and Stalin, whom he refers to as cosmopolitanism's "noisiest foes". In his overall thesis the example of good Islamic cosmopolitanism is embodied in the mystical Sufi tradition as always. Historically speaking this is an area of Islamic practice which has been most acceptable to western governments, it is seen as the soft side of Islam. Critiquing this particular kind of representation Filippo and Caroline Osella have argued that in the longer tradition of sociological research on Islam there has been a noticeable trend of corroborating and celebrating "sufi-inspired forms of Islam as tolerant, plural, authentic … against a maligned Other of reformist Islam" (Osella and Osella 2008: 3).

Fully embedded in a normative imperial culture in the U.S. Appiah is mystified by the "high-octane anti Western rhetoric" amongst Islamist movements in Egypt, Algeria, Iran and Pakistan in response to "the woman question". "There are Muslims, many of them young men, who feel that forces from outside their society … are pressuring them to reshape relations between men and women. Part of that pressure they feel comes from our media. Our films and television

programmes are crammed with indescribable indecency. … We speak of women's rights. We make treaties enshrining these rights. And then we want their governments to enforce them". (Appiah 2006: 82-3).

The anti-western "other" who gets framed in this particular conversation is the modern Muslim citizen who remains anti-modern. In a manner reminiscent of Samuel P. Huntington's thesis on *The Clash of Civilisations* Appiah moves into his description of the anti- or what he calls the "Counter-Cosmopolitans". Drawing on Olivier Roy's monograph *Globalized Islam: the search for a new Ummah* he reiterates the identification of this outwardly westernised group as the new Ummah of global Muslim "neo-fundamentalists", those who believe in the fundamentals of Islam. This is the modern group stopping the progress that can be made by American society in its continuing march toward modernity (2006: 139). National American values and Islamic values are seen to clash and disturb the melting pot of multicultural communities at ease with each other. The discomfort comes mainly from issues such as honour killings recognised as a marker of pre-modern societies specifically Arabs, South and Central Asians who mistreat their women. These are not the partial cosmopolitans that Appiah has delineated in his thesis. Their values are a misfit in western societies.

Both Appiah and Brennan reject the notion of the multicultural in their respective positions of partial cosmopolitanism and cosmo-theory. Their interventions can be read as commentaries on the crisis of the national post 9/11. While Appiah marks a shift from a national trajectory toward a globalising vision Brennan returns to the idea of internationalism as conceptualised by Gramsci; an internationalism that includes a recognition of national sovereignty as a preferred model over an imperial cosmopolitanism that rides roughshod over civil society.

How do the tensions of nationalism, religion and an international cosmopolitanism play out in literary cultural representations written from within and outside Pakistan? What is the legacy of a diasporic and former imperial location such as Great Britain? A literary novel that incorporates some of these questions is Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*. Aslam prefaces a key reference to the iconic twentieth-century Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz with his naming of the home of a Muslim community in Britain as "Dasht-e-Tanhaii" variously translated by the author as "The Wilderness of Solitude" and "The Desert of Loneliness". This is a nod to Faiz's poem "Yad" (Memory) written in 1952. Aslam's ethnic minority characters – notably Pakistani - are stranded in a desolate fictionalised cold and hostile neighbourhood in the North of England. The hoped for union that is key to the romantic lyric by Faiz's verse has been worn thin by the wilderness of diasporic loss. It is this wasteland that serves as the backdrop for the honour crime that lies at the heart of the story.

The Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz can be read as an example of an

individual who responded to the politics of internationalism in the 1940s with his political and cultural affiliations. He was a Progressive poet and a key member of a major literary movement from 1936-1954 that spanned across India and later Pakistan. The term Progressive comes from the All-India Progressive Writer's Association that was formed in 1936. The Association was first established in 1935 in London and came under the influence of British literary figures such as the leftist Ralph Fox.[3] The Progressive group in London were also drawn into the 1st and 2nd International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture organised by French intellectuals in response to the crisis of culture in European society. In addition there was a strong political affiliation to the Communist party of India amongst the key membership of the Association. After Partition the Association was also divided and a new chapter established of the All Pakistan Progressive Writers Association. As a radical group the Progressives were committed to a revisioning of Indian literature from its pre modern traditions such as, bhakti devotionalism, folklore, religious epics and asceticism toward a modern outlook that focused on "scientific rationalism". They wanted to bring home realism and reality to Indian society. Saadia Toor has argued that in Pakistan, the Progressives were a fractured group with two factions, one still committed to a radical nationalism prescribed by the Left and the other more liberal part attracted to a conservative vision of the nation. As an activist Faiz was firmly on the side of the Left and attracted direct censure from the state in the form of imprisonment.

Alongside his socialist activism Faiz is best loved for his persona as a revolutionary verse maker for which he has a following in Pakistan and beyond. He is an organic intellectual in the Gramscian sense. Born in Sialkot in 1911, Faiz received his primary education at Murray College, Sialkot and completed his higher education at Government College, Lahore in Arabic and English literature in pre-Partition Punjab. His ancestory was not aristocratic but his father had served the royal family of Afghanistan and travelled to England to study, to train as a lawyer at Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn in London. In 1935 Faiz joined the staff at Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Amritsar where he taught English. In 1940 he secured a lectureship in English at Hailey College, Lahore. His first collection of poems entitled, *Naqsh-e faryadi* (The protestor's sketch) was published in 1941. In 1942 he joined the British Indian war publicity department in Delhi as captain, and was made a lieutenant colonel in 1944. "No one could have been made less for the army than Faiz, but he felt that in the struggle against Nazism and

[3] See Priyamvada Gopal *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the transition to Independence,* Routledge, 2005.

Fascism, if a uniform had to be worn then a uniform should be worn" (Hasan 1988: xv). He returned to Lahore in 1947 and began a career in journalism as editor of the new national daily *Pakistan Times* and its sister publication in Urdu, *Imroze*. He was firmly committed to the idea of national sovereignty but was faced with the haunting spectre of Partition and the ensuing experience of a permanent loss. His well-known and often quoted poem "Subh-e Azadi" August 1947 (Freedom's Dawn) captures the desolation of independence and Partition:

Ye dagh dagh ujala, ye shab gazida sahar
Vo intizar tha jis ka, ye vo sahar to nahin
Ye vo sahar to nahin jis-ki arzu lekar
Chale the yar ke mil jae gi kahin na kahin
Falak ke dasht men taron ki akhiri manzil,
Kahin to hoga shab-e sust mauj ka sahil,
Kahin to jake rukega safina-e gham-e dil.

Jawan lahu ki pur-asrar shahrahon se
Chale jo yar to daman pe kitne hath pare;
Diyar-e husn ki be-sabr khwabgahon se
Pukarti-rahin bahen, badan bulate-rahe;
Bahut 'aziz thi lekin rukh-e-sahar ki lagan,
Bahut qarin tha hasinan-e nur ka daman
Jigar ki ag, nazar ki umang, dil ki jalan,
Kisi pe chara-e hijran ka kuch asar hi nahin
Kahan se ai nigar-e saba, kidhar ko ga'i?
…
Najat-e-dida-o-dil ki ghari nahin a'I;
Chale-chalo ke vo manzil abhi nahin a'i.

This stain-covered daybreak, this night-bitten dawn
This is not the dawn of which there was expectation;
This is not that dawn with longing for which
The friends set out, (convinced) that somewhere there would be met with,
In the desert of the sky, the final destination of the stars,
Somewhere there would be the shore of the sluggish wave of night,
Somewhere would go and halt the boat of the grief of pain.

By the mysterious highroads of youthful blood
When (we) friends set out, how many hands were laid on our skirts'

From impatient sleeping-chambers of the dwellings of beauty
Arms kept crying out, bodies kept calling;
But very dear was the passion for the face of dawn,
Very close the robe of the sylphs of light:
The longing was very buoyant, the weariness was very slight.
-It is heard that
The fire of the liver, the tumult of the eye, burning of the heart,
There is no effect on any of them of (this) cure for separation.
Whence came that darling of a morning breeze, whither has it gone?
…
The hour of the deliverance of eye and heart has not arrived.
Come, come on, for that goal has still not arrived.
(tr. Kiernan 1971: 122,127)

It is a lyrical rendition that represents the aesthetic mood of an unrequited love and shies away from specific mention of the violence and dehumanisation of Partition except for the hinted at calling bodies. Crucially the journey to freedom remains unfinished amongst the friends who had set out for a particular destination toward emancipation and self-determination. In that crossing they turned a blind eye to the violence and destruction of the moment of decolonisation, a historical juncture marked by the permanent loss that is Partition. With this fracture they remain in a state of permanent exile. This state of "hijr" separation is something that seeps through in his poetry giving it a particular quality of nostalgia and loss.

"Hijr" as a representation of the unrequited love of the nation has many networks of circulation in Urdu poetry and has also travelled beyond Urdu to the secular English novel. The British Pakistani writer Nadeem Aslam who was born in 1966 in the city of Gujranwala located in the province of Punjab in Pakistan is someone who is deeply influenced by it. Aslam moved to the market town of Huddersfied in the county of Yorkshire in England with his family when he was 14. His father Mian Mohammad Aslam was a Communist poet and film-maker and a member of the Progressive Writers Association. According to Aslam, the reason for their move to England was his father coming under increasing surveillance in Pakistan because of his political views (Chambers 2011: 132-4). Aslam claims to have had little exposure to an English education until his arrival in England as he went to an Urdu medium school in Gujranwala. He published his first novel *Season of the Rainbirds* in 1993 and it won the Betty Trask award, followed by *Maps for Lost Lovers* in 2004 and *The Wasted Vigil* in 2008.

Maps for Lost Lovers is ostensibly a novel about the deep emotions of love and faith amongst ordinary British Muslims. It tells the story of a diasporic

family conflicted by the pressures of community, religion, nationality and multicultures. The story of Chanda and Jugnu's murder is narrated through the voice of Jugnu's brother, Shamas who is 64 years old, a poet, a socialist, and the Director of the Community Relations Council and his devout wife Kaukab. Shamas cast as the progressive father and husband lives to serve the needs of his community over and above those of his family. A large part of his character seems to parallel the legend of Faiz as an organic intellectual, a poet and an activist. In the novel the community regard Shamas as a good brother because despite having the financial means to move away he has stayed on, much to the dissatisfaction of his wife Kaukab. The counter foil to Shamas is his brother Jugnu, a highly educated well-travelled cosmopolitan lepidopterist whose has journeyed from Pakistan, via Moscow, to England, the US and has finally settled back in England. Jugnu is a rationalist: he has chosen a career in science, broadened his horizons through higher education, travel, and even owns a speedboat he has named 'Darwin'. Other than family affiliation it is difficult to understand why this cosmopolitan figure has chosen citizenship in the claustrophobic town of Dasht-e-Tanhaii, a place riddled by high unemployment and crime. Jugnu's characterisation puts forward an unproblematic representation of an Enlightenment intellectual who is a cosmopolitan devoted to the pursuit of love and making new discoveries. The representation of both brothers encapsulates an array of philosophic influences mapping an East-West tradition reminiscent of the ideals of a revolutionary national poet and an organic intellectual. The question I wish to raise here is: does Aslam's deployment of the novel form make it possible for him to represent inter community relations in British society as a straight forward divide between Eastern and the Western values? European versus non-European, or does his complex use of linguistic and artistic forms as paratextual devices offer a deeper intertextual layering of split diasporic subjectivities that can only be understood through a cultural transaction between the diasporic self and the home nation?[4] Can the characters in his novel outgrow their stereotypical identity formations around the woman question and successfully traverse a new cultural landscape to achieve a status of partial cosmopolitanism or will they join the ranks of its "noisiest foes" by retreating from British society? Is there a meaningful multicultural landscape that they can occupy?

Aslam's novel has many intertexts with an intra ethnic cultural tradition of love that is anti clerical deploying the motif of the folk tale romance known as the

[4] See Gerard Genette. *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*. Cambridge University Press. 1997.

qissa from Sindhi and Punjabi linguistic traditions such as, the story of Sassi Punnun and Hir Ranjha.[5] These stories of unrequited love, family honour and forced marriages encapsulate some of the themes Nadeem Aslam revisits in his novel. He deploys a genre of devotional Sufi literature, the qawwali, usually attached to patron shrines and the internationally recognised figure of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the renowned Pakistani singer/qawwal, as a real character in the novel who performs for the community giving them a live rendition of a local aesthetic form of devotional music. Underwriting the universal tragic folk tales are the realist tragedies of love for ill-fated lovers in the novel from different religions, classes, ethnicities. The folk tales are used polemically to explicate the tyranny of men toward women and to connect to a Sufi tradition that has traditionally relied on a feminine voice to represent oppression. The narrator offers us his own view:

> And always always it was the vulnerability of women that was used by the poet-saints to portray the intolerance and oppression of their times: in their verses the women rebel and try bravely to face all opposition. They – more than men – attempt to make a new world. And, in every poem and every story, they fail. But by striving they become part of the universal story of human hope – Sassi succumbed to the pitiless desert but died with her face pressed to the last sign of her lover (Aslam 2004:191-2).

The elite lyric aesthetic in Aslam's narrative reproduces this non-elite oppositional Sufi voice rooted in an expression of ecstatic faith. It is torn by the secularising voice of the national poet Faiz. The loneliness of the pitiless desert is hauntingly drawn from Faiz's "Dasht-e tanhai" paying a recognisable tribute to the poet, who is mentioned in the Dedication page alongside his father and the artist Abdur Rahman Chughtai with an acknowledgement to: "two masters who taught me, each in his own way, about what else is worth loving".

By invoking a living tradition of lyric poetry through intertextual references Aslam embeds an inter-generic reference in his novel that adds a deep layer of meaning to the Pakistani novel in English. In doing so he offers his own interpretation of the meaning of lyric poetry in a multicultural environment. This meaning is considerably different to the nostalgic representation in the filmic adaptation of Anita Desai's *In Custody* and in the novel itself. There the Urdu lyric is used as an emotive inter-generic device to depict a decaying cultural tradition. However, what is common to both diasporic novelists is the stylistic

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[5] See Farina Mir, "A Punjabi Literary Formation" in her *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab,* University of California Press, 2010.

device of the lyric to deepen the narrative voice and lend it an inner subjectivity (Frow 2006: 51-71)). Faiz's "Dasht-e tanhai" has at its heart the theme of separation and union and is closely connected to the Sufi expression of an unrequited love and desired for union.

Dasht-e tanhai men, ai jan-e jahan larzan hain
Teri avaz ke sa'e, tere honton ke sarab
Dasht-e tanhai men, duri ke khas-o khak tale
Khil rahe hain tere pahlu ke saman aur gulab
Uth rahi hai kahin qurbat se teri sans ki anch
Apni khushbu men sulagti hui maddham maddham
Dur-ufaq par, chamakti hui qatra qatra
Gir rahi hai teri dildar nazar ki shabnam
Is qadar pyar se, ai jan-e jahan, rakkha hai
Dil ke rukhsar pe is vaqt teri yad ne hath
Yun guman hota hai, garche hai abhi subh-e firaq
Dhal gaya hijr ka din, a bhi ga'I vasl ki rat.

'Yad' (Memory) from the collection *Dast-e saba* (1952)

My dearest I quiver in the desert of solitude
The memory of your lips, the shadow of your voice
In the desert of loneliness in the dust of separation
Your embodiment is in the flowering jasmine and the rose

Your warm breath is close to me as you draw near
Its fragrance faintly smouldering
Far – beyond the horizon – sparkling drop by drop
Falls the dew from your lover's eyes

With such love have you my love
Reached out to the inner core of my heart
That although it is the morning of separation it feels as if
The day of separation has passed and the night of union is here.

(Faiz 1952: my translation)

Published as part of his *Dast-e Saba* collection, composed during his prison years when he was charged with the conspiracy to overthrow the government of Liaquat

Ali Khan, it is a poem that reflects Faiz Ahmed Faiz's personal experience of incarceration, the pain of separation from his beloved and the longed for desire for union that sustains him in his loss. As has been argued by Aamir Mufti and Ted Genoways, with reference to Theodor Adorno's analysis of lyric poetry as essentially "social in nature", Faiz's lyric style can be read beyond the immediately personal level of the lover and his beloved and is deeply engaged with the historical processes of individual subjectivity in the postcolonial nation. Faiz's love lyric encapsulates a utopian desire for union that will somehow erase the "dagh dagh ujala" (the night bitten dawn) the more entrenched he becomes with politics in Pakistan. For Mufti, "the significance of Faiz's repeated use of *hijr* and its derivatives is that it imbues the lyric experience of separation from the beloved with a concrete historical meaning – the parting of ways or leave taking that is Partition". (Mufti 2007: 223) Mufti reasons that Faiz's lyric poetry with its constant referentiality to hijr takes his readers and listeners back to August 1947 and the minority status of the Indian Muslim. To some extent this is true in Aslam's novel as the story of Shamas and his brother Jugnu is embedded within another story, that of their father's Hindu identity lost in the RAF bombing of Gujranwala in 1919. Separated from his sister Aarti, the child Deepak eventually finds himself at a Sufi shrine and is given the name Chakor. He married Mahtaab whom he met at the shrine in 1922 and they have three children together and live in a house that is called Sohni Dharti (Beautiful land) in Lahore, resonating a patriotic Pakistani national song of the 1970s. Chakor regains his lost memory over time and when he develops pancreatic cancer as an old man his wishes are to be cremated as a Hindu and to be rejoined with his religious identity in death. This creates a furore amongst the family, notably the third brother who we are told is religiously minded and Shamas's wife Kaukab, who is also conservative coming from a cleric's family. The timing of Chakor / Deepak's death in the novel coincides with the year 1971 and the cessation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan. Thus the pain of hijr is continuously with us in the novel and exile happens to both Muslim and non-Muslim characters. The reader is frequently reminded of this pain by the larger than life spectre of honour crime that is the main plot and the shocking storylines that accompany it, for instance, the story of the Muslim girl who is beaten to death for having a Hindu lover. She dies during an exorcism to "rid her of djinns". Therefore both in Faiz's poetry and Aslam's novel the move to hijr may, in the first instance, mark the desire for an eventual union or return to a utopian Indian national identity that normalizes the Muslim, but this desire is torn by the need for social reform in Pakistan that will cultivate new inspirational directions, reversing the spiritual and political degeneration of the postcolonial period. Hijr is closer in spirit to the Ummah and its formative moment of the Islamic Hijrah (migration) marking the start of the Islamic

calendar with the migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E.

The experience of hijr for Faiz is an ever-changing one and meaning shifts in his verse from migration to exile. In his later collection *Mere dil mere masafar* (My traveller, my heart) the title poem "Dil-e man, musafar-e man" composed in London reads:

Mere dil, mere musafir
Hua phir hukam sadir
Ke vatan badr hon hum tum
Dain gali gali sadae'n
Karen rukh nagar nagar ka
Ke suragh koi pae'n
Kisi yar-e namabar ka
Har ik ajnabi se puchen
Jo pata tha apne ghar ka
Sar-ku-e nashanaaian,
Hamen din se rat karna
Kabhi is se bat karna
Kabhi us se bat karna
Tumhen kya kahun ke kiya hai
Shab-e gham buri bala hai
Hamen ye bhi tha ghanimat
Jo koi shumar hota,
Hamen kya bura tha marna
Agar ek bar hota!

My heart, my fellow traveller
It has been ordained again
That you and I be exiled
We call out in every street,
We scour every town.

In order to find a code
To a messenger of love
We ask every stranger
The address of our old home

In this town of unfamiliar people
We watch the days go by

At times talking to this visitor,
At times to that one

How can I articulate to you, my friend
The desolation of this night of loneliness
It would have been enough for us
If there was just some reckoning
Death would have been welcome to us
If it were to come but once
(Faiz 1978: my translation)

Written in London this poem captures the essence of the poet in exile, it reimagines the desert of loneliness from "Yad" in 1958 and transports the sentiments from the experience of a forced imprisonment to the location of a voluntary exile in a metropolitan city. The seduction of the lover's gaze has faded somewhat and the constant companion of the narrative voice is its own self. He experiments with the detachment of modernity referencing strangers, unfamiliar people and a lack of knowledge about a permanent home address. A figure comes to light who constantly feels the pain of separation and who is numbed by the repetition of loss. Although Aslam's novel does not directly reference this poem, it speaks to it through the continued use of the lyric as an emotive inter-generic device that expresses the loneliness of individual characters experiencing the alienation of exile.

Following in the footsteps of Faiz, who wrote a small collection of poems in Punjabi, Nadeem Aslam shifts the linguistic register from Urdu to Punjabi expressing the state of hijr through the lyrics of 'Dard di Raunaq' (The spectacle of Pain) by a Punjabi poet Abid Tamimi (d. 2006) in the novel.

Ki pata-tikana puchde ho-
Mere sheher da na Tanhaii ey
Zila: Sukhan-navaz
Tehseel: Hijar
Jeda daak-khanna Rusvaii ey.
Oda rasta Gehrian Sochan han, te mashoor makam Judaii ey.
Othay aaj-kal Abid mil sakda ey –
Betha dard di raunaq laii ey.
[…]
You ask for my address
My city's name is loneliness
District: The Relating of Tales

> Sub-District: Longing
> And its post office is Condemnation and Disrepute.
> The road leading to it is Devoted Thought, and its famous monument is Separation.
> That's where Abid, the writer of these lines, can be found nowadays –
> There he sits, attracting everyone to a lively spectacle of pain.
> (quoted and translated in Aslam 2004: 271)

These lines echo in the memory of the murdered girl Chanda's mother as she prepares to open the family shop for Eid. Like the other characters in the novel who are not marked as organic intellectuals Chanda's mother affiliates to her original home through a linguistic route, which is tied to a community identity rather than a national one. As a region that was torn apart by Partition the Punjab was host to over a million forced migrations. In remembering this poem, Chanda's mother is shown to associate with an aesthetic tradition that recognises loss of community, and the ensuing loneliness and separation as key signifiers of identification for migrants. It recalls a "structure of feeling" that is rooted in an oral tradition that includes Hir Ranjha as a key reference point.[6] Aslam's characters who are in a permanent state of exile from their home connect easily to this poetry of hijr and while existentially they are part of the Dasht-e-Tanhaii they inhabit, mentally they have never recovered from the original loss of separation. The loss from their immediate community is lost in the narrative of the nation and the Punjabi poet captures that sense of community identity through his linguistic register. The daughter, Chanda has been torn apart by many literal separations of divorce and is already lost as a respectable member of the local community. In remembering this poem Chanda's mother seeks solace in the universal theme of separation from the beloved as a diasporic individual who has been torn from her home and has like her daughter suffered the loss of community although for different reasons. As a partial cosmopolitan transnational Pakistani subject she is tied to a particular subjectivity and it is only her linguistic self-expression that gives her the space to mark her retreat and resistance from a dominant narrative.

Aslam's novel offers a syncretic view of Asian identities and influences but the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh inhabitants of Dasht-e-Tanhaii are torn apart by communal tensions, mixed love affairs and honour crimes destined to live separate lives. It is a claustrophobic town and its geography is superimposed with

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[6] I am borrowing the phrase from Raymond Williams who first coined it in *A Preface to Film* (with Michael Orrom, 1954) and developed it in later publications notably *Marxism and Literature* (1977).

the religious beliefs of its inhabitants with a lasting image of the cultural clash between Muslims and Christians reflected in the the architectural mapping of the streets: "The crescent faces the cross squarely across the narrow side-street" (Aslam 2004: 9). It is at this juncture that secular humanism and culturally diverse faith based communities can be seen as a site for the clash of civilisations and the lack of class mobility traps both sides into a constant state of misrecognition of the "other".[7]

The novel's central characters Shamas, Kaukab, Mah-Jabin, Chanda, Charag, Ujala are given names that recall the sun, the moon, stars setting up a cosmology that echoes some of the stock characteristics of the lyric. They represent light and darkness, enlightenment and ignorance. Early on in the novel a conversation between the two brothers reveals that they believe and trust science and scientists more than prophets and messengers of God (2004: 38). In this story the religious clerics and the secular left intellectuals are doomed to clash. The villains of the story and the perpetrators of the honour crime are Chanda's two brothers named "Barra" (Big) and "Chotta" (Small) who are enveloped by the darkness of the abattoirs they visit. They occupy the dark fringes of the novel with little characterization. Toward the end of the book when the honour crime has been traced to the perpetrators through the English Criminal Justice System, Shamas quotes a well known Punjabi couplet by the poet Munir Niazi (1928-2006) encapsulating the poignancy of the two lovers killed "*Kuj Sheher de loke vi zalam san / Kuj mainon maran da shauk vi si* […]. *On the one hand, the city surrounding me was easily provoked. On the other, I was curious about ways of dying*" (2004: 280). Shamas repeats these lines to Kiran looking to assign a moral victory to the murdered lovers. However, his mood is thwarted by Kiran, a Punjabi neighbour, who it turns out had been having an affair with one of the murderers, Chotta. She too had feared for her life in that relationship and a lover's tiff between the two had been a catalyst for the events of the fateful night that led to the murder of Chanda and Jugnu. Everyone in Dasht-e-Tanhaii lives in a state of hijr, it is not a state of ecstatic emotion as imagined in the love lyric but a condition of statelessness, of unbelonging and unworldliness. There is a radical Progressive spirit to Nadeem Aslam's writing ethic that draws from the earlier generation of intellectuals who wrote against the grain with a desire to unleash new and uncomfortable realities to their reading masses. Aamir Mufti suggests that the Indian Progressive Writers Movement of the 1930s embeds a national realism that in addition to mimesis entails a national "passage from primitivism to modernity". He goes on to argue that "Urdu literary culture in late colonial India

[7] See Charles Taylor "The Politics of Recognition," in Amy Gutman (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. (25-74).

is located ambivalently at the cusp of 'nation' and 'minority', resisting precisely the resolutions the Partition attempted to implement, that is, minoritization in India and nationalization in Pakistan". (Mufti 2007: 209). Strictly speaking that analysis does not hold true for Faiz who did look toward the resolution of the national in Pakistan. Nadeem Aslam has switched that focus to an engagement with notions of community. For Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers* is a revolutionary book because it engages with a real issue that has a negative impact on the lives of both Asian and Muslim migrants living in Britain. He has bared their subaltern Dasht-e-Tanhaii to a cosmopolitan English novel tradition. *Maps for Lost Lovers* offers an uneven and contradictory engagement with honour crime. On the one hand it is concerned to provide a forensic, pseudo-documentary analysis of a sociological phenomenon - albeit one already over-determined by Orientalist moral projections. On the other, the story of two lovers killed for their transgression is complicated by the additional factors of ghettoisation and lack of material resources and cultural capital. In an interview with the Pakistani writer Kamila Shamsie, Aslam describes himself as someone who lives in the west and is therefore aware of "its injustices and subtle repressions, but I also know this other world, and I have to bring news of it too".[8] The narrator in *Maps for Lost Lovers* is always concerned with the fate of girls and young women who are shown to be at the forefront of their community's absolutist approach to personal morality. We are told that, "A Pakistani man mounted the footpath and ran over his sister-in-law – repeatedly, in broad daylight – because he suspected she was cheating on his brother. … This was here in England and, according to the statistics, in one Pakistani province alone, a woman is murdered every thirty-eight hours solely because her virtue is in doubt." (Aslam 2004: 136) Aslam sees such atrocities, which often go almost unnoticed by the surrounding white majority society, as every bit as worthy of note as those more eye-catching spectacular acts of violence, such as that seen on 11 September 2001. For instance, in an interview with the *Independent* newspaper, he nails his colours firmly to the mast when asked how he might have framed the novel if he had set it in 2001 instead of 1997. He states, "In a way, the book is about September 11". He recounts how, when visiting Ground Zero in New York, he felt "disappointed and angry" with himself as a writer for not having been "rigorous enough to condemn the small scale September 11s that go on every day". For him, "Jugnu and Chanda are the September 11 of this book'". For Aslam as a novelist, there is an awareness of living in a post 9/11 world, "Most ordinary Muslims say, 'We just want to get on with our lives. Don't identify us with fundamentalists.' But it's a luxury. We

[8] Kamila Shamsie, 'Writer at Heart', *Newsline*, 1 July 2004. http://www.newslinemagazine.com/2004/07/writer-at-heart/. Accessed 15. 06.2011.

moderate Muslims have to stand up."[9] This "rigorous" positioning suggests that Aslam as a writer is inclined toward a value based model of partial cosmopolitanism as discussed by Appiah. While his predecessor Faiz remained an internationalist with a perspective that is closer to Brennan's conceptualisation of cosmo-theory. As has been shown in the essay neither of the theoretical conceptualisations are straight forward appropriations. However they help to delineate a cosmopolitan perspective that is shared differently by the lyric poet and the diasporic writer. Through their creative responses they offer complex patterns of representation beyond the national imaginary of a liberal secularism and religious community at times of international crisis.

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[9] Marianne Brace, 'Nadeem Aslam: A Question of Honour', The Independent, 11 June 2004. http://independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/nadeem-aslam-a-question-of-honour-731732.html (Accessed 7 March 2006).

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Finding Faiz at Berkeley: Room for a Celebration

By Laurel Steele

Kaun kahe kis samt hai teri raushniyon ki raah
Har jaanib benuur khari hai hijr ki shahir-panaah
Thak kar har su baith rahi hai shauq ki maand sipaah
Aaj mira dil fikr men hai

Ai raushniyon ke shahir
Shabkhuun se munh pher na jaae armaanon ki rau
Khair ho teri lailaaon ki, in sab se kah do
Aaj ki shab, jab diye jalaaen, uunchi rakkhen lau

…How will I return to you, my city,
where is the road to your lights? My hopes
are in retreat, exhausted by these unlit, broken walls,
and my heart, their leader, is in terrible doubt.

But let all be well, my city, if under
cover of darkness, in a final attack,
my heart leads its reserves of longings
and storms you tonight. Just tell all your lovers
to turn the wicks of their lamps high
so that I may find you, Oh, city
my city of many lights.

Lahore Jail, March 18
Montgomery Jail, April 15 (1954)

[from "City of Lights, (Ai Raushniyon ke shahir)"
Agha Shahid Ali, trans.][1]

Note on Diacritical Marks:

I have tried to simplify my diacritical marks as much as possible, because of the problem of formatting between different computers and typefaces. I also have tried to keep diacritical marks intact if I am borrowing them in a quoted title or

Laurel Steele

On a very damp and foggy Berkeley Sunday in September, which suddenly brightened by late afternoon, more than two hundred people gather—members of the academic community, the South Asian community, children, students, professors, local Berkeleyans. The setting for the occasion is one of Berkeley's landmark spaces, an elegant old room at the Bancroft Hotel. The crowd is here to celebrate the centennial of the birth of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the Urdu poet. Within the Arts and Crafts Great Hall of the hotel, the jewel-colored stained glass glows as the sun sets. Dark wood, built-in book shelves and an enormous fireplace combine to make a visual statement about Berkeley at its intellectual best and give the event weight: the weight of history, of past artistic traditions and of universal cultural achievements. We are indeed in the "City of Lights," anticipating an evening of Faiz returning to us. Filling the hall, there is also, more prosaically, a scent of spices. Tea is to be served after the program, courtesy of Curry Village Foods.

All over the world, Faiz Ahmed Faiz's birth centennial year is now an occasion for such celebrations. Faiz's poems are read and recited. A daughter—if the program is lucky—or friends, increasingly fewer, and admirers speak. Bits of history and biography are recalled. Academics read papers. Singers sing. From New York to London to Sydney, with many stops in South Asia in between, the festivities are in progress. Indians and Pakistanis, the South Asian Diaspora and everyone who knows Faiz, all are embracing a beloved hero. There is no other Urdu poet, born in the twentieth century, who could command such a worldwide celebration.

Because of the all-encompassing, inclusive nature of conferences and symposia about Faiz in North America or in Europe, these fora reflect what it means to study Faiz, and more generally, Urdu literature, in a western context. Certainly, there may be academic debates about the exact place Faiz should occupy in the Urdu firmament along with older and younger contemporaries, like a Majaz or an N. M. Rashed. But for all practical purposes Faiz's name, for the current generation of Urdu readers and poets, is synonymous not just with Urdu

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other cited reference. Thus, there is no one system of transcription used in this paper.

[1] All of the translations of Faiz by Agha Shahid Ali are from his work, *The Rebel's Silhouette: Selected Poems by Faiz Ahmed Faiz*. Translated and with a new Introduction. First published in 1991. Rev. ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).

poetry but with Urdu itself.

So the September 2011 Berkeley program, "Guftagu: Celebrating Faiz Ahmed Faiz," ("Guftagu" means "conversation" in both Urdu and Persian) in all its complex detail, is bound to be a reflection on Urdu in North America, and much else besides. No surprise then that the atmosphere in the elegant old hall is electric, and thick with a sense of anticipation worthy of a significant cultural event.

But ephemera like this occasion evaporate, and Urdu scholars frequently bemoan what is lost, un-captured, or distorted in their literary history. We all know that events such as this one are indeed evanescent; like theatrical productions or even parties, they happen, things are said, and then, unless the occasion is recorded on camera, and often even if it is, the actual flavor of the experience is unknowable.

Rather than lose the performative aspect of this event, or have it disappear after a news story or internet posting about it, we can better preserve the meaning by putting it in context and by examining its details. If we look closely at this particular Faiz celebration, this one at the University of California at Berkeley (Cal), we can ask, specifically, what is the nature of the event, this Guftagu? Who is the Faiz that emerges? How do we celebrate and what does it mean? By capturing and reading the performance, we can utilize the celebration to look at complex issues concerning the poet and his legacy. Because, after all, here is a gathering, in real space and in real time, in the United States, where the participants are thinking and talking about Faiz Ahmed Faiz. So let us listen to the Guftagu at Cal.

The Berkeley crowd had gathered in the hotel's narrow lobby early. An excited father shepherded his wife and two dressed-up little girls, with hair ribbons and frilly socks, in front of the receptionist. "I hope you have enough chairs!" he said.

"What is going on exactly?" asked the young man behind the counter, as people rapidly lined up behind the father.

"This is the most important poet. An Urdu poet. Faiz Ahmed Faiz. There will be a huge crowd," the father said confidently. "You must let us in early." The receptionist looked confused.

Faiz who? And so it is: from Agha Shahid Ali, bemoaning on many occasions how "no one" has heard of Faiz (meaning no one in literary circles in the United States), to Naomi Lazard recognizing his unmistakable eminence years ago in Honolulu in a crowd of young writers, Faiz's lack of fame outside of South Asia and its Diaspora has always been an issue. Faiz's place in Urdu poetry is one thing: his poems made him famous right away, in the early Forties—as he

said himself "after two musha'iras."[2] But worldwide acclaim, of the sort that came to Pablo Neruda or Czeslaw Milosz, escaped him. Though nominated for a Nobel prize, he never achieved the honors that would gain him the automatic international acknowledgement of his gifts.

Seats filled quickly. First we were allowed in, then "not until the start of the program." Cameras clicked, friends called to each other. We were urged to sit closer, not to leave spaces between the seats. The young woman next to me was reading *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. My mind wandered to its subject. For a moment, the violence in Pakistan hovered over the brilliantly illuminated room in our City of Lights. I thought of the personal anguish suffered by so many, like Faiz being imprisoned in solitary confinement those many years ago. The massacres in Dhaka. The absolute mercilessness of Zia. The hanging of Bhutto. Faiz's exile. Zia's death alongside that of the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan. And now, amidst blood-letting and violence—the current visceral hatred of America. Indeed, everything had blown apart. But this was a place for celebration. For the time being, let there be "kahiin nahiin, kahiin nahiin lahu kaa suraagh (nowhere, no trace of blood anywhere)," as Faiz would say. The girl reading *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* barely looked up until the poetry started.

It was clear that the organizers had had to contend with a lot. First, they expected an overflow crowd, and they got it. We all managed to squeeze in, but the hall was packed. Second, in the upcoming three-hour program, 14 separate speakers would either discuss Faiz, or recite poems or sing them. Faiz's daughter, Salima Hashmi, would be interviewed on stage, and then give a presentation herself, which would include slides of the works of artists influenced by Faiz. Timing was going to be tricky.

Finally, the event was not just about Faiz. According to the small printed program, and evidenced by the line-up of speakers (including Anthony Cascardi, the Dean of Arts and Humanities), the occasion was also an effort to underline Berkeley's commitment to Urdu and to Pakistan. As both Raka Ray, the Director of the Center for South Asia Studies, and Master of Ceremonies Professor Munis Faruqui (who specializes in Mughal history) explained, this event was the launch of what the Center is calling "The Berkeley Urdu and Pakistan Initiatives." These

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[2] "There's No Concorde to Heaven," an interview with Faiz Ahmed Faiz by I.A. Rehman in the *Herald* (Karachi, March, 1984) reprinted in *Coming Back Home: Selected Articles, Editorials, and Interviews of Faiz Ahmed Faiz*, Sheema Majeed, Compiler. Introduction by Khalid Hasan (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008),77.

initiatives are intended "to broaden and deepen" Urdu and Pakistan studies at Berkeley.

Dean Cascardi noted that "The presence of so many South Asian area faculty and the large numbers of supporters from the local community could leave no doubt about the strength of the Urdu and Pakistan Initiatives. Berkeley has made a deep commitment to Urdu, and this event reinforces the beauty and the political importance of poetry written and sung in the language."

I am going to return to the Dean's statement—but I do not wish to spoil the pleasure of the celebration, nor is the beauty and political importance of Urdu in dispute. And indeed, the very presence of the Dean on a Sunday afternoon, enthusiastically addressing the participants, was a welcome sign. But the Dean's remarks highlighted the issue for the University and the University's acting on the Urdu and/or (the "and/or" is from the program and the Center's website) Pakistan Initiatives. How will it do so, given political and financial factors? Pakistan's relationship with the United States is a daily news story and funding for universities is disappearing, so what is Berkeley's role? And where does Faiz fit into all of it? I will come back to these questions, but for now I am enjoying the celebration. Following the assertions of the advantages in studying Pakistan "and/or" Urdu at Berkeley by the first three speakers, it was Qamar Jalil's turn on stage. Now we would hear something specifically about Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

Qamar Sahib could speak directly about his interactions with Faiz; he had a living connection with Faiz. He taught for many years in Lahore at the Berkeley Urdu Language Program in Pakistan (BULPIP), and recently came to Berkeley after a stint teaching at the Urdu summer sessions at the University of Wisconsin.

Qamar Sahib's tale was quite funny. Complaining gently about the small amount of time allotted to talk, he got right to the point. He told how he was teaching at the Berkeley Urdu Language Program in Lahore and had been delegated to go to Faiz Sahib and invite the poet to come to speak to the Berkeley students. His story evoked not just the thoughtfulness of the poet; the listeners also got a whiff of Faiz's immense fame and impossibly busy schedule at the time.

For a moment, Faiz in conversation in the early eighties was before us: the sly mimicry by Qamar Sahib done so sweetly, and the situation, as he haplessly pursued his mission to invite Faiz Sahib, so fraught. This was a moment preserved in amber: "A promise has been made…" repeated the poet, digesting Qamar Sahib's dilemma. The audience could hear Faiz mulling over the Urdu teacher's predicament, in his growling, meditative voice, repeating the words, coming back to them—even making a poem of them.

Qamar Sahib also remembered that he had raised a delicate subject with Faiz Sahib. He noted that the Berkeley program was run by Americans, and the students were Americans. In the long history of Faiz's opposition to the United States government's polices and conduct, and given Faiz's pro-Soviet political viewpoint, Qamar Sahib was concerned that Faiz might not want to come for those reasons. Qamar Sahib recalled sort of hinting at the situation. But he quotes the poet saying, "Bacche hain." They are children, noted Faiz Sahib; they are not Americans or Pakistanis. And so the great poet came to address the lucky students of the Berkeley program.

Here, leaving our celebration briefly, I want to note that for the last decade, this crucial academic program, which has trained several generations of students about Urdu and Pakistan, the Berkeley Urdu Language Program in Pakistan—the very program that provided the venue for students to meet a great Urdu poet—is gone. Unfortunately, for those interested in studying Urdu in Pakistan, since September 2001 Urdu study has been transferred to Lucknow, India, and is administered by the American Institute of Indian Studies. The Center for South Asia Study's website states that because of a 2002 State Department travel warning "prohibiting" students from traveling to Pakistan, the program has been suspended. This is not technically true. Any student who wished to, and who secured a visa, could travel to Pakistan. The underlying point is that neither Berkeley nor the Department of State can guarantee the safety of students in the program. This cannot help Berkeley's Initiatives.

To return to the celebration: Professor Sean Pue, of Michigan State, continued the program with a formal presentation of an academic paper based on his dissertation on the modernist Urdu poet, N. M. Rashed. Pue's connections to Berkeley are myriad. He studied Urdu with Qamar Sahib on the BULPIP program in Lahore and was an undergraduate at Berkeley. His dissertation advisor, Professor Fran Pritchett of Columbia University, did her Master's degree at Berkeley. Just as Qamar Sahib had given us a glimpse of Faiz visiting the Berkeley students in Lahore, Pue let us see what just such a student might be thinking about.

Pue contextualized Rashed and made him personal, talking about his experiences in Iran, at the same time giving the non-academics in the audience (the vast majority) the taste of a scholarly conversation about an Urdu poet, conducted in English. Pue noted that N. M. Rashed was often seen as a sort of "opposite of Faiz." He pointed out that it was not that simple. Although it addresses social themes, Faiz's poetry still more readily conforms to the stereotypes of what Urdu poetry should be than Rashed's. Pue's talk was part of the cross-pollination that was taking place in the Guftagu. The large non-

academic audience who was interested in Faiz's poetry and the academics who analyzed literature were meeting in a single space. Of course, Faiz's enthusiastic followers did not need academics to validate their love of Urdu poetry. And Professor Pue and his fellow professors did not need Faiz's followers in order to pursue their intellectual interests. But each group enriched the other. Indeed, Pue's discussion of Rashed made one hungry for similar academic conversations on Faiz. It may be because there has been so little seriously researched work on Faiz, notwithstanding thoughtful and knowledgeable translations of him, that some puzzles about Faiz are never unraveled.

The feeling of unresolved controversy surrounding Faiz is not mine alone. It has gone on for a long time: C.M. Naim addressed one such issue in a lengthy note in his 1967 article "Consequences of Indo-Pakistani War" concerning Faiz's role as a poet at the time of the 1965 war.[3] Very recently, in *Himal*, "Subsumed by History and the Nation," Afsan Chowdhury asked, "Where does Faiz the poet and pan-South Asian Marxist end and Faiz the Pakistani begin? This is a question to which Bangladeshis, among others, still seek an answer. Faiz Ahmed Faiz remains one of the great unsolved enigmas of South Asian literature."[4]

These controversies swirl about. The fact that Faiz became an officer for Britain when many were fighting against the Raj, Faiz's role in the Pindi conspiracy, Faiz's politics, his relationship with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his response to the crisis in East Pakistan, later Bangladesh, in 1971—even Faiz's fight with Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi (or Qasmi's fight with him!) are a few of the ongoing, unresolved issues. Faiz was Punjabi, from Iqbal's hometown, Sialkot. His Partition did not leave him without a physical place to which he could return, unlike the poets and littérateurs who arrived from all over India to the newly-formed Pakistan. Did that make a difference to his poetry, or to his fame? And what about his time in exile?

During the interview that Professor Saba Mahmood conducted with Professor Salima Hashmi, Faiz's eldest daughter, some of these puzzles were addressed. Mahmood, who teaches Anthropology at Berkeley, and who studied in Pakistan under Hashmi, was able to have Hashmi evoke on stage a living, human

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[3] C. M.Naim. "Consequences of Indo-Pakistani War", *Urdu Texts and Contexts* (New Delhi: 2004).

[4] Afsan Chowdhury, "Subsumed by History and the Nation," *Himal* (January 2011). Accessed November 2011 at himalmag.com/component/magazine/tblcontent/2011/1.html

connection with Faiz and bring him into the room. Hashmi, both during the interview, and in taking questions, addressed some of the conundrums and raised others. It was a rare opportunity to hear first-hand descriptions of Faiz's life and feelings.

For example, Hashmi spoke about Faiz's great poem "August, 1947," which is used frequently as a touchstone when discussing Partition.[5] Hashmi said that she had once, almost teasingly, asked her father "Why, only one poem about Partition?" Her implication was, if the event was so momentous, why not more poems about it? Her father had answered her, seriously, "It was beyond us. We could not cope." Cope. This is a telling word to describe one's ability to function, or to not function. One could hear Faiz's voice in hers, going back all those years. She also talked about the atmosphere of "tremendous sadness" that filled the house during Partition days.

Among many subjects, Hashmi discussed Faiz's personal sorrow at being separated from his daughters during their childhoods, and she evoked his last years in Beirut, when he and her mother experienced the civil war in Lebanon. There in the Great Hall, the audience was quiet, rapt, as we listened to her stories. Then it was time for the poems and the audience was swept away in Faiz's words: "Raqeeb se (To the Rival)," "Dua (Prayer)," and "Sheeshon Ka Maseeha Koi Nahin (There is no Messiah of Crystals)," followed by a poetic tribute to Faiz by Tashie Zaheer, "Nazr-i Faiz (A View of Faiz)." The printed program contained translations by various individuals, but not the Urdu text of Faiz's poems.

Next, Hashmi gave a presentation about Faiz's influence on painters.[6] She showed works, inspired by his poems, by Sadequain, Naiza Khan, Nalini Malani, Anwar Saeed and Imran Qureshi. [7] This exploration of Faiz's influence on the

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[5] Just a few weeks after this evening, Pico Iyer quoted the poem "August, 1947" in full in his article "Pakistani Writers: Living in A Minefield" in the *New York Review of Books* (October 13, 2011) to make a point about ambivalence about Partition. (He used Agha Shahid Ali's translation.) Among many appearances, but in one that reaches U.S. college students, the complete poem is also quoted in Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture and Political Economy* (Routledge, 1998), 199, using Victor Kiernan's translation and having it act as a coda to Chapter 17 on Partition.

[6] This can be viewed on the Center for South Asia Studies website: http://southasia.berkeley.edu/

[7] http://southasia.berkeley.edu/guftugu-celebrating-faiz-video-gallery/).

visual arts was a reminder of how his work continues to affect creativity among South Asians and others. Her talk also highlighted the ongoing vibrant relationship between artists and writers in Pakistan.

Songs followed: "Dasht-e Tanhai" (The Desert of Solitude) and "Mujhse Pahli si Mohabbat Meri Mahbuub Na Maang" (Do Not Ask of me my Love a Love like before) and then, finally a stirring, hypnotic, "Ham Dekhenge" (We Will See). The father sitting in front of me, who had arrived so early, sprang to his feet, thrusting his arm in the air. He was crying. The audience sang along, the beat of the qawwali rhythm overwhelming us all.

Ham dekhenge
Laazim hai keh ham bhi dekhenge
Woh din keh jis kaa waada hai
Jo loh-e azal peh likha hai
Ham bhi dekhenge…

We shall live to see,
So it is writ
We shall live to see
The day that's been promised
The day that's been ordained…[8]

The event was over. Snacks were served. The roar of conversation grew louder. Exhilarated by the evening, we buttonholed friends, caught up, drank tea. It was dark outside, and the lights were shining in the Great Hall.

The next day is brightly sunny, with the smell of eucalyptus and redwood in the air. Serendipitously, I encounter Salima Hashmi outside of Stephens Hall, where the Center for South Asia Studies is located. The grey stone Tudor building, looking like a castle with its turrets, is the backdrop for our conversation. Looming nearby is the tall marble tower of the Campanile. We stand on the steps, and talk about the previous day's program: the charged

[8] *O City of Lights: Faiz Ahmed Faiz: Selected Poetry and Biographical Notes.* Translations by Daud Kamal and Khalid Hasan. Selected and Edited by Khalid Hasan (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 231.

atmosphere of the evening and the excitement of the crowd at hearing Faiz's poetry.

Hashmi tells me that Faiz had come to Berkeley before, in 1979. At that time, the Sikh community of the Bay Area had organized an event. She said that her father had never forgotten it. He recited his poems far into the night, with a huge audience rapturously shouting their applause. This was a time when the most long-established South Asian community in the Bay Area were descendents from the early immigrants from the Punjab to California. So it was the Sikh community that had flocked to hear Faiz then.

In fact, the South Asian community in the Bay Area only began to alter demographically after 1965. The immigration laws changed that year, and the first large wave of post-1947 immigrants began to arrive from South Asia. In 1979, the children of this first group of these new immigrants were only in junior high.[9] So the audience for Faiz in 1979 was still largely his fellow Punjabis, the Urdu-speaking Sikhs. Later, the children of the new immigrants would go on to form a significant population at the University, and some would major in South Asian studies, or have an interest in their literary heritage. Thus the audience the night before in the Bancroft Hotel had been a very different audience for Faiz than the 1979 audience. While Faiz's poems transcended time and borders on both occasions, it is this new audience who will support, or not support, the University's Initiatives.

And it is from inside Stephens Hall that the Center for South Asia Studies is launching the two Initiatives to "broaden and deepen," as the program said, Urdu and Pakistan studies at Berkeley. Hashmi and I stand outside the building in the golden sunshine, and I think about this project, as I had during the last night's celebration of Faiz. While Pakistan is on the front pages in newspapers in the United States now, the funding for the study of Urdu is evaporating. The relationship between the United States and Pakistan is deeply flawed. And there were never many students of either subject at Berkeley.

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[9] Statistics on the increase in immigration from Asia after the passage of the 1965 Immigration Reform act are available at the Department of Homeland Security website in the Yearbook of Immigration. See http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2011/ois_yb_2011.pdf. Also see http://www.npr.org/templates/story.php?storyId=5391395

Looking at dissertations written in the past on either of these two subjects—Pakistan "and/or" Urdu—is one way to approach thinking about the current Initiatives. While counting up dissertations is not a scientific analysis of who is studying what, it can provide some picture of the situation. Dissertations point to areas of interest, and dissertations mean doctorates; doctorates at Berkeley mean, often, jobs as professors.

Of the dissertations done at Berkeley since 1947 that dealt with South Asia, only a few concentrated on Pakistan. For example, divided by department, of the 39 dissertations filed in the History Department that concerned South Asia, two were on Pakistan. In the South and Southeast Asian Studies Department there were 27 dissertations filed, and three were on Pakistan.[10] While obviously pre-1947 dissertations would not be part of the calculation (there are only six I have been able to find on South Asia), in comparison to the number of post-1947 dissertations on India, the number of Pakistan-related dissertations is small. After 1947, counting all Departments, there are over 350 dissertations dealing with India at Berkeley. My rough calculations, working with different data bases, show a total of nine doctorates done at Berkeley that concern Pakistan.

The Center points out on its website "interest in the study of Urdu as well as Pakistan's history, politics, and culture is growing rapidly." One might think about why this is so. There is an ever-increasing South Asia immigrant population. Certainly the United States government has become focused on its relationship with Pakistan. The Center's website states that Berkeley offers instruction in Urdu at all levels, from beginning to advanced. "Berkeley does not combine Urdu and Hindi instruction…Over sixty students annually enroll in Urdu courses. UC Berkeley's Urdu program is one of the largest and best in the country." I wonder about making a virtue of not combining, at least initially, Urdu and Hindi instruction. The languages—the course was called "Hindi-Urdu"—used to be taught at Berkeley this way, and it meant that in the first year, all students, whether of Hindi or Urdu, learned to read Devanagiri script. It is actually quite useful to teach the introductory course this way: students, with not too much extra effort, learn two alphabets and can read texts in both.

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[10] See the website http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/SSEAL/SouthAsia/dis_dept.html for this information. Note also that Departments changed names over time and that until 1973 any dissertations on Urdu literature would most likely have been done through the Near Eastern Languages Department http://nes.berkeley.edu/dissertations-thesis_titles.html. However, there were none.)

The Center also mentions its Quaid-e-Azam Chair in Pakistan Studies, though the Chair is not currently filled. It states that Berkeley "is one of two institutions in the country that houses the Government of Pakistan-funded Quaid-e-Azam Chair in Pakistan Studies. The CSAS in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan established the Quaid-e-Azam Chair of Pakistan Studies at UC Berkeley in 1999." There have only been two occupants of this chair in the past decade, so it has now been filled for about three years out of eleven. Of course, there could be a range of reasons for the unfilled chair. But as a colleague observed, funding for Quaid-e-Azam chairs and fellowships (which are temporary posts rather than endowments) is from Pakistan. The professors and fellows are decided in Pakistan and come from Pakistan. Thus the fact that the Chair is vacant could mean a range of things: that the Government in Pakistan has not sent anyone, or that Berkeley has not reached an agreement on the selection. So how useful are short-term funded positions in this case? It seems like whatever was supposed to happen—someone was supposed to come to Berkeley to teach about Pakistan—is not working that well.

My observations are not critical evaluations. They are exactly what I say: observations. We all know that Berkeley has produced, and will produce, South Asia scholars of distinction. The BULPIP program, as mentioned, trained generations of students of Urdu. The Center does indeed have an active speakers' program dedicated to things Urdu and Pakistani. The program about Faiz is just one such example. The study of Urdu can contribute to any number of other intellectual activities and need not culminate in a dissertation.

I am simply pointing out that at Berkeley, and indeed in the United States generally, dissertations on either Urdu or Pakistan have been few. This is so of the other major South Asia programs at the University of Wisconsin, the University of Chicago and the University of Texas. Just for purposes of comparison, the University of Chicago lists 354 dissertations on South Asia, of which 19 are on Pakistan.[11] No one at Berkeley has ever written a dissertation on any period or on any writer of Urdu literature.[12] So finding Faiz, and being able to think about Faiz at Berkeley, might not be that easy. On the other hand the website says the UC Berkeley library "contains one of the largest collections of publications in Pakistani languages in the world, with over 22,000 books in Urdu." Bidding goodbye to Salima Hashmi, I walk away from Stephens Hall. I go to find Faiz in the library.

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[11] See http://southasiadissertations.uchicago.edu/ucdsa/browse.

[12] See http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/SSEAL/SouthAsia/dis_guide.html.

Entering the old marble edifice at Doe Library, I turn left by the Persian-carpeted Poetry, Art and Music library, Morrison, where one is not supposed to study, but must partake only of the Arts. Going by banks of computers, I follow the polished granite snail-like stairs cut deep into the ground, under the old library, part of an extravagant remodeling that did away with the dusty cramped metal stacks. Several levels below, now far inside a gleaming underground, I check the on-line catalogue. This reveals a little over 70 entries from a subject search concerning Faiz: poems, translations, reminiscences, essays and recordings. There are 46 books listed under Faiz's name alone found in an author search. Eleven books are classed as biographies, but some are really anthologies of his poems, with brief biographical material. And ten translations of his poetry into English are listed.

The shelving in the library is on wheels, and I crank a large knob strenuously to separate the shelves. There are warnings posted about checking for people within aisles between the shelves. No fear, though, the PK2199 section is empty of students. Good, I don't want to squash anyone while exploring the Faiz shelf. Ashfaq Husain's works are here, Urdu memoirs of Faiz's travels in Canada and Europe. In the category of book-length biographies, I find Ludmila Vasileva's 2007 book *Parvarish-i lauḥ o qalam: Faīz ḥayat va takhlīqāt* with an introduction by Jamil Jalibi. I look for *Culture and Identity: Selected English Writings of Faiz* but it is not here; there is a copy at the Davis campus. Too bad I can't reread Faiz's essay on the artist Sadeqain. A somewhat frustrating book, it has long been the only collection of Faiz's writings in English, so it is useful, but much of the material is undated and one has to figure out the date by context. Not all the Faiz books listed in the catalogue are accessible in the Berkeley stacks. Of the book titles about Faiz, most must be requested from the Richmond storage facility. Even Ali's *The Rebel's Silhouette*, the most recent book published in the United States of English translations, needs to be requested from Richmond.

Working through the books that are on the shelves, I stumble upon the first Indian edition of *Zindaan*-namah (Prison Thoughts), published in Aligarh in 1956. It is tiny, almost falling apart. But I am allowed to check it out. I look at the back of the book, with its record of circulation. Conveniently, Berkeley still hand stamps a circulation record. It has been checked out eight times since its acquisition in 1964. Someone had looked at it two months before Faiz died. But between 1989 and 2010, it was not checked out at all. Twenty-one years of solitude on the shelf. Fearing that it will meet the fate of the first edition of *Dast-i saba*, which I discover is now missing from the shelves, I later take *Zindaan-namah* to Copy Central, where I have it copied and bound. The young employee

there who does the job is from Pakistan; he says he has heard of Faiz, but does not know his poetry. He copies the right-to-left layout of the book perfectly.

Coming up from the depths of the library and out to the sun setting across the Bay, with the air cooling quickly, I think about what is there and not there on the shelves, and indeed what is in the official record. Standing beside the library, looking across the water, I can see Mt. Tamalpais. The Golden Gate Bridge is in the distance, its tiny spires glowing on the horizon. One thinks how evening, a transitional time of day, was so important to Faiz, as he saw in it the passage of time and history:

jis ne aafaaq pe phailaayaa hai yuN seh'r ka daam
daaman-e-vaqt se paivast hai yuN daamna-e-shaam
ab kabhii shaam bujhegii na andheraa hogaa
ab kabhii raat Dhalegii na saveraa hogaa
aasmaaN aas liye hai ke ye jaaduu TuuTe
chup ki zanjiir kaTe, vaqt kaa daaman chhuTe
de ko'ii shanKh duhayii, ko'ii paayal bole
ko'ii but jaage, ko'ii saaNvlii ghuuNGhat khole

…Some terrible magician, hidden behind curtains,
has hypnotized Time
so this evening is a net
in which the twilight is caught,
Now darkness will never come--
And there will never be morning.
The sky waits for this spell to be broken,
for history to tear itself from this net,
for Silence to break its chains so that a symphony of conch shells
may wake up to the statues and a beautiful, dark goddess,
her anklets echoing, may unveil herself.
("Evening" (Shaam) Agha Shahid Ali, trans.)

Faiz saw these sunsets across the Bay. He was here in Berkeley in 1979, performing to the exultant Sikh audience. That trip took him from Alexandria, Virginia (so touchingly evoked in a 1998 article in the journal *Alif* by his niece, Sabiha T. Aydelott) to this campus, and then to the East West Center in Hawaii,

where he would meet Naomi Lazard and enlist her work on translations.[13] I wonder how keen he must have been for an accomplished English poet to work on translations. Had he kept in touch with Victor Kiernan, his first translator and early champion? I don't know. Another conundrum.

I look south of the Golden Gate, and can just see the tips of the buildings in San Francisco. Further away lives the South Asian community that populates Silicon Valley, and whom Professor Faruqui acknowledged in his welcome remarks. It is that community that will support, or not support, activities surrounding the Guftagu. Wealthy, professional, accomplished. Interested in a cultural heritage. The Guftagu will be scheduled so they can attend—on the weekends. Between the electricity of hearing Faiz's poems the night before, to the Center's efforts to focus on Urdu and Pakistan, I wonder how Berkeley will fare in its pursuit of its Initiatives.

Then, thinking about the "Initiatives", I realize I want something relatively simple. I wish that out of all this activity, somehow would emerge a rigorously researched full-length biography on Faiz in English. A critical biography, a poet's life, call it what you will. For all the plans to "financially strengthen" and "engage interests" my wish comes down to something much more specific. A biography in English with an international or U.S. publisher, with serious reviewers, would help tie the celebrations of Faiz to the study of Faiz. It would be part of the effort to give Faiz an international legacy. I am happy to read anything in Urdu, but if the biography were in English, it could be read by colleagues, in different Departments—the audience would open up.

Agreed, the Russian Ludmila Vasileva's work is a biography, but it is not a mainstream, major work that English speakers can access. It began life as a monograph in Russian, and then was translated into Urdu. As the reviewer Adeeb Khalid noted, "Faiz Ahmed Faiz was a citizen of this world and his work was very much rooted in the struggles of that world. His work took him all over the world and much was written by and about him. Yet, until now, we did not have a single consecutive account of his life and of the context in which he wrote his

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[13]Sabiha T. Aydelott, "Memories of Faiz," *Alif: Post Colonial Discourse in South Asia, Journal of Comparitive Poetics 18,* (The American University in Cairo, 1998), 299-314. The translations by Naomi Lazard appear *in The True Subject: The Poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

poetry."[14] The reader who reads only English still does not have that account. I need something for someone who might not read Urdu or Russian.

Agha Shahid Ali's translations, and other translations, certainly add to the conversation. But there must be more. Possibly because right now most writers about Faiz are either friend or foe, impartiality seems lost. There is also the question of historical context. For example, wouldn't it be useful to know that until the creation of Bangladesh, Faiz was most frequently paired with the Bengali poet Nazrul Islam as one of Pakistan's two great poets, from the West and East? It was only post-1971 that Faiz was twinned solely with N.M. Rashed, or other coeval Urdu poets. At least this kind of contextualizing would allow the reader to see where a particular history and Faiz parted ways, and why.[15]

Writers and artists need biographies, if only so we readers can organize our own thinking about them—to end the swirl of papers and of information. We at least need to pin down the questions and answers. The acclaimed biographies of poets like Richard Holmes on Coleridge or indeed the great three-volume work on Picasso by John Richardson only improved the conversation. And I am not asking anything that is culturally incongruent: Urdu memoirs abound, and Urdu is no stranger to biographies. Think of Hali on Ghalib or Josh's own retelling of his life. Where is the English biography of Faiz? Like someone hungry for a proper meal, I want my dinner! I want that biography.

For in order to improve our conversation on Faiz, we need more. Yes, Aamir Mufti's brilliant book, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Post-Colonial Culture* does analyze Faiz and his poetry to make larger points about colonialism, minorities and about exile. This is the rare exception. Indeed, Mufti could probably speak quite adroitly on the "Initiatives" because he thinks about how knowledge and power intersect.

Because little extended academic work is dedicated to Faiz, the controversies surrounding him not only seem never to resolve, nor are they even

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[14] Adeeb Khalid, reviewing Ludmilia Vasileva*, Parvarish-e Lauh-o-Qalam*, translated by Usama Faruqi and Ludmila Vasil'eva (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007) in *Annual of Urdu Studies* (19), 256.

[15] This observation derives from many conversations with Pakistanis who were adults in the 1950s in Pakistan, and remember the prominence of Nazrul Islam, and how he and Faiz were often spoken of together. Pakistan even issued a Nazrul Islam stamp (1968).

completely revealed.[16] Sean Pue's discussion of the relationship between Rashed and Faiz that we heard last night is one such contribution, and an unusual one, to the discussion in English.[17] More academic discussions would not necessarily address these controversies, but what if someone wrote critically about Faiz the way Pue has looked at Rashed? Wouldn't it be useful to read about Faiz's life and poetry when neither family, nor friend nor foe was writing?

As far as venues for conversations about Faiz, The *Annual of Urdu Studies*, edited by Muhammad Umar Memon and published from the University of Wisconsin, has been the one forum in the United States for extended academic discussions about Urdu literature for the last three decades. Ralph Russell, Frances Pritchett and Ted Genoways are among the many scholars whose thoughts on Faiz we have been lucky to read.[18] But the *Annual*'s continued existence is now in doubt because it is losing much of its financing. The conversation about Urdu and Pakistan is vulnerable to one tick of an accountant's

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[16] I would like to thank Andy McCord for his patience in addressing, via email, my questions and speculations while I wrote this paper, particularly on the subject of the different presentations/understandings of Faiz. Andy is a poet and a fluent Urdu speaker who has written and spoken on Faiz for many years. He is an invaluable source for matters Faiz; not only does he have a sophisticated and knowledgeable approach to the poems, he directed me to the cable traffic about Faiz in the U.S. National Archives, which we discussed. He also supplied me with his excellent, still unpublished paper on Faiz that he delivered at Columbia University during the "Urdu in Transnational Perspectives Conference" in September, 200l.

[17] Aijaz Ahmad also mentions Rashed and Faiz, juxtaposed, in a discussion in *Lineages of the Present: Ideology and Poitics in Contemporary South Asia* (London: Verso, 2000), 103. The only extended literary discussion of Faiz's poetry in a book published outside of South Asia is Victor Kiernan's Introduction to his translations. It was written more than forty years ago. *Poems by Faiz*. Translated by Victor Kiernan. (Allen & Unwin: London, 1971).

[18] For example, Frances Pritchetts's essay, "The Sky, the Road, the Glass of Wine" *Annual of Urdu Studies* (15 (2000): I, 57-76) is a good analysis of some of the pitfalls translators encounter with Faiz. But it is a too rare example of a scholar taking a serious, critical approach to Faiz's work—and she notes herself "the all too few chances for mutual discussion."

pen, and the *Annual* itself is only as permanent as one funding site. Without the *Annual*, this space for discussion will not exist—yet the *Annual* has funded no students, no events, no guest speakers, and no research. Inspired them, yes—funded them, no. Fran Pritchett's brilliant archive of Urdu material on the Web does not conduct ongoing conversations; rather it archives material.[19]

Other forums for written material in English on Urdu are Pakistani and Indian journals or newspapers. The discussions are taking place outside of universities. For example, in the essay on Faiz by Asif Farrukhi, "Among his contemporaries" in the February 2011 *InpaperMagzine*, Faiz is discussed in conjunction with fellow poets of his time.[20] Farrukhi adds to our knowledge of Faiz by giving a good glimpse of the poetic environment, and we can extract from his essay an excellent reading list for a course in Modern Urdu Poetry. But where is the course?

Yet, I argue with myself, this is ironic. Faiz is clearly not the subject of fat dissertations. Journals about Urdu are vulnerable to the whims of finance committees. Not many people in English Departments in the United States are reading on-line articles about Faiz's centennial. But Faiz does make appearances constantly in literature from the Subcontinent, in literature by South Asians and in discussions about such literature. Authors use him to legitimate themselves and their writings, or insert his presence in their works in various ways. There are innumerable examples of this: I have end-noted a lengthy discussion of him last month in *The New York Review of Books*, and earlier I have cited the use of his poetry in a standard college history textbook on South Asia. So if I can find Faiz everywhere, why do I still need a biography?

Back in my own study in Virginia, Faiz is in Rushdie's work, in Qurratulain Hyder's translation of her Urdu novel, *River of Fire*, and in an essay

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[19] Frances Pritchett's vast website on Urdu literature is the only other vehicle, besides the *Annual of Urdu Studies*, that is a dedicated academic tool for Urdu scholars. It functions as a repository of material on Urdu, and began with Professor Pritchett's project on Ghalib. She has maintained this herself and enlarged its scope over the years for everyone's benefit. Nevertheless, it is not the venue for on-going academic dialogues about Faiz of the kind I am envisioning; it collects discussions, but does not conduct them. See http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00fwp/published.html

[20] Asif Farrukhi, "Among Contemporaries," accessed November 1, 2011. http://www.dawn.com/2011/02/17/among-his-contemporaries.html

by Aamer Hussein in last year's Pakistan issue of *Granta*. And that is just one small handbreadth of the bookshelf! How each author uses Faiz is significant, and each usage establishes him as a living presence in the literary universe. For example, Salman Rushdie locates a distorted version of Faiz in *Midnight's Children*, as Nadir Khan, the poet with no rhyme. (Is it actually a double location, because the real poet with "no rhyme" in the Urdu firmament is N. M. Rashed?) As the Rani says, "gently," when introduced to Nadir, "A modernist, then?"[21] We know this figure is partly based on Faiz because Nadir Khan is found hiding in the laundry bin and Aadam agrees to provide him sanctuary. (And we also know this fact—the whereabouts of a hidden poet—was used to properly identify Rushdie in a recent Twitter controversy.) Rushdie says in *Step Across this Line: Collected Non Fiction 1992-2002*:

> One of my aunts was living in Karachi, Pakistan, at the time of partition. She was a close friend of the famous Urdu poet, Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-84). … Faiz came to my aunt's house knowing that an angry mob was looking for him and that if they should find him things would not go well. Under the rug in the sitting-room there was a trap-door leading down into a cellar. My aunt had the rug rolled back, Faiz descended into the cellar, the trap-door closed, the rug rolled back. And when the mob came for the poet they did not find him. (372)

He also says: "Faiz was the first great writer I ever met, and through his oeuvre and his conversation he provided me with a description of the writer's job that I accepted fully. (371)"[22]

In another example of Faiz's hovering presence, Qurratulain Hyder inserts him with no disguise into her English translation (or, as she calls it, "transcreation") of her 1959 Urdu novel, *Āg kā Daryā* [River of Fire]. This novel is the classic story of India's past and of Partition. It took both countries by storm when it was first published, and it has never been out of print. In this added scene to her 1996 translation of it, the participants—college age and a bit older—are in a

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[21] Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, First published 1981. (Penguin, 1991), 45.

[22] Salman Rushdie, *Step Across this Line: Collected Non Fiction 1992-2002* (New York: Random House, 2002), 371-372. Rushdie also refers to the "Grandpa Munster-like" mien of Faiz, in a brilliant cross-cultural vision.

coffee house in Lucknow, just after Independence, discussing Faiz's poem about Partition. In the Urdu version of *Āg kā Daryā*, this scene does not exist at all. I think she adds this fictional discussion of Faiz's poem because today nuanced recollections of Partition are not complete without Faiz's words. The scene captures the seriousness with which young people regard poets who clearly speak for them (who speak even for those who do not understand Urdu), and the ambivalence with which they view the future. In the 1996 version, there is no rift between what the 1940s characters in *Āg kā Daryā* think and what Faiz, the real, non-fictional poet, whose poem is now being recited and talked about in both the fictional and non-fictional world, has written. What Faiz wrote came to be, over the years, the very words for understanding Partition. This is the fictional world:

Faiz's gazida

Talat interrupted him as a grim reminder. "Have you read Faiz Ahmed latest poem. The Morning of Freedom? Yeh daag daag ujala, yeh shab-sahar…" She went on to recite the poem. The audience became very still.

> Pothan Abraham, the Malayali who worked for The Pioneer, broke the silence. "Now translate it into pidgin English, I couldn't understand a word."
>
> "Translate Urdu poetry into English? How can you render jigaar ki aag as the liver's fire?"
>
> "Try," said Abraham, smoking his pipe dreamily.
>
> "Talat pondered awhile, then began, "Okay—The blighted dawn, this darkened sun. This is not the morn we waited for. We went forth in the desert of heaven, hoping to reach our destination of stars. We hoped that, somewhere, we would come ashore from the placid river of the night, that the barge of sorrow would end its cruise. Whence came the early morning breeze, where did it go? The wayside lamp does not know. The night's burden has not diminished, the hour of deliverance for eye and heart has not arrived. Face forward! For our destination is not yet in sight."
>
> There was a gloomy silence again.
>
> [There is a discussion about a broken musical instrument.]

> Meanwhile, Malcolm got busy with his pen and sketchbook…
>
> "You mean Humpty can never be put together again?" asked Talat, raising an eyebrow.
>
> "Talat!" Tehmina admonished her as usual. "From Faiz Ahmed Faiz to Humpty Dumpty—grow up![23]

The sobering and evocative effect that Faiz's words have on the fictional listeners in 1947, recalled by the author in her translation fifty years later, reflect the non-fictional world of the present. The poem will speak for the generation. Yet, one of the characters needs to have it translated into English in order to understand it.

Finally, I pull from my study shelf another recent example of Faiz's presence in people's thoughts. The Pakistan issue of *Granta* (2010) contains a brief memoir of Aamer Hussein's first days in 1971 London. In "Restless," Hussein tries to use Faiz to locate himself culturally:

> The library had a collection of Urdu poems by Faiz, who'd lived up the road from us in Karachi. They'd called him a dissenter, an internal exile and a communist. He wrote better about restlessness and loss than anyone I'd ever read. One of his prison poems had been set to music; my sister used to sing it when we were children, and we'd imitate her.
>
> Though I spoke Urdu well, I'd been forced in India to do exams in Hindi, which I now read and wrote much faster. The Faiz book had poems in English and Urdu on facing pages. It helped me to relearn my native script.
>
> …I had a new girlfriend: Pakistani, she lived across the bridge over the

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[23] Qurratulain Hyder, *River of Fire* [*Āg kā Daryā*], "transcreated from the original Urdu" by the author. First published in 1959, in Urdu. (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998), 275. I explored this issue of Hyder's re-incorporation of Faiz into a presentation of Partition in my earlier essay "'We just stayed on the Ship to Bombay'...Tea and Consequences with Qurratulain Hyder," *Annual of Urdu Studies* (23, 2008), 182.

Thames. She played piano and guitar. We sang duets, tried to set Faiz to guitar music, performed at a club together.[24]

This is, of course, exactly what happened in Berkeley at the Faiz celebration that September evening. The lights of the room glowing, a beautiful young woman sang Faiz's "Mujh se pahli si mohabbat meri mahbuub na maang" to the accompaniment of a young man on the guitar. She sang tentatively but exquisitely, her hesitation making the words even more fragile, as the guitar followed to that bitter end:

…Anginat sadiyon ke taariik bihimaana tilism
Resham-o-atlas-o-kamkhwaab men bunwaae hue
Jaa-ba-jaa bikte hue kuucha-o-bazaar men jism
Khaak men lithre hue, khuun men nahaae hue…

…aur bhi dukh hain zamaane men mohabbat ke siva
Raahaten aur bhi hain vasl ki raahat ke siva
Mujh se pahli si muhabbat meri mahbuub na maang

On the dark loom of centuries
Woven into silk, damask, and gold cloth
Is the oppressive enigma of our lives.
Everywhere—in the alleys and bazaars—
Human flesh is being sold…

There are afflictions which have nothing to do with desire,
Raptures which have nothing to do with love.
My love, don't ask me for that past love.

("Do Not Ask," trans. in Daud Kamal *O City of Lights*)

Faiz, found at Berkeley—found in a celebration, but not in the dissertation files. Berkeley, with its beautiful, hopeful Initiatives on Pakistan "and/or" Urdu. Yet, there it is in the news every day: drones, bombs, torture, violence; the oppression woven into the rich cloth, Faiz's dark loom of centuries. Now I walk towards home, passing the Great Hall in the Bancroft Hotel, where we celebrated

[24] Aamer Hussain, "Restless." *Granta*, Pakistan Issue (112, 2010), 222-223.

Faiz with eagerness and pleasure. In Berkeley, our City of Lights. Such grand and beautiful ideas. Such exquisite poetry. In that room, there was no sign of blood anywhere—"kahiin nahiin, kahiin nahiin lahu kaa suraagh." No one mentioned an uncomfortable present that evening. As we watched Salima Hashmi on the stage, Faiz's daughter, reminiscing, did we know? Just months earlier, Salima Hashmi's cousin, and Faiz's nephew, had been assassinated. Salman Taseer, the Governor of Punjab, was killed at the beginning of the year. And then, his son was abducted, and is still held hostage. This is Faiz's family. Salima's mother, Alys, Faiz's wife, and Saleem's mother are sisters.

As Faiz would say, there are sorrows, of course, that have nothing to do with desire. Faiz's own stance can become ours--our beloved Berkeley asks us to believe in its commitment, in its own dedication to Urdu. But between Pakistan's pain, and Salima's loss, when evening, drunk on the blood of skies, becomes night, "Jis ghari raat chale, Asmaanon ka lohu pii ke siyah raat.[25] So, Berkeley, don't ask of me that old golden round of speakers and teas. Don't ask me to believe in you. Human flesh is being sold. How can I look the other way? "Mujh se pahli si muhabbat meri mahbuub na maang." Don't ask me, my love, for that love again.

[25] Lines from Faiz's "Paas Raho (Be Near Me)." Agha Shahid Ali's translation.

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Faiz's Letters to Alys

By Salima Hashmi

This is obviously not a literary work, since these are private letters. There is no need to go into any serious discussion about them.… [I]t is quite possible that in our Department of Sociology, imprisonment may become a subject for research. Therefore perhaps these letters might reveal a few aspects of the psychological experience of a lengthy incarceration.… I can see only one positive aspect to the publication of these letters, which is that for many people imprisonment is not unusual[1].
(Faiz Ahmed Faiz)

[1] Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1976), Foreword to *Saleebein Meray Dareechay Mein*. Cited (trans. Salma Mahmud) in *Two Loves* (2011). Sange-e-Meel, Lahore. pp.53-4.

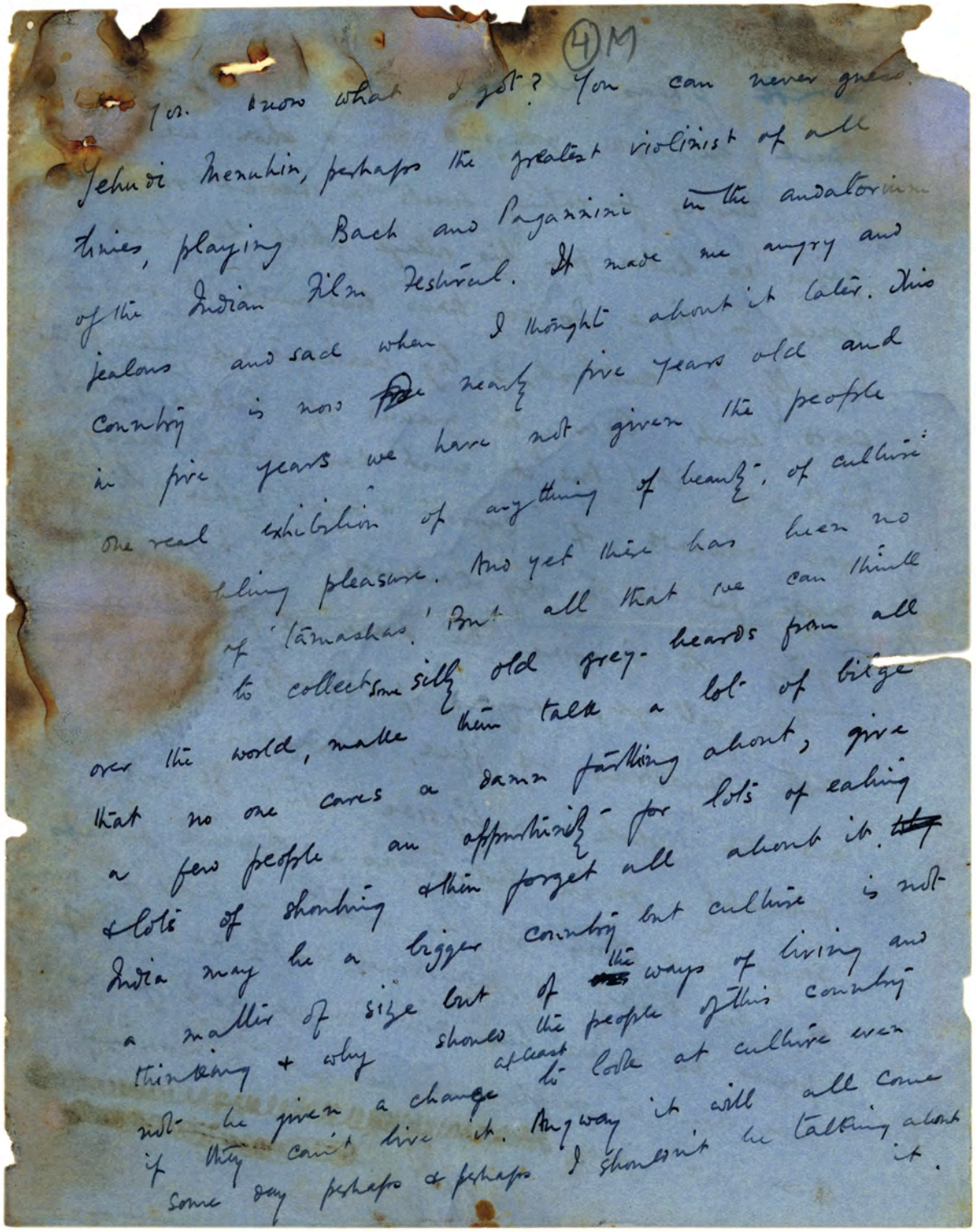
Salima Hashmi

I am no scholar on Faiz. The glimpses I share here, I contribute as his daughter, hoping to offer a window into a very human, loving, family man— someone who saw himself as part of a milieu—more companion than champion. This simply human aspect of Faiz's life, and of his time in prison, can sometimes run the risk of being lost amidst a more political or scholarly focus— but, alas, incarceration and imprisonment is not as uncommon an experience in Pakistan as it ought to be, and too many could unfortunately also identify with these letters at a more humanly felt level.

In 2009, when we had embarked upon the project 'Faiz Ghar'— setting up a small Museum in a house leased to us by a friend and admirer of Faiz— we commenced sorting Faiz's belongings, papers and books. It was not a massive collection by any means, given his nomadic, rather spartan life, but an interesting one. My mother was instrumental in saving and sorting what little there was: a smart grey lounge suit, a fur cap, his scarf, his pen, and a reasonably large cache of photographs, letters, certificates, medals.

After my mother's death, all this had been packed away in cartons in my house, waiting for just the sort of opportunity that the Faiz Ghar project afforded. Sifting through his papers, I came across a plastic bag containing some scraps of paper. On closer look, I deciphered Faiz's writing, and the unmistakable stamp of the censor from Hyderabad Jail. These few letters were in poor shape but readable. It is surprising that they were there at all. Alys and Faiz had moved to Beirut in 1978. Their home in Lahore was closed for almost three years. On return, all seemed to be in order except our cupboard, which had been attacked by termites. Here too, the termites had spared all but one small wicker basket, where Alys had stored all of Faiz's correspondence from the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case days. Alys was inconsolable, but Faiz reminded her that the Urdu translation existed: 'Saleebein meray dareechay mein', published in 1972.

The termite ridden, now salvaged remnants were conserved with the help of Dr. Asma Ibrahim and transcribed by Kyla Pasha and were published under the title ***Two Loves*** *in 2011. We decided to bring out the volume accompanied by photographs of some of the cells and other bits and pieces.*



(4) M

Yes. Know what I got? You can never guess.
Yehudi Menuhin, perhaps the greatest violinist of all
times, playing Bach and Paganini in the andalorium
of the Indian Film Festival. It made me angry and
jealous and sad when I thought about it later. This
country is now nearly five years old and
in five years we have not given the people
one real exhibition of anything of beauty, of culture
of 'tamashas'. But all that we can think
of is pleasure. And yet there has been no
to collect some silly old grey-beards from all
over the world, make them talk a lot of bilge
that no one cares a damn farting about, give
a few people an opportunity for lots of eating
& lots of shouting & then forget all about it.
India may be a bigger country but culture is not
a matter of size but of the ways of living and
thinking & why should the people of this country
not be given a chance at least to look at culture even
if they can't live it. Anyway it will all come
some day perhaps & perhaps I shouldn't be talking about
it.

Salima Hashmi

I chose not to go to Hyderabad Jail for personal reasons, but Arif Mahmood, friend and photographer, went and identified the cells and photographed them. I remember that I had been allowed just once to visit: The occasion was Eid, and the prisoner's families had been allowed into the inner sanctum, into the courtyard with a courtroom at its center. (The trial was held in camera, with no one present but the accused, the judges and lawyers— the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case Act had forbade any public access to information about the proceedings.) Around the courtyard were rooms for lawyers, guards and witnesses. I have a vague recollection of a few shrubs carefully tended in sandy soil.

Going through these letters—only 25 had survived from the originals—I was struck by two things: Firstly the comparison with the Urdu translation, and I realize what a good job Faiz had done of translating his own letters. And secondly, the things he had chosen to omit in the translation, in the published translation. (These were largely bits of juicy gossip, and also certain bits of intimate sentences written to his wife and the way that he chose to mention us, the two daughters, calling us "pigeons" and "funny faces".) Below are a few excerpts.

Faiz writes to Alys from Hyderabad, 15 March 1952:

> The court closed for a fortnight. Today is our first holiday. It is a little after seven o'clock as I write. The sun has not yet come into our yard and every one else is still in bed. (We are sleeping in the verandahs now). I have already shaved and washed to the utter confusion and amazement of the half-awake fellows in their mosquito nets as I am usually the last to get up. One or two have been calling out in scandalized voices to enquire what is biting me, whether the Governor has invited me to breakfast or Rita Hayworth is waiting in the visitors room. Actually I am only making one of my periodical attempts at self-reform…

17 September 1952:

> Yesterday Asghari (Manzoor's wife) sent two sprays of lovely flowers for Nasim and me….and as I write they are before me, disbursing their heavy, sugary odour, nestling under Cheemi's big picture like a votive offering. What a lovely picture it is…and as I sit down on my table I contemplate it often, trying to read her future from her face. I think I have begun to see a good deal of it now. In her face there is not a streak, not a line of

meanness, dishonesty or bad temper. It is open like a book. So I know what she will grow up into—a frank, open, trusting, jolly, affectionate person but albeit silly like her father with no understanding whatsoever of the world's wiles. This means that she will hurt herself often and will be frequently imposed upon but she will retain her happy smile all the same and will never be really unhappy. This is because I think that pain and unhappiness are distinct and different things and it is possible to go on suffering pain without really being unhappy. Pain is something external, something that comes from without, an ephemeral accident like a physical ailment, like our present separation, like the death of a brother. Unhappiness on the other hand, although produced by pain, is something within yourself, that grows, develops, and envelops you if you allow it to do so and do not watch out. Pain no one can avoid but unhappiness you can overcome if you consider something worthwhile enough to live for. Perhaps I'm being pedantic again so I shall leave it.

15 August 1952:

Your letter came today. I feel happy today after a mild attack of a blue period lasting over a few days. It must be the weather. It is more like spring than summer. The mornings are vaguely cool and disturbing like the first breath of love and the sun in the early hours brings more colour than heat. In the evenings the breeze seems to bring the breath of the seas and the skies seem to close not on drab prison walls but on distant palm-fringed beaches. And it is sad like all beauty that is within your sight and beyond your grasp—like all beauty that you know to be an illusion. Yesterday we had a change. The prison gateway was festooned with lights, red blue and green, and four loud-speakers blared forth radio programmes in cracked, discordant voices. The lights and the colours, and din felt more like Anarkali than Hyderabad Jail and for a long time I could not sleep. In the morning I awoke with a strange happiness in my heart and I wrote what I enclose with this letter. I was astounded to find that it took me hardly anytime at all and I had practically finished when we went down to breakfast. I am still feeling rather intoxicated with it and am beginning to fear that perhaps someday I might end up as a poet after all.

2 October 1952:

I've already sent one ghazal to Rauf and the enclosed should provide a befitting end-piece. I feel particularly pleased with this one because "I don't mind telling you" (to borrow Majid's pet phrase) that nobody else can write like this today and for a long time nobody will. This is not

because of vanity regarding talent— mine is very limited and so many others posses more talent than I—it is merely a question of the capacity of taking pains, particularly in descriptive writing where the temptation to follow the line of least resistance and accept any cliché and any approximation to the image in your mind and have done with it. The reader, of course, can never tell how much effort has gone into each word, the final word that emerges after innumerable mental rejections. I'm sure you're laughing now, because I'm preening myself so much, but I must do it some time.

8 October 1952:

Beloved,

This morning the moon shone so brightly in my face it woke me up. The jail bell tolled the half hour after four. I sat up in my bed and at the same moment Arbab (51) in the bed next to me also sat up and smiled at me. He went back to sleep at once but I got up and sat in the verandah opposite my cell and watched the morning come. I heard the jail lock open and shut as the guards changed, the keys and chains rattle in the distance and the iron gates and door clamp their jaws as if they were chewing up the last remains of the night's starry darkness. Then the breeze slowly rose like a languid woman and the sky slowly paled and the stars seemed to billow up and down in pearly white pools and then sucked under. I sat and watched and thoughts and memories flooded into the mind. Perhaps it was on a morning like this that this moon beckoned to a lonely traveler a little distance from where I sit and took the traveler with him away into the unknown and the traveler was my brother. Perhaps this moon is at this moment softly shining on the upturned faces, painless now in death, of the murdered men in Korean prison camps and these dead men too are my brothers. When they lived, they lived far away in lands I have not seen but they also lived in me and were a part of my blood and those who have killed them have killed a part of me and shed some of my blood. Albeit they are dead, as my brother is dead, and only the dead can adequately mourn for the living. Perhaps some day I shall be able to put this morning into verse and I have threatened Arbab that if I do he might become immortal by being in it.

There are many other letters which come from an earlier time. He wrote the following in the mid-1940s:

> Darling,
> Delhi heat is just coming into its own with 100 during the day and dust storms in the evenings but the nights are cool. Further heat is being engendered by the discussion, the talk of communal riots etc. I have twice visited the Imperial Hotel lawn in the evening in company with Morris Jones, and the atmosphere here needs a Voltaire or Swift or some equally great satirist to describe it. Every giggling ninny is a political expert these days and the Foreign Correspondents, I bet, are having the time of their lives. Woodrow Watt (The MP) asked me to lunch the other day. He insisted on talking politics and I insisted on talking about Freda Martin, so there was a stalemate….I had a rather nice surprise the day I arrived when a parcel insured for Rs. 200 suddenly turned up on my table bearing some Bombay address. Inside was an expensive looking watch and a letter from Ms. Jaddan Bai (the film star who wanted a poem of mine for her film) saying that she wanted only three lines from a ghazal and as she 'dare not offer money (the verses being invaluable of course) and can I kindly accept the present? There was nothing for it but to accept the present but I wish she had made it money instead ….
> I hope my darlings are well – the few days in Simla have done a lot of good to my morale.

In 1947, when my mother, aunt and we the two daughters were in Srinagar, my father visited, and the following are a few excerpts from letters he wrote when he came back:

> The Muslims have got their Pakistan, the Hindus and Sikhs their divided Punjab and Bengal, but I have yet to meet a person, Muslim, Hindu or Sikh who feels enthusiastic about the future. I can't think of any country whose people felt so miserable on the eve of their freedom and liberation. Both morally and politically the British could not have hoped for a greater triumph.

Another letter from the same times:

> Darling,
> Arrived here safely the day before yesterday. For once, safety has some meaning, for if I had been a Hindu or a Sikh I could never have gone

> beyond half way. The situation in the West, however, bears no comparison to what has happened and is happening in the East. It seemed so unreal and far away as long as I was in Srinagar, but it has all came back and is far far worse than anything I had feared and imagined. From early morning till late evening one hears nothing but tales of horror and even though one ties shut one's mind and one's ears tight against them there is no escape from the horror or tragedy that surrounds one from every side. To be alone and ponder over it all is an unbearable pain, and one has conceived a horror of being alone with one's thoughts.
> It is difficult to see a path or a light in the gloom but one has to maintain one's reason and one's courage and I shall certainly maintain it.
> I am glad you are not here although Lahore is peaceful for now; it resembles more a deserted wilderness than a populated city.

In 1958, Faiz embarked upon working on the film "Jago Hua Savera". Just an excerpt from Hotel Shadbagh:

> In the last three days, there has been no sun, the trees are dark with rain and the wind feels heavy with nostalgic regrets. My window brings memories of Simla and Kashmir and in the midst of work and discussions there are sudden stabs of homesickness and thoughts of you and the urge to drop everything and return. I could work so much better if you were here, but it can't be helped so I'm trying to rush through it as speedily as I can.

Among the letters, I came across a letter written in Ziarat, in 1972. This was news to me; I didn't know of the trip. It's odd that he decided to take a trip to Ziarat. He writes:

> Arrived in Quetta yesterday after quite a pleasant flight – it felt strange to arrive at a place unreceived, unannounced, unwelcomed, to hire one's own transport and go looking for a place to stay. I don't even remember when it happened to me last. There were no taxis at the airport so I had to take the PIA station wagon. The driver asked where I wanted to be dropped. I said I don't know, some hotel you know of. He took me to Lourdes, who were full up and then dropped me at the Grand where I spent the night.

It certainly looks grand from outside, marbles and what not but the rooms are cheerless. I made a round of the town in a rickshaw, what a dreary, one-eyed place it is quite unlike what I remember of it from the past – then I slept for a while and in the evening began investigations for a drink, Lourdes bar seemed to be the only place. I found one solitary drinker in the bar, sitting on a bar-stool, looking for all the world like Picasso's Absinthe Drinker.

I sat in a chair nearby and ordered a drink. I am not quite sure whether I liked or disliked the loneliness, perhaps both. Before I had finished my drink the bearer brought another, unasked. And then the absinthe drinker turned around and said "If I may have the honour sir". So I had to ask him to join me. He introduced himself as Bashir something an engineer. "I'm sorry I don't quite recognize" I said "how can you when we have never met. But I read poetry and I never thought I would ever be alone in the same room with such a great man" (ahem! etc.) Fortunately he was not a bore – in fact an intelligent and aware young man.

Telephone from Lourdes "Sir, since you are going to Ziarat in a taxi, would you mind taking two young ladies with you? They don't have an escort and feel nervous about going to Ziarat alone in a bus". I suppose a gentleman has no option so I had to say yes, imagining some glamorous American beauties. They turned out to be two PIA girls. One a Punjabi and not too bad looking, the other a Parsi from Karachi, both equally dumb.

I tried to make some bright conversation on the way and drew a blank. "No oil in these seeds" as they say in Urdu. So we all landed up in this hotel in Ziarat to find that we are the only 3 denizens in the place. A sore disappointment for them – but not for me.

But there is a nice young Parsi boy, Manager of the place here and I think he is keeping them amused. Had a nice nap, hot bath then a long walk by myself, absolutely weird, like walking through ghost land. Not a soul, not a sound, not even a bird. Almost terrifying, ideal for a honeymoon couple terribly in love. But I think ordinary mortals would find it a bit trying – as these two girls are doing, who are, as I write, desperately trying to get through to Karachi. I have a feeling that they are not going to last out for more than a day unless young Pervez our manager rises to the occasion. How he can rise to the both of them I don't know….

And the last bits of his correspondence are of course from his time in Beirut—he especially talked about the Israeli invasion, and he says that all the pain and glory of those days, the anguish of the people and their heroism, were almost too much for the

heart and for poetry. After the 6th of June, when the Israeli invasion began, (and Mahmoud Darwish was always with him)— he writes from the Hotel Meridian in Damascus:

> Dearest
> Here with the letter I wrote to you one day before everything went dead – the airport, post office, telephone, lift, electricity, and finally even the water. There was no room in any hotel, so Moin kindly shifted me to a flat below his own (he had finally found his way back from Kuwait through Syria) as the occupant had shifted to East Beirut. So had our Ambassador and his family. I could have done the same, but the heart didn't agree to let the side down. So I decided to stick it through and what the poor Palestinian and Lebanese and the city went through beggars all description. And then the evening before yesterday, Azam Khan from the UN (you know with the poet wife) somehow traced me to Moin's flat and offered to take me along with his family to Damascus through Tripoli and Hams. So I asked Moin and he said "yes, I couldn't let you go alone, but probably they will let UN personnel through". Of course the heart missed a beat at every Phalangist checkpost but we made it in about 9 hours. And arriving in this posh hotel almost felt like having risen from the dead. First hot bath after ten days and the light all around. (although even in Beirut I never missed a night's sleep despite the guns and most of the time I nap in the afternoon) so all is well sweetheart…

*In 2010 when we started preparing the volume **Two Loves**, I also came across some of the other letters from 1959, during the time when he was detained in Ayub Khan's period. He had to write on regulation paper known as form 'B' and give details of all people he mentioned in the letter. There were 14 lines on the paper. We were allowed a visit every Thursday afternoon.*

> I'm looking after myself and the days are slowly sliding into nothingness so keep your chins up. Even the miserable half-hour every fortnight is better than the complete absence of beloved faces, so I look forward to the Thursday that will bring its respite to the days of hopeful waiting.

Last year I made two journeys, not to Hyderabad but to Montgomery and Lyallpur Jails: Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) because that is where we first visited Faiz before his indictment and where he had been kept in solitary confinement. Having been told he was tortured, Alys was fearful of how he had fared. I had a recollection of those first moments of seeing him through the window of the Superintendent office, walking towards us. My

mother's back was towards the window, when I told her he looked his old self, smiling and smoking his perennial cigarette, she relaxed. The cell I could not trace, and could only conjecture where he may have spent those three months.
The cell in Montgomery (or Sahiwal,) was a different story. Here too, my sister and I had been allowed a special visit. Not only is the cell there, but has a plaque on the door, which says "Kamra-e Faiz Ahmed Faiz". The garden that he planted, that he laid out with grass, shrubs, trees and flowers, is in place, fresh as the day I saw it at age 12. There were roses blooming in the August of 2010 – in memory of and tribute to Faiz.

Salima Hashmi

بسم اللہ الرحمٰن الرحیم

افتخار عارف

خواتین وحضرات!

یادش بخیر اسی ہال میں اِسی جگہ ستر کی دہائی کے اواخر اور اَسّی کی دہائی میں فیض کے ساتھ تقریباً ہر سال اُن کی وفات تک دو تین تقریبات کا انعقاد ضرور ہوتا رہا ہے۔ گزرے ہوئے اچھے اور خوشگوار دن اور ناقابلِ فراموش یادیں جذباتی کیے دیتی ہیں۔ اُداس بھی ہیں مگر افسردگی میں ایک احساسِ طمانیت بھی ہے کہ ہم نے فیض جیسے عظیم المرتبت شاعر کے ساتھ بے شمار لازوال اور زندہ لمحے گزارے۔ لگتا ہے ابھی فیض سامنے کے دروازے سے اچانک برآمد ہوں گے اور سارا ہال تالیوں کے شور سے گونجنے لگے گا۔ خوشی اور انبساط اور فخر سے کِھلے ہوئے چہرے، مسکراتے ہوئے فیض کا استقبال کریں گے اور وہ آ کر سٹیج پر جلوہ افروز ہوں گے۔ گفتگو کریں گے اور ہر شخص محسوس کرے گا کہ جیسے فیض آج اُسی کی دلدہی و دلداری کے لئے بطورِ خاص تشریف لائے ہیں۔ اب فیض ہم میں نہیں ہیں مگر ان کی شاعری اور ان کا آدرش اور ان کی زندگی آج بھی ویسی ہی زندہ، اُجلی، روشن، موثر اور بامعنی ہے جیسی ان کی زندگی میں تھی۔ آج کا عہد بھی فیض کا عہد ہے، نہ صرف پاکستان کے بسنے والوں کے لئے بلکہ ساری دنیا کے انسانیت دوستوں کے لئے فیض کی معنویت اور بھی ہزار پہلو ہوگئی ہے۔ فیض کا جہانِ حرف و معنی آج بھی ویسا ہی اُجلا اور روشن و موثر، شاداب سرخرو ہے جیسا ان کی زندگی میں تھا۔

دنیا کی عظیم شاعروں کی کوئی سی فہرست بنالیں آپ دیکھیں گے کہ ان کے موضوعاتِ سخن میں حسن اور محبت اور عشق سرِ فہرست ہیں۔ ستیم، شوم، سُندرم، اللہ جمیل ٌ ویُحب الجمال۔ فیض بھی اس سے مستثنیٰ نہیں۔ نقشِ فریادی ہی میں اُنہوں نے اپنے موضوعِ سخن کی وضاحت کردی تھی۔

موضوعِ سخن

گُل ہوئی جاتی ہے افسردہ سُلگتی ہوئی شام
دُھل کے نکلے گی ابھی چشمۂ مہتاب سے رات
اور مشتاق نگاہوں کی سنی جائے گی
اور اُن ہاتھوں سے مَس ہوں گے یہ ترسے ہوئے ہات

اُن کا آنچل ہے، کہ رُخسار، کہ پیراہن ہے
کچھ تو ہے جس سے ہوئی جاتی ہے چلمن رنگیں
جانے اس زلف کی موہوم گھنی چھاؤں میں
ٹمٹماتا ہے وہ آویزہ ابھی تک کہ نہیں
آج پھر حسنِ دل آرا کی وہی دھج ہو گی
وہی خوابیدہ سی آنکھیں ، وہی کاجل کی لکیر
رنگِ رخسار پہ ہلکا سا وہ غازے کا غبار
صندلی ہاتھ پہ دُھندلی سی حِنا کی تحریر
اپنے افکار کی ، اشعار کی دنیا ہے یہی
جانِ مضموں ہے یہی، شاہدِ معنیٰ ہے یہی
آج تک سرخ و سیہ صدیوں کے سائے کے تلے
آدم و حوا کی اولاد پہ کیا گزری ہے ؟
موت اور زیست کی روزانہ صف آرائی میں
ہم پہ کیا گزرے گی، اَجداد پہ کیا گزری ہے ؟
ان دمکتے ہوئے شہروں کی فراواں مخلوق
کیوں فقط مرنے کی حسرت میں جیا کرتی ہے ؟
یہ حسیں کھیت، پھٹا پڑتا ہے جوبن جن کا !
کس لئے ان میں فقط بھوک اُگا کرتی ہے
یہ ہر اِک سَمت پُراَسرار کڑی دیواریں
جل بجھے جن میں ہزاروں کی جوانی کے چراغ
یہ ہر اک گام پہ اُن خوابوں کی مقتل گاہیں
جن کے پرتو سے چراغاں ہیں ہزاروں کے دماغ
یہ بھی ہیں، ایسے کئی اور بھی مضموں ہوں گے

لیکن اس شوخ کے آہستہ سے کھلتے ہوئے ہونٹ
ہائے اس جسم کے کم بخت دلآویز خطوط
آپ ہی کہیے کہیں ایسے بھی افسوں ہوں گے
اپنا موضوعِ سخن ان کے سوا اور نہیں
طبعِ شاعر کا وطن ان کے سوا اور نہیں

اور یہی محبت فیض کی شاعری کا اسمِ اعظم ٹھہرتا ہے۔ محبوب سے تعلق اپنے آدرش سے محبت، اپنی دھرتی سے محبت، خلقِ خدا سے محبت، امن وسلامتی اور عالمِ انسانیت سے محبت، نہ جانے کیوں مرا دل چاہتا ہے کہ لندن کے اس ہال میں فیض کی ایک نظم ضرور سناؤں۔ فیض نے یہ نظم لندن ہی میں لکھی تھی اور یہاں پڑھی بھی تھی۔

کوئی عاشق اپنی محبوبہ سے

گلشنِ یاد میں گر آج دمِ بادِ صبا
پھر سے چاہے کہ گل افشاں ہوتو ہو جانے دو
عمر رفتہ کے کسی طاق پہ بسرا ہوا درد
پھر سے چاہے کہ فروزاں ہوتو ہو جانے دو
جیسے بیگانہ سے اب ملتے ہو ویسے ہی سہی
آؤ دو چار گھڑی میرے مقابل بیٹھو
گرچہ مل بیٹھیں گے ہم تم تو ملاقات کے بعد
اپنا احساس زیاں اور زیادہ ہوگا
ہم سخن ہوں گے جو ہم دونوں تو ہر بات کے بیچ
اَن کہی بات کا موہوم سا پردہ ہوگا
کوئی اقرار نہ میں یاد دلاؤں گا نہ تم
کوئی مضمون وفا کا نہ جفا کا ہوگا
گردِ ایام کی تحریر کو دھونے کے لئے

تم سے گویا ہوں دمِ دید جو میری پلکیں
تم جو چاہو تو سنو اور جو نہ چاہو نہ سنو
اور جو حرف کریں مجھ سے گریزاں آنکھیں
تم جو چاہو تو کہو اور جو نہ چاہو نہ کہو

☆

میں لندن آنے سے پہلے اسلام آباد سے تقریب کے سلسلے میں کراچی گیا تھا۔ کراچی میں پچھلے چند دنوں میں ..... شہری موت کے گھاٹ اُتر چکے تھے۔ یہ سارے مارے جانے والے لیاری سے بھی تھے، کٹی پہاڑی سے بھی، لانڈھی اور کورنگی سے بھی تھے اور ناظم آباد سے بھی۔ سارے مارے جانے والے بدنصیب لوگوں میں ایک بات مشترک تھی کہ وہ اکثر و بیشتر پسماندہ طبقے سے تعلق رکھتے تھے۔ سارے ٹیلی وژن چینلز آزادانہ ان واقعات کی فوٹیج دکھا رہے تھے۔ بین کرتی ہوئی مائیں، بیوائیں، بہنیں، بیٹیاں دھاڑیں مار کر روتے ہوئے بوڑھے باپ اور بھائی، بلکتے ہوئے چھوٹے چھوٹے یتیم معصوم بچے بچیاں —— اور چاروں طرف تماشائی۔ آپ چاہیں تو ان کو تماش بین بھی کہہ سکتے ہیں۔ پارٹیاں ایک دوسرے پر الزام تراشیاں کرتی رہیں اور سیاست دان لاشوں پر سیاست کرتے رہے۔ حکومتیں اور ارباب اختیار قاتلوں کے ساتھ آہنی ہاتھوں سے نمٹنے کا رٹا ہوا سبق سناتے نہیں تھکتے۔ اخباروں کی چیختی ہوئی سرخیاں قتل عام کے احوال بتا رہی تھیں اور چینلز واقعات کے پیچھے کمنٹری میں فیض کی وہ نظم پڑھ رہے تھے جو انھوں نے کراچی ہی کے ایک واقعے کے پس منظر میں لکھی تھی۔

فیلڈ مارشل ایوب خان مادرِ ملت فاطمہ جناح کو انتخابات میں شکست دے چکے تھے مگر مشرقی پاکستان اور کراچی نے مادرِ ملت کے حق میں ووٹ دیا تھا۔ ظاہر ہے اسٹیبلشمنٹ کی نظر میں یہ جرم ناقابل معافی تھا سو فتح کا جشن منایا گیا۔ بقول ہم جیتے جی مصروف رہے کے مطابق تین ہٹی سے لالوکھیت اور ناظم آباد کی طرف ایک کھلے ٹرک پر ساٹھ ستر ہیجڑے لالٹین لیے سوار تھے۔ لالٹین محترمہ فاطمہ جناح کا انتخابی نشان تھا۔ ہیجڑوں کے بالوں کو سفید رنگ دے دیے گئے تھے تاکہ مادرِ ملت سے مشابہت پیدا کی جا سکے۔ جلوس فائرنگ کرتا ہوا لالوکھیت میں داخل ہوا تو محترمہ کے حامیوں نے ایوب خان کے خلاف نعرے لگائے۔ ہراول دستے میں جیپ پر سوار کارکنوں نے جن کی قیادت ایوب خان کے صاحبزادے کر رہے تھے گولی چلا دی، ہلاکت ہوئی اور حالات بگڑ گئے۔ رات بھر مظاہرین اور نوجوان کے ورثا جنازہ لیے مختلف تھانوں کے چکر لگاتے رہے مگر کہیں ایف آئی آر درج نہ ہو سکی اور پھر مظلوم کی لاش بغیر کسی لکھا پڑھی کے دفنا دی گئی تب فیض نے لکھا:

کہیں نہیں ہے کہیں بھی نہیں لہو کا سراغ

نہ دست وناخن قاتل نہ آستیں پہ نشاں

نہ سرخی لب خنجر نہ رنگ نوک سناں

نہ خاک پر کوئی دھبّا نہ بام پر کوئی داغ

کہیں نہیں ہے کہیں بھی نہیں لہو کا سراغ

نہ صرف خدمت شاہاں نہ خوں بہا دیتے

نہ دیں کی نذر کہ بیعانہ جزا دیتے

نہ رزم گاہ میں برسا کہ معتبر ہوتا

کسی علم پہ رقم ہو کے مشتہر ہوتا

پکارتا رہا ہے آسرا، یتیم لہو

کسی کو بہرسماعت نہ وقت تھا نہ دماغ

نہ مدعی نہ عدالت حساب پاک ہوا

یہ رزق خاک نشیناں تھا رزق خاک ہوا

جنرل ایوب کے عہد میں لکھی ہوئی یہ نظم کیا آج کے تناظر میں کچھ زیادہ موثر اور بامعنی نہیں ہوگئی ہے۔

فیض کے تمام ناقدین نے ان کی شاعری میں رجائیت، آس اور اُمید کے عناصر پر بہت وضاحت سے لکھا ہے۔ تاریخ عالم گواہ ہے کہ ہر زمانے میں ہر تہذیب میں اور ہر مذہب میں کسی نہ کسی مسیحا کی، کسی نہ کسی آنے والے کی، کسی نہ کسی ایسی ہستی کی نشان دہی ضرور کی گئی ہے جو ظلم اور جبر فضا کو ختم کر کے معاشرے کو عدل و خیر سے بھر دے گا۔ میں یہاں عرض کرتا چلوں کہ عہدِ حاضر میں نمود کرنے والے نظریات میں بھی ''آنے والا کل''، ''بہت حسین و خوش گوار ہوگا'' کی بہت تکرار کی گئی ہے بشرطیکہ ہم ان کے نظریات کو نافذ و رائج کر دیں۔ تمام آدرش وادی نظریے انسان کو مایوسی سے محفوظ کرنے اور اچھے مستقبل کی تعمیر میں لگ جانے کا پرچار کرتے رہتے ہیں۔ ادیان عالم میں یہ صورت عقیدہ کی شکل اختیار کر جاتی ہے جب کہ جدید نظریات میں اس کے لئے دلیل و منطق کا ایک ڈھانچہ اس طرح استوار کیا جاتا ہے کہ مستقبل پر یقین ایک طے شدہ امر کی حیثیت اختیار کر جاتا ہے۔ برصغیر میں ترقی پسند تحریک کے قیام کے ساتھ ہی یہ بات رواج پا گئی تھی کہ اگر ہم نے سوشلسٹ نظام حیات کو اپنا لیا تو ہر ظلم اور زیادتی کا استحصالی نظام ختم ہو کر رہے گا اور جس طرح ان کے بقول اس وقت کے مشرقی یورپ کے سوشلسٹ ملکوں میں دودھ اور شہد کی نہریں بہہ رہی تھیں مشرق کا مستقبل بھی تابناک ہوگا۔ ''ایشیا سرخ ہے'' کا نعرہ لگانے والوں میں ہم جیسے پسماندہ طبقے کے نوجوان بھی شامل تھے اور مارکسی دانشور بھی یہ کہتے نہیں تھکتے تھے کہ۔

سنا ہے دو قدم آگے مہک رہے ہیں چمن
کہیں تو قافلۂ نو بہار ٹھہرے گا

ترقی پسند شاعری اس اُمید افزا اور خواب آور نظریہ کی ہر سطح پر ترجمانی کرتی نظر آتی تھی۔ جیسے کہ کہا گیا ہے۔

اب اس کے بعد صبح ہے اور صبح نو مجاز
ہم پر ہے ختم شام غریبانِ لکھنؤ

مجاز

حیات لے کے چلو کائنات لے کے چلو
چلو تو سارے زمانے کو ساتھ لے کے چلو

مخدوم

زندگی ہے تو بہرحال بسر بھی ہو گی
رات آئی ہے تو آئے کہ سحر بھی ہو گی

جذبی

شب ظلم نرغۂ دشمناں سے پکارتا ہے کوئی مجھے
میں فرازِ دار سے دیکھ لوں کہیں کاروانِ سحر نہ ہو

مجروح سلطان پوری

جب امبر جھوم کے ناچے گا
جب دھرتی نغمے گائے گی
وہ صبح کبھی تو آئے گی

ساحرلدھیانوی

ہمیں خبر ہے کہ ہم ہیں چراغ آخر شب
ہمارے بعد اندھیرا نہیں اُجالا ہے

ظہیر کاشمیری

مگر فیض کی شاعری میں یہ موضوع جتنی خوبصورتی اور جمالیاتی کمال کے ساتھ سامنے آیا اور تسلسل سے نظم ہوا ہے اس کی مثال پوری اردو شاعری میں نہیں ملتی۔ امید اور بشارت، تبدیلی کی آرزو، خوش آئند مستقبل کا مضمون فیض کی غزلوں میں بھی اور نظموں میں بھی تواتر کے ساتھ نظم ہوا ہے۔

دل نا امید تو نہیں ناکام ہی تو ہے
لمبی ہے غم کی شام مگر شام ہی تو ہے

☆

ہو نہ ہو اپنے قبیلے کا بھی کوئی لشکر
منتظر ہو گا اندھیروں کی فصیلوں سے اُدھر
ان کے شعلوں کے رجز اپنا پتہ تو دیں گے
خیر ہم تک وہ نہ پہنچیں بھی صدا تو دیں گے
دور کتنی ہے ابھی صبح بتا تو دیں گے

☆

اے خاک نشینو اُٹھ بیٹھو وہ وقت قریب آ پہنچا ہے
جب تخت گرائے جائیں گے، جب تاج اُچھالے جائیں گے

☆

دل سے پیہم خیال کہتا ہے
اتنی شیریں ہے زندگی اس پل
ظلم کا زہر گھولنے والے
کامراں ہو سکیں گے آج نہ کل
جلوہ گاہ وصال کی شمعیں
وہ بجھا بھی چکے اگر تو کیا
چاند کو گل کریں تو ہم جانیں

مگر وہ نظم جو اس سلسلے کی سب سے مقبول نظم ہے اور شاید اب پاکستان کے قومی ترانے کے بعد سب سے مقبول نظم بن کر سامنے آئی ہے۔ نظم کا عنوان ہے ''ویبقیٰ وجہہ ربک'' یہ نظم انقلابِ ایران کے بعد لکھی گئی اور یہیں لندن میں لکھی گئی۔ فیض کا خیال تھا ''یہ ایرانی انقلاب اپنی قسم کا بڑا انقلاب'' تھا۔ انقلابِ فرانس کے بعد ایسا انقلاب دنیا میں نہیں آیا۔ روس، چین اور ویت نام کے انقلابوں میں طرفین کی فوجوں کے درمیان جنگ ہی ایران کے انقلاب میں عوام کی فوج کی براہ راست حکومتی اداروں سے جنگ ہوئی، جہاں عوام نے فوج کو شکست فاش دی۔

ہم دیکھیں گے

لازم ہے کہ ہم بھی دیکھیں گے
وہ دن کہ جس کا وعدہ ہے
جو لوحِ ازل میں لکھا ہے
جب ظلم و ستم کے کوہ گراں
روئی کی طرح اڑ جائیں گے
ہم محکوموں کے پاؤں تلے
جب دھرتی دھڑ دھڑ دھڑ کے گی
اور اہل حکم کے سر اوپر
جب بجلی کڑ کڑ کڑ کے گی
جب ارضِ خدا کے کعبے سے
سب بت اُٹھوائے جائیں گے
ہم اہل صفا، مردودِ حرم
مسند پہ بٹھائے جائیں گے
سب تاج اچھالے جائیں گے
سب تخت گرائے جائیں گے
بس نام رہے گا اللہ کا
جو غائب بھی ہے حاضر بھی
جو منظر بھی ہے ناظر بھی
گونجے گا انا الحق کا نعرہ
جو میں بھی ہوں اور تم بھی ہو
اور راج کرے گی خلق خدا
جو میں بھی ہوں اور تم بھی ہو

☆

اسی ہال میں پڑھے جانے والے مضمون میں کہ جس کی صدارت خود فیض فرما رہے تھے کہا گیا کہ فیض کی شاعری حرف حق کی تلاش کی داستان ہے۔حرف اظہار کی معراج ہے۔صورت،حرکت،رنگ اور خط اور مفہوم سب حرف کے دامن میں سمٹ آئے ہیں۔الطاف گوہر نے کہا انجیل مقدس میں کہا گیا:

In the begining was the word and the word was with god and the word was god.

تخلیق کا آغاز حرف سے ہوا،حرف،حرف حق تھا اور وہی حق تھا۔برہ دارنژیک اپنشد میں کہا گیا ہر نام کی ابتدا حرف سے ہوئی اور حرف ہی سے ہر نام لیا گیا۔قرآن کریم میں ارشاد ہے اقرا باسم ربک Proclaim in the name of your god۔''بول''فیض کے ہاں اقرا کے ترجمے کے طور پر آیا ہے۔اس میں مشورہ بھی ہے اور ترغیب بھی اور حکم بھی۔اعلان کی شکل،مشتاق یوسفی نے 'بول' کا ذکر کرتے ہوئے نوآزاد ملکوں میں جبر واستبداد کے پنجے میں جکڑی ہوئی خلق خدا میں ولولہ تازہ اور حوصلہ نبرد کو تیز کرنے کے لیے ''بول'' کا سہارا لیا۔''بارہ مصرعوں کی نظم بول''صرف فیض ہی کا عہد نامہ نہیں بلکہ اسے اگر تیسری دنیا کا عہد نامہ کہا جائے تو بے جا نہ ہوگا۔یہ نظم آج سے کوئی ستر برس پہلے لکھی گئی تھی جب برٹش راج کا سورج نصف النہار پر تھا اور زبان کھولنے پر قدغنیں لگی ہوئی تھیں۔اس میں ان کے مبارزت کے لہجے کی گونج صاف سنائی دیتی ہے۔مدھم مگر مضبوط سروں کے ساتھ وہ رجز کی لے تیز کر دیتے ہیں۔ہر چوتھی لائن کے بعد Tempo بڑھتا چلا جاتا ہے۔یہاں تک رجز خواں کے نفس گرم کی آنچ محسوس ہونے لگتی ہے اور آخری بند کے لحن میں عہد عتیق کے خبر دار کرنے والوں کا جاہ وجلال گونج اُٹھتا ہے۔

بول

بول کہ لب آزاد ہیں تیرے

بول زباں اب تک تیری ہے

تیرا ستواں جسم ہے تیرا

بول کہ جاں اب تک تیری ہے

دیکھ کے آہن گر کی دُکاں میں

تند ہیں شعلے سرخ ہے آہن

کھلنے لگے قفلوں کے دہانے

پھیلا ہر زنجیر کا دامن

بول! یہ تھوڑا وقت بہت ہے

جسم و زباں کی موت سے پہلے

بول! کہ سچ زندہ ہے اب تک

بول! جو کچھ کہنا ہے کہہ لے

نظم میں ''آہن گر'' کا تذکرہ مجھے اساطیر ایران کے بے مثال کردار کاوہ آہن گر کی طرف لے جاتا ہے جس نے ضحاک کے ظلم و جور و جفا کے خلاف بغاوت کی اور اپنی دھونکنی کا پرچم بلند کیا اور عہد ستم کا خاتمہ کیا۔ ''درفش کاویانی'' کے استعارہ سے اہل علم مجھ سے بہتر واقف ہیں۔

فیض نے ایران کے طلبہ پر، فلسطین کی جدوجہد آزادی پر، روس اور چین کے عوامی انقلابوں پر، افریقہ کی آزادی پر اور عالمی سامراج کی ریشہ دوانیوں پر بھی لکھا اور برصغیر اور بالخصوص پاکستان کے ہر اہم واقعے پر اپنا شعری تاثر ضرور رقم کیا۔

فیض عالم انسانیت کے شاعر تھے۔ ان کی شاعری دوامی آفاقی انسانی قدروں کی ترجمان تھی مگر ظاہر ہے کہ کوئی بھی تخلیق کار مقامی ہوئے بغیر آفاقی نہیں ہوسکتا۔ وہ اپنی زمین سے اور اپنے لوگوں سے جڑے ہوئے تھے۔ قیام پاکستان سے لے کر اپنی وفات تک ہماری تاریخ کے ہر اہم واقعے پر فیض نے اپنا شاعرانہ تبصرہ ضرور کیا ہے۔ آزادی کا مرحلہ ہو یا آزادی اظہار پر لگنے والی قدغنوں کی صورتِ حال، مارشل لاء عہد میں جبر و تشدد کی صعوبتیں ہوں یا قید و بند کے مرحلے، مشرقی پاکستان کا المیہ ہو یا خلق خدا پر ہونے والے مظالم کی داستان، جلاوطنی کی منزلیں ہوں یا اپنے آدرشی مملکتوں کے بتدریج زوال اور انہدام کے اندیشے، ان سب کا بیان فیض کی شاعری میں موجود ہے۔

فیض کی شاعری کا مطالعہ کرنے والے بخوبی جانتے ہیں کہ ان کی لغت شعر کلاسیکی مشرقی شعری روایت کی ترجمانی کرتی ہے۔ تہذیبی بلکہ مذہبی روزمرہ محاورہ سے استفادہ اس نوعیت کا ہے کہ بعض اوقات پڑھنے والے کو مشکل میں مبتلا کر دیتا ہے۔ فیض کا یہ اسلوب حالی اور اقبال کا تسلسل ہے یا ردعمل اس کی تفصیل میں جانے کا یہ موقع نہیں مگر مروجہ لفظوں کو معنی کی نئی جہتوں سے آشنا کر کے فیض نے اپنی بات جس طرح عوام تک پہنچائی ہے یہ کچھ ان ہی کا حصّہ ہے۔ پچھلے چند برسوں میں تو فیض کی اس وضع کی شاعری اور بھی زیادہ راسخ و مقبول ہوتی نظر آتی ہے۔ سرسری مطالعے میں کچھ ترکیبیں، کچھ مصرعے منتخب کیے ہیں۔ آپ بھی دیکھیے:

چھن گیا کیف کوثر و تسنیم، بے نیاز دعا ہے رب کریم، متاع غیرت و ایمان کی ارزانی نہیں جاتی، متاع لوح و قلم، نشاط وصل، حلال و عذاب ہجر حرام، فراق ظلمت و نور، پرورش لوح و قلم، بیٹھے ہیں ذوی العدل گنہگار کھڑے ہیں، یقیں جو غم سے عظیم تر ہے، سحر جو شب سے کریم تر ہے، میرے مقدور میں ہے معجزہ کن فیکون، لامکانِ عشق کی تدبیر بسم اللہ، شورش زنجیر بسم اللہ، پھر برق فروزاں ہے سروادی سینا، خورشیدِ محشر کی لو، جس روز قضا آئے گی، للہ الحمد بانجام دل، دل زدگان کلمہ شکر بنام لب شیریں دھناں، فرش پر آج درِ صدق و صفا بند ہوا، عرش پر آج ہر اک باب دعا بند ہوا۔ ہر اک اولی الامر کو صدا دو کہ اپنی فرد عمل سنبھالے۔

جزا سزا سب یہیں پہ ہوگی یہیں عذاب و ثواب ہوگا
یہیں سے اٹھے گا شور محشر یہیں حساب و کتاب ہوگا
ہم جیتیں گے لازم ہے کہ ہم بھی جیتیں گے

فیض جس آدرش پر یقین محکم رکھتے تھے اس کا تقاضا تھا ''تمام فنون کا مقصد انفرادی اور اجتماعی حیثیت میں ایک ایسے فن کی تخلیق ہے جو سب کے لیے انتہائی قابل فہم ہو یعنی ایک انسان دوست معاشرہ اور انسان کے لیے اس کا شاہ کار--- (کارل مارکس)۔اس اصول کی روشنی میں فیض کی شاعری کے چلن کو دیکھتے ہوئے اندازہ ہوتا ہے کہ وہ کس سطح پر عوام و خواص سے محو کلام تھے۔انھوں نے مکالمے کی ایک ایسی غنائی جمالیاتی روایت کا آغاز کیا جس کے وہ خود ہی بنیاد گزار بھی تھے اور خود ہی اس کو منزل کمال تک پہنچانے والے بھی۔پچھلے چند برسوں میں سیاسی جلسوں سے لے کر مذہبی اجتماعات تک تحریکوں کے درمیان درس گاہوں میں نوجوان نسل کے اندر کسی اور شاعر نے اس درجہ رسوخ حاصل نہیں کیا جتنا فیض کی نظموں کا جادو سر چڑھ کر بول رہا ہے۔بعض نظمیں محنت کشوں سے لے کر عدل کے ایوانوں اور پارلیمان سے لے کر شاہراہوں میں برابر گونج رہی ہیں۔سب منتظر ہیں وہ دن کہ جس کا وعدہ ہے، جو لوح ازل پہ لکھا ہے، ہم جیتیں گے، لازم ہے کہ ہم بھی جیتیں گے، جزا سزا سب یہیں پہ ہوگی، یہیں پہ روز حساب ہوگا۔چاند کو گل کریں تو ہم جانیں، جو دل پہ گزرتی ہے رقم کرتے رہیں گے، جس دھج سے کوئی مقتل میں گیا وہ شان سلامت رہتی ہے، چلے چلو کہ وہ منزل ابھی نہیں آئی ——— اور کون سا شاعر ہے جس کی نظمیں لکھے جانے کے بعد اس طرح عوام نے حرز جاں بنا رکھی ہیں جیسے فیض کے مصرعے ہیں۔

اب ایک بات مضمون سے ہٹ کر۔

فیض کی شاعری کا سفر کتنی دور تک جاری رہے گا؟ اس سوال کے جواب کا انحصار اس بات پر ہے کہ خود زبان اردو کا مستقبل کیا ہوگا۔جب تک اردو زندہ ہے فیض کی شاعری زندہ رہے گی۔میرے منھ میں خاک اگر اردو ختم ہوگئی تو نہ فیض رہیں گے، نہ راشد، نہ میراجی، نہ جوش و فراق، نہ اقبال، نہ غالب۔زبانوں کے نام پر سیاست ایک بھیانک کھیل پہلے بھی کھیل چکی ہے۔اہل سیاست لسانی تعصبات پر دوکانیں چمکانا ترک نہیں کریں گے۔نئے کھیل کا انجام بھی بھیانک ہو سکتا ہے۔پاکستان کی تمام زبانوں کو ان کا حق رعایت کی طرح نہیں حق کی طرح ملنا چاہیے۔میرا ایمان ہے کہ اردو کا مستقبل سب زبانوں کے ساتھ پہلے بھی تھا اور آج بھی رہے گا۔فیض زندہ صحبت باقی۔

کیا زمانہ تھا جب سویت یونین اپنے تمام کروفر کے ساتھ عالمی بساط سیاست پر نمایاں تھا اور وہ تمام اہلِ قلم جو مجبور اور مظلوم طبقوں کی حمایت کرتے تھے انقلاب کی سرزمین سے اپنا رشتہ جوڑتے نہیں تھکتے تھے۔ سب نے کسی نہ کسی طور پر سویت انقلاب کی حمایت ضرور کی۔ فیض بھی آخر دم تک سویت یونین کے حلیف رہے اور اس وقت بھی جب Prestroika کے زمانے میں Glasnost کے ماحول میں بلکہ اس سے پہلے بقول ڈاکٹر لدمیلا وسیلیفو، فیض کو سویت قیادت سے کچھ شکایتیں پیدا ہوئیں مگر فیض نے شائستہ خاموشی کا رویہ اپنایا۔ سچی بات تو یہ ہے کہ وہ ہمیشہ روسی قیادت کے بجائے روسی اہل قلم اور سویت عوام سے اپنا رشتہ جوڑتے رہے جب کہ ان کے ساتھی سویت روس کی حمایت میں اتنے دور نکل گئے تھے جن کا کوئی متوازن شخص تصور بھی نہیں کر سکتا۔ ابھی کل کی بات ہے ہماری جوانی کا زمانہ ان شاعروں کی محبت میں گزارا گیا جو کہہ رہے تھے:

لینن کے پیغام کی جے ہو اسٹالن کے نام کی جے ہو
جے ہو اس دھرتی کی جس پر اپنا اجارہ ہو کے رہے گا
(مجروح سلطانپوری)

☆

سٹیلن میرا باپ (عارف عبدالمتین)
مری نگاہ میں ہے ارض ماسکو مجروح
وہ سرزمیں کہ ستارے جسے سلام کریں

اور تو اور یہاں انگریزی کے ایک ممتاز شاعر فرما رہے تھے۔

No father to his children did what Lenin did for us.

فیض کی نرمی اور مٹھاس اپنے آدرش کی حمایت کرتے ہوئے بھی برقرار رہی۔ بلاشبہ فیض کو ماسکو عزیز تھا کہ وہاں کے لوگوں سے اُنہوں نے محبتیں کی تھیں اور اس شہر سے اُنہوں نے دو چیزیں سیکھی تھیں۔

''ایک امن سے محبت کرنا اور جنگ کرنا لیکن جنگ کے لئے نہیں بلکہ امن کے لئے جنگ کرنا۔ ماسکو میں اُنہوں نے اپنی زندگی کے بہت مشکل اور بہت خوشگوار دن گزارے اور اردو کی لازوال اور بے مثال نظمیں لکھیں۔ پاس رہو ۱۹۶۳ء کے اوائل میں لکھی تھی۔

تم مرے پاس رہو

مرے قاتل، مرے دلدار، مرے پاس رہو

جس گھڑی رات چلے

آسمانوں کا لہو پی کر سیہ رات چلے

مرہم مشک لیے، نشترِ الماس لیے

بین کرتی ہوئی، ہنستی ہوئی، گاتی نکلے

درد کے کاسنی پازیب بجاتی نکلے

جس گھڑی سینوں میں ڈوبے ہوئے دل

آستینوں میں نہاں ہاتھوں کی راہ تکنے لگیں

آس لیے

اور بچوں کے بلکنے کی طرح قلقلِ مے

بہر ناسودگی مچلے تو منائے نہ منے

جب کوئی بات بنائے نہ بنے

جب نہ کوئی بات چلے

جس گھڑی رات چلے

جس گھڑی ماتمی، سنسان، سیہ رات چلے

پاس رہو

مرے قاتل مرے دلدار مرے پاس رہو

☆☆☆

رہگزر، سائے، شجر، منزل و در، حلقۂ بام

بام پر سینۂ مہتاب کھلا، آہستہ

جس طرح کھولے کوئی بندِ قبا، آہستہ

حلقۂ بام تلے، سایوں کا ٹھہرا ہوا نیل

نیل کی جھیل

جھیل میں چپکے سے تیرا، کسی پتے کا حباب

ایک پل تیرا، چلا، پھوٹ گیا، آہستہ

بہت آہستہ، بہت ہلکا، خنک رنگِ شراب

میرے شیشے میں ڈھلا، آہستہ

شیشہ و جام، صراحی، ترے ہاتھوں کے گلاب

جس طرح دور کسی خواب کا نقش

آپ ہی آپ بنا اور مٹا، آہستہ

دل نے دہرایا کوئی حرفِ وفا، آہستہ

تم نے کہا ''آہستہ''

چاند نے جھک کر کہا

''اور ذرا آہستہ''

☆☆☆

فیض کا ایمان تھا امن سے صرف محبت نہیں کی جانی چاہئے اس کے لئے جدوجہد بھی کی جانی چاہئے۔ امن کے لئے مستقل اور غیر مصالحانہ جدوجہد کرنا لازمی اور ضروری ہے۔ یہ جدوجہد ہر ایمان دار کا فریضہ ہے۔ اُنہوں نے کہا تھا مجھے یقین ہے کہ انسانیت جس نے اپنے دشمنوں سے کبھی ہار نہیں مانی اب بھی فتح یاب ہو کر رہے گی۔ اور آخر کار جنگ و نفرت اور ظلم و کدورت کے بجائے ہماری باہمی زندگی کی بناوہی ٹھہرے گی۔ جس کی تلقین اب سے بہت پہلے فارسی شاعر حافظ نے کی تھی:

خلل پذیر بود ہر بنا کہ می بینی

بجز بنائے محبت کہ خالی از خلل است

دنیا میں ہمارا خطہ اور مشرقِ وسطیٰ کے مختلف شہر جس صورتِ حال سے گزر رہے ہیں اس میں فیض کی شاعری جیسی زندہ اور بامعنی نظر آ رہی ہے کوئی اور شاعر اس کے قریب سے بھی نہیں گزرتا۔

☆

ترقی پسند ادب اور پروپیگنڈے پر بعض بزرگوں کی طرف سے سخت حملے ہوئے فیض نے واشگاف لفظوں میں اعلان کیا اچھا ادب بھی ایک سطح پر موثر پروپیگنڈے کی حیثیت رکھتا ہے۔ افکار اسلامی کی ترجمانی میں بڑی بڑی تبلیغی اور دعوتی نوعیت کی کتابوں کے انبار نے وہ کام نہیں کیا ہوگا جو کارنامہ اقبال کی شاعری نے سرانجام دیا۔ بیسویں اور اکیسویں صدی میں جلال الدین رومی کی اثر انگیزی نے تصوف کو کن کن انجان سرحدوں تک پہنچایا، صاحبانِ علم اسے مجھ سے بہتر جانتے ہیں۔ گیتا تلسی داس کی رامائن، سورداس کی پداولی اور میرابائی کے بھجن بھی اس تناظر میں رکھے اور دیکھے جا سکتے ہیں۔

اپنے قارئین کے لئے کہ ادب ایک سطح پر لطیف تفریح، جمالیاتی انبساط و فرحت انگیز سرشاری Aesthetic pleasure, entertainment, enjoyment and dilight بھی فراہم کرتا ہے مگر صرف یہی اس کے مقاصد نہیں ہیں۔ تیسری دنیا میں نوآبادیاتی سامراجی صورت حال کے دوران اور اس کے بعد بھی لکھنے والا صرف شاعر یا ادیب نہیں ہوتا وہ ایک راہبر و رہنما بھی ہوتا ہے۔ مصلح بھی ہوتا ہے، استاد بھی ہوتا ہے فکر کی تعمیر و تشکیل بھی کرتا ہے اور رائے عامہ کو تبدیل بھی کرتا ہے۔ فیض مسدس حالی اور حمایت اسلام کے جلسے میں پڑھی جانے والی نظموں اور حسرت موہانی کی عملی جدوجہد کے نتیجے میں قید و بند کی صعوبتوں کے بعد آئے تھے۔ انیسویں صدی کی ۳۰ویں دہائی برصغیر کی ادبی تاریخ میں ہمیشہ یادگار رہے گی کہ اس میں ادب طبقہ اشرافیہ سے نکل کر عوام الناس میں روشناس ہوا۔ سرسیّد، ڈپٹی نذیر احمد، پریم چند، اقبال، انگارے اور ترقی پسند تحریک نے ادب کو مزدوروں، کسانوں، کلرکوں، خواتین، اساتذہ اور دیگر عوامی طبقوں میں مقبول کیا۔ بعد کے زمانوں میں جوش، مخدوم، مجاز، فیض، شیخ ایاز، جالب، فراز، کشور ناہید اور فہمیدہ ریاض اتنے مقبول اور محبوب ہوئے کہ Glamour world کے Celebraties کی شہرت بھی ان کے سامنے ماند پڑتی نظر آتی تھی۔

☆

ایڈورڈ سعید نے Yeats اور نوآبادیاتی نظام سے چھٹکارے کے حوالے سے بہت سی نئی باتوں کا انکشاف کیا ہے کہ کس طرح حُبّ الوطنی کے نام پر نوآبادیاتی نظام کے زیر اثر پروان چڑھنے والی سیاست تیسری دنیا میں گل کھلاتی رہی ہے۔ The wretched of the Earth کے مصنف Frantz Fanon کو نقل کرتے ہوئے Edward Saeed نے لکھا ہے کہ کس طرح بورژوا طبقے کے سیاستدان نوآبادیاتی نظام کے خاتمے کے بعد بھی سامراجی رویوں اور ہتھکنڈوں کو استعمال کرتے ہوئے نوآزاد معاشروں میں استحصالی نظام کو قائم کرنے اور اسی روایت کو مسلسل رکھنے پر اصرار کرتے ہیں۔ ۱۸۵۷ء کی ناکام جنگ ختم ہوئی تو اس کے بعد استحصالی طبقے کی ریشہ دوانیاں کھل کر سامنے آگئیں۔ عوام نے اور خاص طور پر پسماندہ اور متوسط طبقے کے گروہوں نے آزادی سے جو خواب جوڑ رکھے تھے وہ دیکھتے دیکھتے بکھر گئے تھے۔ استحصال کی یہ شکل پہلے سے بھی زیادہ کریہہ اور بھیانک تھی۔ ۱۹۴۷ء کے سال کا دوسرا نصف پے در پے فسادات کے جلو میں آزادی کی نوید لایا۔ وہ اہل قلم جنہوں نے مجبوروں اور مظلوم طبقوں کے لئے ایک بہتر معاشرے کا خواب دیکھا تھا وہ خاموش نہ رہ سکے اور فیض نے وہ معرکتہ لآرا نظم لکھی جو آج بھی اتنی ہی Relevant اور بامعنی معلوم ہوتی ہے جیسے پہلے تھی۔ فیض نے جس تناظر میں نظم لکھی وہ لہجے کی بے باکی، جذبے کی شدت اور جمالیاتی حسن کے سبب آج بھی ان کی نمائندہ نظم سمجھی جاتی ہے۔ عنوان بھی واشگاف گفتگو بھی براہِ راست۔

صبحِ آزادی

اگست ۱۹۴۷ء

یہ داغ داغ اُجالا یہ شب گزیدہ سحر
وہ انتظار تھا جس کا یہ وہ سحر تو نہیں
یہ وہ سحر تو نہیں جس کی آرزو لے کر
چلے تھے یار کہ مِل جائے گی کہیں نہ کہیں
فلک کے دشت میں تاروں کی آخری منزل
کہیں تو ہوگا شبِ سُست موج کا ساحل
کہیں تو جا کے رُکے گا سفینۂ غمِ دل
جواں لہو کی پُراسرار شاہراہوں سے

چلے جو یار تو دامن پہ کتنے ہاتھ پڑے
دیارِ حسن کی بے سرو خواب گاہوں سے
پکارتی رہیں باہیں، بدن بلاتے رہے
بہت عزیز تھی لیکن رُخِ سحر کی لگن
بہت قریں تھا حسینانِ نور کا دامن
سبک سبک تھی تمنا، دبی دبی تھی تھکن
سُنا ہے ہو بھی چکا ہے فراقِ ظلمت و نور
سُنا ہے ہو بھی چکا ہے وصالِ منزل و گام
بدل چکا ہے بہت اہلِ درد کا دستور
نشاطِ وصل حلال اور عذابِ ہجر حرام
جگر کی آگ نظر کی اُمنگ دل کی جلن
کسی پر چارۂ ہجراں کا کچھ اثر ہی نہیں
کہاں سے آئی نگارِ صبا کدھر کو گئی
ابھی چراغِ سرِ رہ کو کچھ خبر ہی نہیں
ابھی گرانیِ شب میں کمی نہیں آئی
نجاتِ دیدہ و دل کی گھڑی نہیں آئی
چلے چلو کہ وہ منزل ابھی نہیں آئی

☆

ایلیٹ نے بہت درست بات کی تھی کہ کوئی بھی شاعر یا کوئی بھی فنکار اس وقت تک ہماری گرفت میں نہیں آ سکتا جب تک کہ ہمارے سامنے اس کے پیش روؤں کا مکمل تناظر نہ ہو۔ جب بھی کوئی نیا فن پارہ وجود میں آتا ہے اس میں صلاحیت پوشیدہ ہوتی ہے کہ وہ اپنے زمانے کے نہیں اپنے پیش رو منظر نامے کی معنویت پر بھی اثر انداز ہوتا ہے۔ دیانت دارانہ تنقید اور بامعنی اور موثر تحسین کا مرکز و محور شاعر کی ذات نہیں بلکہ شاعری ہوتی ہے۔ یہ وہی بات ہے جو ایذرا پونڈ نے ایچ ڈی کے ایک خط میں متیس (Matisse) کا حوالہ دیتے ہوئے کہی تھی۔

We should discuss the piece of Art and not the Artist.

فیض پر لکھی جانے والی تحریروں میں اکثر تحریریں وہ ہیں جن میں شاعر کی ذات یا شخصیت زیرِ بحث آتی ہے۔ ان کی شاعری کے اصل متن پر کم بات ہوتی ہے۔ میں نام گنوانا نہیں چاہتا گنتی کے چند مضامین چھوڑ کر فیضیات کا بڑا حصہ ایسے ہی مضامین اور تحریروں پر مشتمل ہے جن کا تعلق اکثر ایسے Anicdotes سے ہے جو ملاقاتوں، قصوں، واقعات اور خاص طور پر ایک محبوب شخصیت کی کرشماتی زندگی سے کشید کیے جاتے ہیں۔ ایک اور بات اسی سلسلے کی ہے۔ کوئی شاعر مکمل طور پر SelfSufficient نہیں ہوتا۔ اس کا پیش رَو منظر نامہ اور عصری تخلیقی سرگرمیاں دونوں شعوری یا غیر شعوری طور پر اثر انداز ہو کر رہتی ہیں۔ اقبال، حالی، حسرت اور اختر شیرانی کس کس طور پر فیض پر اثر انداز ہوئے اور کس کس طرح مخدوم، جوش، مجاز اور دیگر ترقی پسند شعرا کے فکری اشتراک نے فیض کی شاعری کو متاثر کیا۔ اس کے بارے میں بہت معتبر لکھنے والے اظہارِ خیال کر چکے ہیں۔ میں اس تکرار سے بچتے ہوئے بس ایک بات عرض کرنا چاہتا ہوں کہ خود فیض کی تحریروں ہی سے اپنی روایت اور ہم عصر دونوں سرچشموں سے انحراف و اعتراف کی مثالیں فراہم کی جا سکتی ہیں۔

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فیض احمد فیض (۱۹۸۴ء۔۱۹۱۱ء) ہماری ایک عظیم قومی شخصیت ہیں اور ہمارے لئے نہایت فخر کا مقام ہے کہ ان کی تہذیبی، خصوصاً تخلیقی خدمات کا اعتراف ہماری قومی سطح کے ساتھ ساتھ کسی نہ کسی عالمی سطح پر بھی کیا گیا اور اعترافِ عظمت کا یہ سلسلہ مستقل طور پر توسیع پذیر ہے۔

فیض کی تہذیبی خدمات متنوع عملی اور ذہنی شعبوں میں ہیں، جن میں سے سب سے بڑا شعبہ ان کے تحریری کاموں کا ہے، جو نثر میں بھی ہیں اور شاعری میں بھی۔ ان ساری متنوع تہذیبی خدمات میں مرکزی اہمیت ان کی شاعری کو حاصل ہے۔ اسی مرکزی اہمیت کے پیشِ نظر موجودہ انتخاب کا غالب حصہ ان کی شاعری ہی کے متعلق مضامین پر مشتمل ہے۔

فیض ایک بڑے سماجی آئیڈیل سے والہانہ وابستگی رکھنے والے شاعر ہیں۔ ان کی شاعری نے متعدد نسلوں کے شاعروں اور قارئین کو متاثر کرتے ہوئے ان کو تخلیقی تحرک بھی عطا کیا اور ان کی فنی و جمالیاتی تعلیم و تربیت بھی کی اور اس دوگونہ تاثیر کا دائرہ وسیع سے وسیع تر ہوتا چلا جا رہا ہے۔

ہر بڑا ادیب ادبی تنقید اور ادبی نظریے کو مستقل طور پر نئی سے نئی آزمائش میں ڈالے رکھتا ہے اور یہی خوبی فیض کی شاعری میں بھی موجود ہے۔ ہر نئی نسل کے اہم ادبی نقادوں اور ادبی نظریہ سازوں نے ان کی شاعری کو ضرور اپنا موضوع بنایا ہے اور یقینی طور پر آئندہ نسلوں کے ادبی نقاد اور ادبی نظریہ ساز بھی اس عمل سے بیگانہ نہیں رہیں گے۔

کسی نے کیا خوب کہا ہے کہ کسی مظہر کی کوئی سائنسی صداقت ایک بار ہی دریافت ہوتی ہے اس کی جمالیاتی قدر بار بار دریافت ہوتی ہے، فیض کی شاعری جو خود ایک اعلیٰ فنی و جمالیاتی مظہر ہے، اس پر یہ بات اور بھی زیادہ صادق آتی ہے۔

(فیض احمد فیض، فیض صدی: منتخب مضامین کے دیباچہ سے اقتباس جسے یوسف حسن اور ڈاکٹر روش ندیم نے لکھا۔)

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Logical Placement of the Poetic Language: Coloring Faiz Ahmed Faiz's *Zindan Nama*[1]

By Dr. Waseem Anwar

There can be several ways of celebrating Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poetry, but one under discussion is an attempt to synchronize with the logical placement of his poetic language. It might not sound really thoughtful, given the poetic experience be treated as a profound inspirational experience, but the linguistic variety of the poets like Faiz, metaphoric or metonymic or imagistic, needs to be explored if one wants to enjoy the depth of the enigmatic lure of such poetic ventures! In general, there could be multiple theories regarding the use of vocabulary in poetry and its coloring of moods and feelings, and in Urdu poetry in particular, yet the colors and shades that a poetic experience might carry along with its varying tones and moods start becoming imaginable and at times even visible if not literally tangible. I do not necessarily initiate a theory to underline the power of any such poetic experience, but my point here is to argue that an honest reading of poets like Faiz and their literary and linguistic backgrounds helps the readers develop a viewpoint and add meaning to their understanding, the readers' poetic experience after the poet's own, the interpretation or the hermeneutic extension after inspiration!

If we are tempted to relate connections between interpretation and inspiration of the poetic experience, the words, the images and tones and moods that they might bear or carry, critics and writers generally recognize that as the fundamental dimensions of human expression the visual and the verbal arts develop an inter-disciplinary or cross-referential impact that is well-established between these two forms. Virginia Woolf's: " . . . though they must part in the end, painting and writing have much to tell each other" and Earnest B. Gilman's: "The order of experience in painting (seeing first then reading) is superficially the reverse of the literary experience . . ." support my idea (See Gilman, *The Curious Perspective: Literary and Political Wit in the 17th Century*). In many ways, the written medium seizes the techniques of the visual to foreground that the imaging

[1] Based on author's M. Phil. thesis "The Use of Color Vocabulary in Some Colonial and Postcolonial Literary Works" in 1994 at the University of the Punjab (Lahore), a smaller version of the paper was published in 2006 issue of *Patras*, the literary magazine of New Hostel of G C University (Lahore).

and coloring much fall under the civilization of the written word. To extend the argument J. Hillis Miller also in his *The Linguistic Moment* relates the importance of the needle's eye that enfolds transience of spatial images for eternity, while Jurij Lotman in *The Structure of the Artistic Text* talks about the iconic principle involved in the visual arts.

Besides shapes and forms, colors are also cardinal to visual arts, and most colors have several meanings related to the cultural significance attached to them. As commonly black stands for death, underworld, mourning, elegance, while gray stands as colorless, figuratively as well as literally. But overall, a color is unlikely to have one rigid meaning. Like other artists, writers also exploit colors and color theories through the literary medium, word. Wendy Steiner in *The Color of Rhetoric* maintains the ways writers use different periods and genres for any inter-art analogy. Also in his detailed study *Color and Human Response*, Faber Birren explores the biological, visual, emotional, aesthetic and psychic responses to color by referring to both the ancient symbolic use of colors as well as their application in the modern environment.

Generally speaking, the writers of modern and contemporary times are inheritors of discontinuous polyglot traditions. Historians as well as literary critics find examples of imperial oppression and hegemonic designs in today's postcolonial societies, their literatures, their education plans, and even in their use of languages. The Martinique critic Frantz Fanon claims: "to speak language is to take on a world, a culture." Like all other great writers, the postcolonial literary writers also manipulate vocabulary, color vocabulary, and color models. Specified color-vocabulary as transformed into a metaphor for the colonial experience refers to the darkness of a depressing experience that the underlings face, while it also exposes the devilish deeds of despots. The juxtaposition relates to a synonymity between color and its semantic levels. In his 1986 foreword to Fanon's book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Homi K. Bhabha comments: "The Black presence ruins the representative narrative presence of Western person-hood; its past tethered to treacherous most experience under coercion."

In the literature written against a coercive background or one that deals with the theme of slavery and colonialism such direct, indirect, suggested or implied meanings attached to colors reinforce various racial, religious, regional, ethnic, cultural, colonial or imperial discriminations. When "historicized," as says Frantz Fanon, the aesthetic, symbolic, and traditional presence of black color in English literature and the literatures in English is essentially linked to the history of humanity in general and to that of slavery in particular. The blackness of the soul that belongs to the white villain rather than to his black victim prepares

the ground for manipulating the darkness of Africa beyond regional, racial, geographical boundaries, making this dark-continent a symbol for all the struggling freedom-lovers. There is a sense in which Africa has become, like the rest of the Third World an outer space, one of the last battlefields where white men struggle for the future of mankind. The African arena is still regarded as a perfect setting for trials of strength, a theatre for ideological battles and the potential last holocaust.

Within the context of postcolonial-ism a reading of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's *Zindan Nama* (1956) and some other poems about the theme of resistance plays around the foresaid *logical placement of poetic language*, its verbal and visual connections, its coloration. In Faiz's poetry color-vocabulary, with its universal significance, becomes a powerful medium and is exploited to the maximum to raise the fundamental East-West polarity around haves and have-nots and many other related paradigms. In his works, above all, there is a constant struggle against the prevailing oppressive systems. Resistance in consequence to deprivation is the result of the colonial rule or lack of freedom, while for Faiz the role of poetry for liberating the oppressed against slavery or system symbolically becomes a stylistic coloration. Like Roque Dalton, a poet from El Salvador, Faiz also attempts "Poetry…not made of words alone" or like Onésimo Silveria, the Cape-Verdian poet also writing in Angola and Mozembique, "A poem without children nourished …/ On the black milk of aborted time."

With reference to the postcolonial problems and the difficulties of independence, democracy, development, destiny and persecution of intellectuals, Edward Said names Faiz Ahmed Faiz as one of the victims of "system." Postcolonial-ism is certainly an offspring of the colonial culture, while culture reflects the experiences of a society. Though Faiz always tried to define Pakistani culture from a more geographically specific and regional angle, he also tried to find reasons for identity crisis in the region. But, of course, here we are more interested in tracing how he experiences oppression and then expresses it through his poetic experience through the *logical placement of poetic language* and its related coloration.

Verbally as well as visually, the use of black as a color connected with coercion is traced in the literature of the Sub-continent. In his works Allama Mohammad Iqbal also exposed the hidden blackness under the apparent and superficial whiteness during the British colonial rule. Faiz reiterates such connotations with reference to the whiteness and glamour of the West. In his own

manner he traces the real profundity of thought and creed in the Orient and terms the Western world as "Zahir Nuqra," that is the silver white that turns total black the moment it is touched. In the coloring of their works there is a strong contrast between Iqbal and Faiz; at his most natural Iqbal is ardent, impetuous, direct, Faiz more delicately suggestive.

Through his poetic experience, Faiz traces the struggle for survival against annihilating forces and imperialist designs in universal as well as in local and indigenous terms. His greatest contribution is towards redefining of "love" in the modern political context of his times: "Love do not ask me for that love again." Faiz, like Silveria, considers poet as a responsible political being and art as a part of the human struggle to survive through misery: "For many years these helpless hands/ Have been clasped to the hard black bosom of the night/ Under the iron corpse of the night?" The central theme of Faiz's poetry is human emotional and mental journey, a struggle for justice in migration: "my heart, my traveler." Homeland, Love, Mankind, Liberty, Protest, Banishment, Exile, Struggle, Afflicted and Inflicted Souls are some of the key words as well as major themes of his works. Written in 1956 "Come Africa" elaborates the point well enough. In his foreword to "Dear Heart," Khawaja Masood writes that Faiz's works are rooted in the "earth philosophy, drawing a sharp line between right and wrong. For Faiz, peace and independence are beautiful ideals in the post-independence context. Servitude kills the qualities of intellect and intelligence, truth and justice. His poems "Oh City of Many Lights," "The Window," "Africa: Come Back" or "Come Africa" from *Zindan Nama*, and "Ink and Pen," "Tablet and Pen," "The Hour of Chain and Gibbet," "Black-Out," "Solitary Confinement," "A Prison Nightfall," "A Prison Daybreak" and many others from different collections are full of such powerful messages.

Faiz's love for Lahore was not ordinary as well. He termed it a "City of Light." But later on in "Oh City of Many Lights!" in *Zindan Nama* he talks of the way these lights have waned. Even the "noonday dries up" and skyline is covered with foggy and oozy tide of "blackish misery." But Faiz is an optimist and in the prevalent darkness of the sooty blackness he finds embers of hope, associated with love: "When I see the shine on my fetters." In the four poems of the *Zindan-Nama*, Faiz records his experience in the prison houses to link them to the tortures of slavery. Prison is always projected in the image of black night: "How terrible is the night of pain." Life in a prison house is like an experience of a blind man who lacks in appreciating colorfulness, but then "I imagine that morning has lit up your face." Faiz talks of: "This Harvest of Hopes" (The last poem in *Zindan Nama*), relating the "roundness of cheeks and the coils of . . . ringlets" of his beloved to his love for the "beloved homeland." The "Trees of the prison

courtyard" stand "With drooping head" (A Prison Nightfall) and finally the daybreak arrives on the universe. Faiz's jail poetry is full of colors that represent moods. From confiscation and loneliness to sardonic remarks under confinement he was impressed upon by the darkness of Africa as a strong image that keeps time: "I am Africa, I put on your mask,/ I am you, my step is your lion tread,/ Africa—come,/ Come with your lion-tread, Africa, come!" Faiz's identification with African lands is his masterpiece, full of hope and beauty to be reborn. Reading Faiz, one is definitely reminded of poets like Iqbal and W. B. Yeats and their stance as national and native intellectuals who join the people of the land to their histories, lost found or re-found.

I would like to end up by offering a humble poetic tribute myself because a poet can best be understood and paid homage to in the poetic discourse:

O Beloved Son of the Sinful "City of Lights!"[2]

O beloved son of the sinful "City of Lights…,"
forlorn, splendrous, inspirational!
Amid the millions of leaflets of the publications
thou shalt exile once again,
to remind us of the promises, forgotten,
of the sacrificial homelands, drained to rotten,
with their eternal cries of a shrieking humanity:
Ab hijrat mein hay harj hee kiya
jab hijr ki ratain apnee hon!
(Why worry about migration when the desertion is ours!)
In the banished niche of floating time,
the treadmill of our universal horoscope,
can we promise to be "Faiz-yab" once again,
by making a choice for some "Zindan Nama,"
and see the revival in its darkness,
of the same sunshine that reflects its fetters,
that yet inscribes with its brightest letters,
the silenced celebration of a holy "City…of [many a] Lights,"
of its famished painful black nights,
full of the creepy forms of its sinfulness
that we all proudly carry along!

[2] The poem echoes a re-mix of titles of Bapsi Sidhwa's 2005 edited *Beloved City: Writings on Lahore* (in Pakistan) and *City of Sin and Splendour: Writings on Lahore* (in India) as well as of the OUP's 2006 publication of Faiz's selected poetry and biographical notes translated into English by Daud Kamal and Khalid Hasan, *O City of Lights*.

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Found in Translation: Revisiting the experience of Translating Faiz for Merchant-Ivory's *In Custody*

By Shahrukh Husain

"To recite a verse, you need power, resonance, the explosion of a cannon. There's a spark or two still left in Urdu." Nur, *In Custody* (quoted from film subtitle)

It was an odd experience watching *In Custody* eighteen years after it was premiered at the London Film Festival in 1993. The decision to make this film was unique and crazy. Anita Desai's Booker-nominated novel of the same title follows the nightmarish journey of a Hindi lecturer, Deven (Om Puri), in the small town of Mirpur whose secret passion for Urdu ("the right to left language") is suddenly exposed when a roguish magazine editor of an Urdu magazine commissions an interview with Nur Shahjahanabadi (Shashi Kapoor). Nur is the pivotal character of the narrative, once hailed as the 'poet of the age', though now he is all but forgotten, having fallen into decadent ways, impoverished, sick and unproductive. Perhaps he has given up on his art, believing that "*if Urdu is no more, of what significance is its poetry? It is dead, finished. You see its corpse lying here, waiting to be disposed of."* Nur, *In Custody* (quoted from film subtitle).

Deven is charged with recording any new work by the poet for his magazine and so begins a nightmarish journey in which the lecturer disgraces himself at his university, embarrasses his supporters and alienates even his long-suffering wife. Nur, constantly surrounded by clamour and domestic dissension, demeans and exploits him, always hinting at the possibility of letting him see his new verse.

Steaming with passion for Urdu and its poetry, Desai's taut, scant prose emphasises by striking contrast the mellifluous, elaborate timbre of Urdu to those familiar with the language. Desai is not an Urdu speaker though she has had some exposure to it. She is multilingual, speaking a couple of Indian languages including Hindi, as well as English and German. Ismail Merchant on the other hand did speak Urdu and though Urdu is not, traditionally, the first language of his community, he was passionate about it. This is not unusual. Hordes of South

Asians love Urdu poetry and despite lacking a true understanding of it, they are enticed by its familiar lyrical phrases and evocative romantic images which conjure up the profound universals of undying love, pain, sacrifice and death, the last three often resulting from the first. Anita Desai had always imagined the story of *In Custody* in Urdu, with its crumbling edifices and declining standards embodied in the once great talent of Nur. Ismail Merchant believed this was the story of the death of a language. He spoke, when describing the narrative theme, of 'the death of Urdu culture', a phrase which in itself evokes the reality of a way of life underpinned by customs, literature and a language that appeared in many ways to interact with modes of behaviour, etiquette and morals. His production is tinged with the nostalgic filmic genre of the Muslim Socials in Indian Cinema. The Muslim Socials, evolved in the Thirties, depicted a lavish lifestyle where poetry was as much a part of good breeding as classical singing or dancing in other Indian societies such as Bengal or South India, or indeed, further afield in Victorian and Edwardian England and Ireland.[1] The prodigious success of these movies, which visited all the sacred shrines of Urdu – or Indian-Muslim - culture from literary reference to the best known religious ritual, namaz, visits to dargahs and qavvali singing to über-polite manners, exotic costumes and what goes on behind the purdah, testified to the allure of this sometimes mysterious, closed yet impactful, set of communities. It also appealed to the Muslims themselves who enjoyed representations of what they regarded as the best aspects of themselves as well as humorous depictions of the quirky extremes to which they took politeness and good manners. The filmic adaptation of *In Custody* in Urdu was to be an art house Muslim Social from the western world, updated to a marginally more socially interactive narrative with a theme-shift from romantic love, self-sacrifice and death to one in which the protagonist's Beloved is an art-form symbolised by Nur, rather than a woman or divinity. I always believed the Muslim Social was a homage to the great death-bride complex of the Asian subcontinent so deftly appropriated by Sufi writers. *In Custody*, could be said to be a bridge between the traditional Muslim Social and the modern one in which the decay of an elitist culture gives way to a more realistic genre in which economic and changing social aspirations are uppermost, a trend illustrated in films such as *Dastak* (1973) and *Bazaar* (1982).

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[1] The Muslim Socials gained massive popularity which peaked with Mahboob Khan's 1946 movie Najma, a love tragedy, creating a model for subsequent productions. Some of the most popular ones include Barsaat ki Raat (a rainy night) 1960, prod. P.L. Santoshi, prod. R. Chandra; Chaudhvin ka Chand (The mid-cycle moon) 1960 dir. Mohammad Sadiq, Producer: Guru Dutt; Mere Mehboob (My Beloved) 1963 dir. Harnam Singh Rawail; producer: H.S. Rawail.

Anita adapted the book and wrote the script in English and it was decided the film should be shot in Urdu with Ismail directing. Ismail set about looking for a translator and my brother Aamer Hussein told him I was researching the works of Faiz, Firaq Gorakhpuri (1896-1982), Josh Malihabadi (1894-1982) and Jigar Muradabadi (1890-1960). I joined the team to translate the script and to select a range of suitable poems to represent the work of Nur Shahjahanabadi. Like the others, I am not monolingual. Urdu is my mother tongue; I grew up in Karachi, speaking it perhaps more fluently than others of my age and social background. Urdu was the national language of Pakistan but did not belong to any of its regions reflecting the position of English under the Raj. In a freshly post-Partition Pakistan good schools taught, at most, two hours of Urdu against ten of English language and literature. Urdu had the status of a 'second language' even after the syllabus was upgraded in the mid-Sixties to introduce an anthology of classical poetry and prose to supplement the two-way translation of short passages and essays.

From the beginning, Anita, Ismail and I shared an excitement and a belief in the success of the film despite its bizarre genesis and trajectory. Anita adapted it from her English novel into an English script, which I translated into Urdu and then back into English for the subtitles. Likewise, the poems, chosen for their quality and the popularity of the poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz among Urdu poetry lovers in Pakistan, and to a significant extent in India, were translated into English for the subtitles.

After the script was translated, I presented Ismail with poems by a number of poets. We had visualised Nur as a Josh-like character, fond of his drink and surrounded by sycophants but as the session progressed we seemed to focus more and more on the work of Faiz, a poet anomalous among Urdu writers because, like the three of us, he was perfectly bi-lingual in Urdu and English, held a Masters in English Literature as well as a degree in Persian and Arabic. His wife, Alys, was an English woman who spoke fluent Urdu. The multi-lingual theme continued in the film's core creative tribe. (This worked well in a scene where Nur wanders off into a reverie about English poets and quotes a line or two from Keats' "Ode to the Nightingale", which my husband Christopher Shackle and I had a great deal of fun transcreating into Urdu verse!).[2] I was delighted that my two favourite choices of poem book-ended the film. They were "aaj ek harf ko

[2] Christopher speaks English, Urdu, Panjabi and, in addition to fluency in Greek and Latin, has a working knowledge of several other European and South Asian languages as well as Persian, Arabic and Turkish.

phir dhoondta phirta hai khayal" (Today, once more, thought wanders in search of a word) appropriate for a poet whose Muse had abandoned him, and "aaj bazaar me pabajaulan chalo" (walk in the bazaar with feet in chains) to be used at Nur's funeral procession.

In order to write this piece, I revisited the movie after nearly two decades to refresh my memory about the circumstances under which some of the translations (or subtitles) came to be as they were. All were relatively close to the original in the draft translations, recording the learning curve, the process of discovery and compromise that marked the part of this movie which was, for a brief while, in my custody – the translation.

As the DVD began, my mind flashed back to my first viewing of the movie. The memory of slipping into my seat in a New York auditorium beside Ismail Merchant, Anita Desai and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala along with the rest of the Merchant-Ivory team is still vivid. With characteristic kindness Ruth leant over and told Anita and me: "Don't be shocked. It's just a rough-cut. Nothing like the movie will be." Then the lights went out and the screen was dominated by the magnificent image of a hand with a quill writing the Urdu script. The auditorium was filled with Shashi Kapoor's voice.

Aj ek harf ko phir dhundta phirta hai khayal
Madh bhara harf koi, zehr bhara harf koi
Dilnashin harf koi, qehr bhara harf koi
Harf-e-ulfat koi dildar-e-nazar ho jaise
Jis se milti hai nazar bosa-e-lab ki surat
Itna roshan ke sar-e-mauja-e-zar ho jaise
Sohbat-e-yar men aghaz-e-tarab ki surat
Harf-e-nafrat koi shamsher-e-ghazab ho jaise
Ta abad shehr-e-sitam jis se tabah ho jaen

Sunil Wadekar's singing overlapped with Kapoor's voiceover as the screen was filled with a succession of images representing Indian Muslim interests. Zakir Hussain's composition was restrained and in keeping with the ambience of the film. Now I had to meet the same challenge.

Back in London, I sat down with trepidation to translate one of my favourites from Faiz's entire body of work. I reminded myself that I had never been an accomplished translator and that subtitles had to be read swiftly by the audience,

typically, three seconds for a single line, six for a double. My priority would be to ensure the translation supplemented the context of the scene.

My experience of translating was unconventional, to say the least. I began compulsively translating poems from Urdu into English from the age of twelve, ghazals and nazms, classics by greats like Ghalib and Mir alongside modern poets who wrote lyrics for the cinema. Several of Faiz's poems had been used in movies and more frequently, sung by well-known vocalists such as Nurjehan, Malika Pukhraj and later Mehdi Hassan ("Mujh se pehli si muhabbat mere mahbub na mang" (do not ask, Beloved, for the love that was), "gulon me rang bhare bad-e-naubahar chale" (filling roses with colour, the breeze of early spring goes by), "ae roshniyon ke shehr" (Oh city of lights), "tum mere pas raho" (stay by me) and many others in private sittings). Often, they were recited ***teht-ul lafz*** at random social gatherings and afterwards I feverishly searched the collections on the bookshelves at home for the poems. I believe translation was my way of trying to make a deeper connection with the meanings that lay beneath words that held so much appeal. Placing them squarely in the language I knew best would make them clearer. In fact, the process delivered a different outcome. Words and phrases, internal rhyme schemes and beautiful imagery so mesmerised me that I ended up with paragraphs instead of couplets or stanzas. When I read them back, I was frustrated by the inadequacy of my effort and began all over again. I had notebooks filled with page after page of scored out phrases, over-written, scrapped and rewritten from scratch. I never found a professional translation which I felt entirely conveyed the compass of the original. I latched on to every existing translation I could find but always ended up disappointed. I swore never to translate Urdu poetry into English except for myself. Years later, the translations in my academic work, though more concise, were as disappointing as the rest though the footnote alleviated some of my frustration. I refused offers to translate for literary editions, even leaving my share of verse in the small book, *Urdu Literature*, (Third World Foundation, 1985) to my fellow authors David Matthews and Christopher Shackle. Ironically, most readers gave me credit for those translations because I was the only native speaker of the three. It was only when I was asked as a student to translate lyrics to accompany music cassettes that I was finally persuaded by the hefty fee to take an assignment which demanded an involvement with a readership. Fortunately the often-inferior selection of ghazals and nazms helped me to tighten my brief; to provide literal, workmanlike translations which were far from lyrical. I was beginning to understand that each compacted line of poetry carries too much information to convey adequately into another language, that the process demands ruthless choices about stripping down the verse to certain basics prioritised according to

the translator and the target audience. One translator may choose to replicate the rhyme scheme and rhythm while another may place greater importance on underlying references or quirkiness. I was also aware now of my target audience. They were either western listeners who bought the albums for their classical music content with poems thrown in for light variation, or South Asian fans of top rate singers, in thrall to the listening experience, who understood something of the verses but wanted to understand more. Their interest, too, was primarily in the musical experience, and so simple, accurate translations would be adequate. The experience reminded me of the complex relationship between English and Urdu in South Asia where whole sections of social and regional groups feel a massive attraction to both languages but nobody quite belongs to either of them.

An individual's response to a poem is a complex affair, far beyond literary appreciation of prosody, content or words. Externally, it is enriched by social and political contexts and reference, and internally by personal elements, which involve the inclusion of the Self: experience, association, perception. The initial reaction is usually one of these two polarities, either emotional appeal or literary quality. It is only close analysis that prompts the peeling back of layer upon layer of substance. This is particularly true of Pakistanis reading Faiz whose work is rich with literary references from several languages and political connotations derived from his own activism and beliefs (such as "A jao Afriqa" (Come, Africa), "Falastin ke liye" – For Palestine).

I began to read existing translations, Arberry, Nicholson and a host of others but they did not appeal. They were wordy, arcane and dry, useful as cribs but no more. Translations by mother tongue speakers on the other hand were even wordier, florid in an attempt to approximate Urdu imagery and expression but sacrificing the exquisite sounds and cadences of the language to an orgy of 'feeling' words and extravagant adjectives. There was something of this tendency in my own teenage scrawls, 'thous' and 'thees' and sub-Fitzgerald exuberance mixed with the influence of 17-19th century English poetry and literature on our school curriculum. It never occurred to me until years later that there was sometimes a colloquial quality or a flippant tone implicit in those originals that was ignored and submerged with an excess of English words. The UNESCO series (Allen & Unwin) 1971 translations arrived in the Seventies and there was a buzz around them in India and Pakistan. The first, I think, was Victor Kiernan's translation of Faiz's work. He had achieved a flow and ease which made the poems accessible, but there was still something indefinable missing – thought searching for a word.

The bilingual speaker's metalingual relationship with the lines, a special, perhaps

unique understanding, a communication between a line of poetry and an individual, was lacking. All of these influences came strongly back into play when I began the task of translating the poems chosen for *In Custody*.

I fortified myself with Faiz's pragmatic response to the translations of a young American poet in the early Eighties. I had asked his opinion once about a translation of his famous poem "rang hai dil ka mere" (the colour of my heart). The opening lines seemed to me a travesty of the original. His response was simple and typically modest, "What I wrote, she translated." It made me reflect more deeply. He was right. The translation of the words was entirely true to the original, so why did it sound and feel so flat? The words in Urdu were beautiful, "asman hadd-e-nazar, rahguzar, rahguzar, shisha-e-mai, shisha-e-mai". (The sky, the vision's limit, the path, the path, the wine glass, the wine glass)

It struck me that the translator's job is complicated by yet another element, the aural effect of words and their positioning, triggers a complex of associations and expectations. The subjective reception of the poetic discourse of Urdu is often at odds with English, it may translate accurately into English but loses its lyrical or poetic quality, sound and rhythm, all of which are important elements in the presentation of a poetic line. Faiz had sketched a pen and ink impression of a horizon, a road, a bottle of wine. But to many of his admirers, the words lifted from the language of his choice, drenched in his sensibility, redolent with the resonances of his idiom and thought, had been stripped of their meta-discourse. Besides, the rhythmic repetitions, the wave upon wave of rhyming phrases, the consistent pace interspersing the phrases, created music which is lost in another language.

My task now, was to keep Faiz's response firmly in my mind. *"What I wrote, she translated."* I wanted the statement to liberate me from the obligation to convey the richness. I decided that would be my starting point. I put myself firmly in Faiz's custody as I began.

I whipped through a literal translation in the workmanlike mode I had become used to, re-translated, cut back, and tweaked. When I could do no more, I edited again for accuracy and literals and sent it to Ismail. He showed them to the late Ruth Prawer Jhabvala who was Polish and married to an Indian, bilingual in Gujarati and English. Ruth had acquired knowledge of Indianness and some familiarity with its literature and poetry but I suspect she approached the translations from the point of view of the English-speaking reader. She worked with a gentle touch and some of her tweaking improved the draft.

Overall, the translation worked because the poem expresses with remarkable clarity the conflict and power of the creative process in action, of the poet seeking inspiration and precision to express an array of thoughts and feelings. It falls into a category of poems familiar to Faiz aficionados, the impetus of which has often been debated and questioned, that is, the juxtaposition of stark and violent images of social deprivation with romance and lyricism ("Mujh se pehli si muhabbat mere mahbub na mang", "raqib se" (to the rival), "do ishq" (two loves), "mauzu'-e-sukhan" (poetry's substance). "Aaj ek harf" is a later poem in which the poet's reflection on the uses and themes of his art achieves a subtler register. Earlier poems in this category contained a schism between one section and the next, beginning with the poet's remit to write of truth, romance and beauty, which would then ruthlessly metamorphose into descriptions of harsh and bloody violations of humanity. "Aaj ek harf" begins with the poet's search for inspiration, which includes both aspects of the above. Immediately after stating the intent of the search, Faiz posits a series of oppositions demonstrating the depth and reach of his ambition and the power of words to express all. Here is the translation that appears in the subtitles with line-breaks altered:

My mind is groping for a word
A word as sweet as seduction
And bitter as poison
A word that bewitches
But is full of rage
A word as brimming with passion as the gaze between two lovers
As soft as a kiss
A word shining like a sea of gold
A tune struck up in a lover's arms

I struggled minimally with the whole, and a little more with the highlighted lines; the original was taut, devoid of adjectives and consistently structured. The translation contained extraneous words, which detracted from the clean, regular phrasing of the original. I was overruled in the name of "readability quotient" and accepted it as part of the collaborative process which I was fast learning was a crucial part of filmmaking. I would however have preferred my original translation below.

A honeyed word, a venom-filled word
An alluring word, a rage-filled word

A loving word, like the Beloved (herself)

Whose gaze is met like a kiss on the lips
Luminous as a gold-tipped wave

A hate-filled word like a sword of fury
Which would destroy forever the cities of oppression

The last two lines pick up on earlier hints at the atrocities which engage the poet's search as much as the romance. I noticed when I went to the premiere that they never made the subtitles though they remained on the voiceover.

The words were a perfect fit with the circumstances of Nur Shahjahandabadi, and offered the audience a sense of his concerns which went beyond the drinking, scrounging ways into which he had fallen, to deeper preoccupations with the human situation. No new poems by him had appeared for a while, apparently words had abandoned him. The poem also resonated powerfully with me as a writer. And in that moment, they reminded me that living in London, I too in some sense was in search of a word from the language that was a seminal part of my Self. I felt I had a responsibility to convey the full impact of its significance in this context to the wider audience the film would reach, those who had experience of it and those who did not.

I was grateful that I was able to be pragmatic about the opening poem and this was more or less true of the remaining poems. I had few quibbles with "aaj bazaar men pabajaulan chalo", which so aptly fitted the funeral procession of Nur. Faiz had written of an incident where he was spotted as he was transported to the dentist from the prison at Lahore Fort, bound in chains in a police vehicle. Someone in the crowd recognised him as he was driven through the town centre and soon a procession formed behind the jeep. It inspired the poem which to date has been sung by a number of the best Pakistani singers. The procession in the movie echoed the original incident.

Aaj bazaar men pa-bajaulan chalo
Chashm-e-nam, jan-e-shorida kafi nahin
Tohmat-e-ishq poshida kafi nahin

Dast-afshan chalo, mast-o-raqsan chalo
Khak barsar chalo, khun-bab-daman chalo
Rah takta hai sab shehr-e-janan chalo

Hakim-e-shehr bi majma-e-aam bhi

Teer-e-ilzam bhi, sang-e-dushnam bhi
Subh-e-nashad bhi, roz-e-nakaam bhi

Inka damsaaz apne siva kaun hai
Shehr-e-janan men ab basifa jaun hai
Dast-e-qatil ke shayan raha jaun hai

Rakht-e-dil bandh lo, dilfigaro, chalo
Ab hameen qatl ho aaen yaro, chalo!

Walk through the bazaar today with feet in chains
Tears of rage, a lamenting being are not enough

With arms flung out in a dance of ecstasy
With ashes on your head and a bloodstained cloak

Walk past the gaping crowds of the great and the small
Past slings and arrows of slander
Past the unhappy dawn and the oppressed day

In who can they confide but me?
I alone know who is sincere among lovers
And who deserves to die

Prepare yourselves all of you with aching hearts
Come friends let's go again towards our death

I had a few differences with the final version as it appeared. The first highlighted line which was slightly inaccurate "rah takna" suggests anticipation, awaiting, great and small was from a separate line where the original specified the town noble and the common crowd – neither merited a battle but I did feel uneasy about the next lines which are closer to:

Who in this city of lovers remains untainted?
Who remains worthy of the executioner's hand?

The meaning seemed to be subverted. These lines mattered because they signified the importance of trust and loyalty in a society where people had to watch their words and deeds. Indeed, the poet was serving a sentence for a political crime he always denied. But by this stage I was constantly conscious of the fleeting nature

of the subtitle, balancing the truth of the poem against its relevance to the movie and I questioned if anyone would buy the video and re-run it to examine the translation. How much would anyone absorb much less retain of the verses? I brushed aside my difficulties along with concerns about failing to convey the significance of Faiz's use of the collective "we" – his identification with the populace in whom he longed to develop social consciousness, the desire to strive on, the right to hope. This act of joining in with those whom he attempts to inspire, strikes a distinct contrast to the verse of Iqbal, Pakistan's national poet who inspired from a distance. Faiz carried out his own injunctions, as the context of *pabajaulan* demonstrates. The poems were now de-contextualised as they would be to any new reader uninformed about a unified corpus set against the lifelong social ideals, politics and principles of the poet. None of this was remotely possible in this project. I continually reminded myself I was not writing about Faiz's political verse or his personality as a poet but translating his poems for Nur, a fictional character. Therefore, none of the above concerns was relevant. But I realised in the course of working on the film, from poetry selection to final cut, that I had refracted Faiz's lines through the prism of Nur's narrative told in giant images where words spoken in Urdu were reinforced in large English captions. As I became immersed in the continual interplay of two languages, prose and poetry, high language and colloquialism, the constant teasing and tweaking in an attempt to balance accuracy, relevance and medium, Nur coalesced into another personality, one much closer to Faiz. I reverted to my default position – pragmatism. The job had been appropriately done. Ismail and Anita were happy with it.

Then I saw the translation of a verse in the last quarter of the film. It was the last verse of a ghazal popularised by Iqbal Bano. Its opening lines are: "na ganvao navak-e-nimkash, dil-e-reza reza ganva diya / jo bache hain sang samet lo, tan-e-dagh dagh luta diya" (don't waste your arrow-like glance, I have already given up my shattered heart/gather up these unused stones, have (already) relinquished my scarred body).

The *bayt* fits that moment in the quest when Deven, the beleaguered protagonist of the movie, has suffered every possible failure and humiliation from Nur, his followers and his wives. He is on the verge of losing his job, has been discredited before his editor and even his long-suffering wife is angry with him. Then out of the blue, he receives a parcel of Nur's new poems and a letter authorising him to publish them. Deven rushes to share his triumph with a well-placed man who has gone to some trouble to get him a grant for the project. The man is not interested as he stands watching his ancestral mansion being demolished and fantasising

about the malls and flats that will replace it. In extreme close-up, Deven quotes a verse of his idol as he holds the now handsomely bound manuscript. He has risen from symbolic death to victory and will achieve the same for Nur and Urdu. It is a moment when everything the unlikely hero wanted from this consuming passion-project has turned to gold. The *bayt* is:

Jo ruke to koh-e-garan the ham, jo chale to jan se guzar gae
Rah-e-yar ham ne qadam qadam tujhe yadgar bana diya

My translation read:

When I stopped, I was a mountain, when I moved, I transcended life
Path of my Beloved, I made every step of you a milestone

The version Ismail returned to me was:

Once I was steady as a mountain but now I leave life behind
And walk along you, O pathway to the great Lover, building a shrine to him at every step

My first reaction was one of shock. There was no concept in the Urdu ghazal of the Great Lover. Even Faiz's tolerant and down-to-earth attitude to translations of his own work, did not comfort me. This ghazal is characterised by a tone of almost exuberant defiance, a sense of triumph which reminded me of the image of a Muslim warrior striding off to war with a spring in his step and a shroud tied to his head. The achievements in each verse of the ghazal are spirited and surprising. In the particular *bayt* under discussion the oppositions of stability and movement are followed by the transformation of transience into permanence. The verse is the culmination of the poem's theme of triumph in death. It resonates with the exploitative, derelict wreck of Deven's idol, Nur, incredibly redeeming himself and his art by transforming his premonition of death into the resurrection of his fame. It is also true for Deven who plunged into the project without skill, knowledge or sense of self-preservation but who has suddenly and unexpectedly been rewarded. The revised rendering of the lines didn't work. I realise, looking back, that I had chosen this couplet to represent not merely a seminal narrative moment in the film but the culmination of the building internal narrative of the whole of Faiz's poem. Without the first, the second was also ineffectual. But I was the only one who felt it.

As I looked at the scene after nearly two decades, I could not remember if I

defended my view strongly enough against its failure to take account of the wilful, proud spirit that permeated the rest of the ghazal. I am responsible for it, I knew the verse and its context, no one else on the team did. I can only imagine that I was overwhelmed by the collaborative nature of filmmaking. I had gone from fervently translating for myself, to providing literal translations accessible to the lowest common denominator in the potential audience and finally to an art house film where I had to engage with a directorial team, most of whom were new to Urdu and its poetry, sometimes to the detriment of the narrative and poetic text.

When I watched the DVD, I felt what I can only describe as a sense of failure. Faiz wrote modern poetry and could incorporate any concept he chose to – and did, of course – but with finesse and consistency. He had told me many a time, his roots were firmly embedded in his vast knowledge of Arabic and Persian poetry and he loved and admired Ghalib. He had been content to stay, quite naturally and organically, within the tradition of an elusive Beloved. Even in his apocalyptic poems such as "ham dekhenge" (we'll see) his choice of tone and the subversion of prevailing beliefs through traditional religious discourse remain consistent. The task I had accepted in the spirit of pragmatism had become a matter not merely of authenticity but of integrity as well. I have a vague memory of someone pointing out to me that this was a single and isolated verse among the many poems used in the film. All these years later, I see that though the subtitle utterly fails to reflect the resonance of the *bayt* with that climactic moment in the narrative, I also realise that, however perfectly rendered, it could never have conveyed all that I so desperately wanted from it. What I wanted was simply not achievable. The translation of a single couplet cannot be expected to showcase the whole of the poetic narrative and the reader's unique participation in it. "Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany." (James Joyce 1944: Chapter XXV).[3] That radiance is the investment of the reader's soul or Self. It is not implicit in the words but comes from the associations, interpretations and unique participation of the reader in the text. Antonin Artaud and other theatre gurus assert that the script is a "pretext" which only turns into the full text after the interaction of actor and audience.[4] The poem, too, is a preliminary text germinated by the reader's cathexis. What I had in effect been attempting while translating all those verses as a teenager, was to

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[3] James Joyce's *Stephen Hero,* edited by Theodore Spencer (New York: New Directions Press, 1944) http://theliterarylink.com/joyce.html (Accessed 17 May 2012)

[4] Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, New York: Grove Press, 1958. pp.53, 63.

translate the Self – myself, by including my immersion in the text and what it had become for me. It was not achievable. I found in translating for cinema that the passion which had turned to pragmatism over the years had returned, perhaps because cinema is both an overt and a profound medium of communication and demands a deeper examination of one's own psyche and that of the recipient if a true rapport is to be established. Yet the medium imposes inflexible constraints of time while requiring sophistication disseminated in simple terms. Even in an art house film with subtitles and slightly more leisurely dialogues, this proved the nemesis of my pragmatism, reviving the conflict of my nascent efforts. My limitations in the skill and, even more, the art of translating Urdu poetry into English which I had once accepted, now made me feel I was selling out. The only way I could complete the job without feeling a thorough failure was to manage my own expectations by lowering them. Working on *In Custody* made me confront this mindset and analyse it. I was my own analysand, observing my practice and my objectives and assessing their validity and viability in a range of contexts. This, I believe, is a position in which all serious translators find themselves at some stage or other.

Pragmatism was, to quote from *pabajaulan* "not enough" (*kafi nahin)*. I had discovered that Faiz and his work formed part of my thinking and my notions about the writer's responsibility and authenticity. It was now clear to me that growing up, hearing the poems as they were published, knowing the poet's political commitment, picking up, years after the event on the continuing admiration around Faiz's imprisonment and solitary confinement for his alleged part in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy of 1951, all molded my own humanitarian convictions. These remain deeply implanted. Faiz's verses were not merely literary works, they were part of the way I looked at the world, at life. I owed him a debt of gratitude and I was surprised to discover how seriously I took this at a deep subconscious level. I loved the experience of working on *In Custody*, with all its exciting lessons, creative challenges and frustrations. It was life changing and the discoveries I mention above attest to this. But I am relieved that, given its maverick bilingual genesis, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I wonder if the work of a less known or loved poet might have been easier to translate. I will never know because as a translator of Urdu verse into English, I am now firmly retired.

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SOAS Students Forum on Faiz Ahmed Faiz

Edited by Samreen Kazmi

(**Contributors**: Bilal Gilani, Urooj Chandani, Samreen Kazmi, Chinmay Sharma)

How is Faiz understood today by a new generation of global university students? Our attempt, in this set of thought-pieces, has been to go beyond the haloed academic domains of Pakistani literature, culture or politics. Such an attempt is only a fitting tribute to such a poet —one whose word seems to effortlessly sail the finest interstices between the personal and the political, the aesthetic and the philosophic.

How do we, whose lives have been touched by Faiz in some close or distant way, *feel* about Faiz? What does his life, or his work, or even his legacy, do for us? What do we or don't we understand about him, coming as we do from across a generation divide after him?

The four pieces that follow are diverse parts of this conversation. In autobiographical mode, Bilal Gilani traces Faiz through different phases of growing up. Urooj Chandani, someone who was involved in the Lawyers' Movement in Pakistan, veers markedly off the political track to reflect on the budding of words, the power of subjective image, and the unsaid. Samreen Kazmi's contribution is excerpted from a longer essay[1], suggesting that Faiz's poetry opens up the borders of sympathy and familiarity, through a poetics of suffering rather than one of allegiance. And perhaps to an opposite effect, Chinmay Sharma's opinion-piece hinges on alienation for those encountering Faiz in India today.

Diverse in scope, theme, and genre, these contributions are in conversation with each other in more than one way, and thus I present them as a constellation: Ultimately, it is the reader who contributes, taking away from them what she will.

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[1] Kazmi, Samreen. "The Rebel's Survival: Universality of Faiz's Verse" (unpublished, 2012).

"Do Ishq"

(By Bilal Gilani)

Faiz Ahmed Faiz's name strikes many chords in the deep recesses of my mind, from where feared pains and passionate dreams are dim and shadowy glimpses: a lantern by the railway station, smoke by the lakeside hut, water in the oasis. Through my formative years, Faiz's poetry has stirred, kindled and fanned nascent emotions into passions more blazingly felt and more fully understood. It has been both torch-igniter and torch-bearer.

Rang pairahan ka, khushboo zulf lehrane kaa naam
Mousam-e-gul hai tumhare baam par aane ka naam
(Colour is of dress, fragrance is of flowing tress, a mere name.
The Season of flowers is a name for your coming to the window[2] *)*

Through my teenage years, Faiz Sahib taught me what it is to be in love. His was a kind of drunkenness that makes one realise that the world is full of infinite love, that love is like seasons, that autumn and spring mix to make the symphony of life. His fearlessness taught me to be bold and experience the colours of the spring this world is always eager to offer.

Aur bhi gham hain zamaane men mohabbat ke sivaa
Raahatein aur bhi hain vasl ki raahat ke sivaa
(Many other woes in the world besides love,
many other comforts besides our togetherness…[3]*)*

Having grown up to young adulthood in the turmoil-ridden Pakistan of the Musharraf-era (2001-2008), I found in Faiz a different inspiration, a persona who could be my Great Leader instead of the tenth President of Pakistan. His poetry transported me from solitary experience to the sense of being united alongside hundreds of thousands of my fellow countrymen, in the same troubles and the same struggles. Not only me but many youth like myself felt that we had all had enough and the time for revolution had come. During the "Lawyers' Movement" (2007-2009), Faiz's poetry enthused us to dream for the people of our land—

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[2] Faiz, *Nuskha-hai Wafa* (Lahore: Karvaan, 2002) 151. Trans. Samreen Kazmi.
[3] Faiz, "Mujh se Pehli Si Muhabbat Mere Mehboob Na Maang", in *Nuskha-hai Wafa*, 61. Transl. Agha Shahid Ali. http://pdf.faizcentenary.org/downloads/022_do_not_ask_by_agha_shahid_ali.pdf , Accessed 3 August.

songs and slogans from his works drove the movement, and guided us to channel our passions for constructive ends.

Abhi giraani-e-shab mein kami nahin aayi
Najaat-e deeda-o dil ki ghari nahin aayi
Chale chalo, ke wo manzil abhi nahin aayi
(Night's heaviness is unlessened still, the hour
Of mind and spirit's ransom has not struck;
Let us go on, our goal is not reached yet.[4]*)*

It is also to Faiz that I owe my understanding of the fleetingness and artificiality of the triumph against Pakistan's military regime. A successful lawyers' movement was but one small step in a very long and tedious journey. If it was "ishq" for our people, a collective love for the homeland of our dreams, which was the motor for the movement, then Faiz's lingering verse reminds us to keep going with *that* aim in sight.

As I take account of what Faiz has enabled me as a person to feel, think, and accomplish, I cannot help but say I have much farther to go. Indeed, I feel I haven't done much. The consciousness that is "Faiz" still continues to spread through me, to nudge my dreams into action. In taking account, I try to ward off the smugness of less poetic struggles, and dare to hope for more: If one day I were to do something for the downtrodden of Pakistan it would probably have a lot to do with Faiz— the igniter and the torch-bearer of revolutionary change.

Saying and Not Saying
(By Urooj Chandani)

As I stood there, the fresh snow fell on the pavement in front of me, on the grass patch and the railing: the beauty restored in the heavens seemed waiting to be unleashed, to be unshackled before engulfing everyone and everything in its magnificent embrace.

Asked by a friend to write about Faiz, and about what his writing and his struggle meant to me, I had initially planned to write about how so many of his poems had inspired us during the time of student uprising against President Musharraf's regime, how his memory and verse gelled together our hopes and efforts for a so-called democracy in Pakistan— but the silence of that night, the innocence of that snow took me to a different place, of personal memories.

Hum-sukhan hon gay jo hum dono to har baat ke beech

[4] Faiz, "Subh-e Azadi", in *Nuskha-hai Wafa*, 118. Trans. Victor Kiernan.

ankahi baat ka mohoom sa purdah ho ga
gard-e ayyaam ki tehreer ko dhone ke liyay
tum se goya hon damm-e deed jo meri palkein
tum jo chaho to suno, aur jo naa chaho na suno
(When we both speak, between each exchange there
will be the diaphanous veil of the unsaid.
In washing the writing of the sands of days,
if my eyelashes speak at the instance of sight,
if you want, listen; And if you don't want, don't listen.[5]*)*

The liberating descent of the snow's white purity, its embrace, was the place where I had once rote-learned verses from Faiz's poetry— they had managed to capture the wholeness of my longing, my suffering, so simply and beautifully in words that I just couldn't find any other substitute. I had leaned on those verses for strength, for my own self-expression.

aur jo harf kerein mujh se gurezaan aankhein
tum jo chaho to kaho, aur jo na chaho na kaho
(And if words shield their eyes from mine
If you want, speak; And if you don't want, don't speak.)

I thought of that battle of words with silence. As I repeated the pieces of that poem to myself, the turns of phrase which I could still recall vividly were loaded with the feelings they had once evoked. I was carried to the finer creases of my long-shelved memories: how much I longed for *him* at that time, what his one word of agreement to my humble request would have meant to me... But the request was never made and my longing was never revealed. It just rested in my heart as it still rests to this day, as the two lines from Faiz still resound in my head:

un sai kehnai jo gaye thai Faiz, jaa sadqeh kyai
unkahi si reh gayee wo baat sab baaton kai baad
(Faiz, what you'd gone to say, ready to offer everything, even your life –
those healing words remained unspoken after all else had been said.[6]*)*

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[5] Faiz, "Koi Aashiq kisi mehbooba se", in *Nuskha-hai Wafa* 598-9. Trans. Samreen Kazmi
[6] Faiz, "On Return From Dhaka", in *Nuskha-hai Wafa* 528. Trans. Agha Shahid Ali.

A Brotherhood of Suffering

(By Samreen Kazmi)

> "*as a writer or artist, even though I run no state and command no power, I am entitled to feel that I am my brother's keeper and my brother is the whole of mankind... But out of this vast brotherhood, the nearest to me and the dearest are the insulted and the humiliated, the homeless and the disinherited, the poor, the hungry and the sick at heart. And this is the relevance to me of Palestine, of South Africa, of Namibia, of Chile, of my own people and people like mine.*"[7]

What exactly did Faiz mean by saying "my own people and people like mine"? While his view on partition and subsequent disappointment with the state of Pakistan's affairs has been widely discussed— his poems "Subh-e azadi" (Freedom's Dawn) and "utho ab mati sey utho" *(*Rise from the Earth*)* respectively critiquing Pakistan's polity and reflecting on the sadness of war for both sides[8]— his position on the bloody civil war that ended in the independence of Bangladesh has not received a great deal of attention. When the military started its crackdown on the then-East Pakistani activists in March 1971, many in the West Pakistani literary circles, including progressives, maintained a somewhat tight-lipped attitude about what the establishment considered a necessary action to quell separatism.[9] Faiz, however, was not one to toe the expected line, whether that of the establishment or that of fellow progressives. In a poem entitled *Stay Away from Me*, dated March 1971, at a high point of the military operation in East Pakistan, Faiz says:

> How can I embellish this carnival of slaughter? How decorate this massacre?
> Whose attention could my lamenting blood attract?
> There's almost no blood in my rawboned body
> And what's left isn't enough to burn as oil in the lamp?
> Not enough to fill a wineglass.
> It can feed no fire,
> Extinguish no thirst.

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[7] Faiz (1982) "The Role of the Artist." The Ravi 71(2):1-2, cited in Khalid, 268.

[8] Aamir Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton: Princeton, 2004) 252,269.

[9] Khalid Hasan, ed. *O City of Lights: Faiz Ahmed Faiz: Selected Poetry and Biographical Notes, (*Karachi: Oxford, 2006) 23.

There's a poverty of blood in my ravaged body—a terrible poison now runs in it.
If you pierce my veins, each drop will foam as venom at the cobra's fangs.
Each drop is the anguished longing of ages' the burning seal of a rage hushed up for years.
Beware of me. My body is a river of poison.
Stay away from me. My body is a parched log in the desert.
If you burn it, you won't see the cypress or the jasmine, but my bones blossoming like thorns in the cactus.
If you throw it in the forests, instead of morning perfumes, you'll scatter the dust of my seared soul.
So stay away from me. Because I'm thirsting for blood.[10]

While some Bangladeshi writers have since then wondered why Faiz remained relatively silent during the war, this poem reflects deeply felt sorrow and pain, and a near uncontainable anger at the developments in the region.[11] Faiz does not mince his words in criticising the perpetrators of the operation; his anger spills out as "a river of poison", ready to pollute and destroy the whole landscape. Even as he was called upon by his fellow intelligentsia from West Pakistan, to show solidarity with the West Pakistani state, we see in this poem an outright refusal to "embellish this carnival of slaughter" and "decorate this massacre".

When East Pakistan did secede as Bangladesh, he does not appear to have questioned their political decision to do so. Instead, in his 1974 poem *Dhaka se waapsi pe* (Upon Return from Dhaka), he asks:

Will we who remain strangers after all kindnesses are over
Become familiar after all the meetings are over?
How many seasons of rain will have to fall over
Scarred leaves before their greenness come unbloodied to mind?[12]

The refrain of the word "over" (translated from "*baad*", literally "after" in Urdu)

[10] Faiz, in Agha Shahid Ali, *The Rebel's Silhouette.* (accessed 15 April 2012) http://arafiqui.wordpress.com/tag/faiz-ahmed-faiz/.
[11] Afsan Chowdhury, "Subsumed by history and Nation." (2011) (accessed 15 April 2012). http://www.himalmag.com/component/content/article/3532-subsumed-by-history-and-nation.html
[12] Faiz (1974) "On Return from Dhaka". Transl. Azhar Hussain (accessed 15 April 2012). http://www.theindependentbd.com/paper-edition/others/art-a-culture/95315-faiz-ahmed-faiz-and-bangladesh.html

in this poem points to its opposite— the feeling that this pain and separation was never-ending, would never be over. Time does not heal the wounds. Several years after the traumatic events of the partition of East and West Pakistan, the pollution Faiz had mentioned in his earlier poem seems now to have taken over the landscape in this poem. The very leaves are scarred and bloodstained—no number of monsoons, the poem seems to suggest, can ever wash away that blood, that suffering.

It is this suffering—sometimes sweet and sorrowful, sometimes suspended and nostalgic, and sometimes uncontainably violent and angry—that takes precedence in Faiz's verse over all other affiliations. As such, his concern was not so much with the national unity of the polity of Pakistan but with the claims of mankind and felt experiences. He saw the borders carved around South Asia in his life-time as barriers further pitting man against man, irrevocably fracturing existence. And he did so without caring to conform to the demands of the state or political belief. While the geo-politics of the region may have moved on since Faiz wrote these verses, the emotion behind them still resonates, giving his otherwise non-conformist view a universal feel.

A Symbol Secularized

(By Chinmay Sharma)

In post-Independence India, Faiz Ahmed Faiz's works have become, perhaps along with the rest of Urdu literature, a symbol of themselves. Faiz is introduced at a remove from his Indian audience, especially for the generation that comes much after partition. This is not to say that Faiz's legacy does not resonate with the younger audience, but, it also gets converted into a symbol of itself in the syncretic "secular" polity that the modern Indian nation-state would like to project itself as.

I do not mean to say that this is always or necessarily so— I think there are different ways of looking at Urdu literature. My own observations are naturally tentative, based from my own cross-section of experience and impressions. For our generation, for whom Partition is something that happened to the grandparents, Faiz's poetry doesn't always constitute the finer points of the works themselves. Much like being introduced to *Shakespeare's* plays, or *Eliot's* poetry, or *Kālidāsa's* plays, my introduction to the works was not from the point of view of, 'this is Faiz's poetry', but instead with the italics already in place—

'this is *Faiz's* poetry'[13]. A presumed alienation marks the introduction to these works.

Of course, one's association or engagement with the works does not need to be thus marked forever. With study and reading one does become more familiarized. But a kind of alienation is also beyond the mere breaching of novelty— borne out of the fact that the language in which the poetry is written is becoming alien in the imaginary of the Indian. The Urdu that I had access to, living in India, was either coded as Hindi or was used in Bollywood films. At the point of *introduction* of his works to some of us new readers in India —even without being linguistically opaque, like Neruda's Spanish verse or Chaucer's Middle-English— Faiz's poetry is still accessed through a feeling of alienation.

The concerns to be found inside Faiz's work, however, still have evident resonances with the concerns and history of contemporary India. His work is not removed in the manner of Shakespeare, Eliot or even Kālidāsa. It still forms a part, if perhaps a dwindling part, of the cultural imaginary of some sections in Indian society. For instance, I had access to Faiz through the ghazals of Mehdi Hasan, Begum Akhtar, Ghulam Ali, Iqbal Bano and Shanti Hiranand. Then, in a different vein, a younger subculture also produces its own kind of Faiz symbols: Recently, in a clothing shop for college students in Delhi, I saw verses by Faiz printed on T-shirts, much like the famous snap of the face of Ché Guevera. In terms of Faiz's poetry itself, the works dealing more directly with partition continue to resonate in the popular cultural sphere, along with films and novels based on partition (e.g., *Pinjar*, *Train to Pakistan*, and *The Ice Candy Man* which was made into a movie under the name *Earth*, *Ammo* etc). Firmly planted in these niches of production and consumption, I think, Faiz's poetry has become an integrated part of syncretic "secular" cultural sphere (if not the political sphere) of post-Independence India.

This is highly ironic if we consider Aamir Mufti's idea that the divided Self in Faiz's poetry consciously refuses the notion of 'unity-in-diversity'[14]. Faiz's poetry (and Urdu poetry in general) is not taught in the school or university syllabi; it is accessed at a remove and partially through popular culture. It thus

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[13] Sawhney, *The Modernity of Sanskrit.* (London&Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2009) Sawhney makes a similar point about Sanskrit literature.
[14] Mufti, 248.

becomes a part, in an incomplete and partially recognized form, of the cultural imaginary— and as a part of this imaginary, it becomes a symbol (along with the works of Ghalib, Mir, Zauq) of Urdu literature in the Indian sphere. Its integration with this imaginary through a fairly well-organized and popular music world and Bollywood has made it a symbol of a pluralistic polity, at least in the cultural sphere if not the political sphere. This kind of partially projected (and perhaps partially understood) divided Self, at any rate, does not then need to be at odds with the idea of a peacefully pluralist Indian nation-state. It can become a simple lament for a lost undivided self, a pre-lapsarian self, but the very presence of the lament makes it a record of the plurality that is still existent.

Afterthought

It was promised at the outset to let the readers take away what they will. It is not my intent to tamper with that promise, but to simply point to a couple of quite key strands of connection that run across our snippets.

Sloganeering, Allegiances, Symbols—

Faiz is not the first poet to be called a political poet, and certainly not the first to be considered a nationalist and a revolutionary poet, a centrally-mobilizing but a radicalizing thinker, all at the same time. Movements deploy his verse and later movements re-deploy it for their cause; cultures and subcultures hail him as belonging to them; individuals bind with him their own aesthetic meanings and lives. But what in these deployments is variably picked up and what left unsaid, incompletely understood, misappropriated?

For example, in the recent Lawyers' Movement in Pakistan, briefly touched upon by Bilal Gilani and Urooj Chandani, to what extent do we differentiate between the slogan of the cause and the actual mechanics, political positionings or outcomes of the cause? Outside the active political sloganeering of revolutionary movements, our pieces collectively wonder at the kaleidoscope of identification and misidentification with Faiz. For instance, could he be claimed neatly by the polities of post-partition Pakistan or post-Bangladesh Pakistan, or even by the various non-polities or cultural communities which traverse a broad secular/minoritarian spectrum today?

Geographies—

The geography of Faiz's poetry is bewilderingly complex and vast in scope. In the most obvious sense, of setting, SOAS students have tried to cover here a wider geography than is normally spanned in a piece of this length. Bilal Gilani and Urooj Chandani looked at a contemporary Pakistan; I looked at East Pakistan in Faiz's 1970s poetry; and Chinmay Sharma looked at a post-independence India. But ultimately our scope enables us to raise questions

pertaining to other kinds of geographies in Faiz's poetry. The material geographies of the "state", for example, can be quite at odds with the geographies of its subjects' experiences, of our subjectivities, and of cultures— particularly in our South Asian context of postcolonial fissions and bloody partitions. Do our postcolonial polities, and the kinds of borders that bolster them just lead to further break-up? Does the poet, as king of his own landscape, wield the power to erect boundaries (e.g. in "Stay Away From Me", discussed in my own piece) where he chooses? If so, can he then also erase boundaries, where he wants, with the same ease? How does Faiz's own geography negotiate these boundaries? What is the reach of raw human emotion (of "ishq" for a people or of sympathy for their suffering), and conversely, what are its limits? Must alienation set in beyond these limits?

In this section, we have tried not so much to answer these questions but simply to raise them— to extract, as it were, from the deeper subjective level at which we as youth engage with Faiz today.

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The Colour of My Heart: On Reading Faiz

By Aamer Hussein

Reading about the death of Mehdi Hassan last week reminded me of the first Faiz ghazal I ever learned to sing.

Mehdi Hassan's "Aaye kuch abr, kuchh sharab aye" (The clouds came, the wine came) was on one side of a 45 rpm record tht had been sent to my mother in 1966 by the artist Laila Shahzada, who'd designed the cover. On the other side was a ghazal sung by Farida Khanum, written by some other, now forgotten poet.

For some years, Faiz had lived just down the road from us in PECHS (Karachi), where we'd often see him taking the air in the garden as we passed his house on our way to school. But though we hummed it all the time, that song was my sister Shahrukh's: in the mid-sixties it was her signature tune, and she'd practice its complicated cadences when my mother's teacher, Ustad Umrao Bundu Khan, the renowned singer and sarangi-player, came over to give her singing lessons. Khan Saheb, as we called him, first told us about Mehdi Hassan's version of Faiz.

My mother, too, sang Faiz in her beautiful soaring voice – "Dil men ab yun tere bhule hue gham ate hain/jaise kaabe men safiaane haram aate hain" (My heart is filled with your forgotten memories / Like the emissaries of the sacred enter the Ka'ba.) -but for the English-educated, semi-westernised boy I was, melody, message and man were three different entities. I tried, but couldn't yet, associate the poet in the garden - although I knew he was a leftist and a rebel, and, many said, an atheist - with the poems he wrote, or with the songs that were sung so sweetly all around me.

Somehow that recording of "Aaye kuchh abr" travelled along with my collection of music and my green portable record player and me when I moved to school in Ootacamund a year and a half later. My uncle, who taught English Literature in that mountain resort, longed for the sound of Urdu poetry in that climate of Eng Lit and Carnatic music; so on Sundays he'd listen to the record and at other times he'd ask me to sing. I didn't consider myself a singer and my Urdu was imperfect, but as I memorised the words to please him I began to unravel the nuances of the poem: the poet encircled by imaginary suns and moons descending from his wine glass, calculating the sorrows of the world, remembering his beloved without restraint, and then, the last verse, a wanderer's refrain.

In Ooty, too, a friend of my father's, an eccentric maharani, who lived in a hilltop villa behind a church, had a collection of records to match her collection of guns, and would hum a nazm by Faiz: “Mujhse pehli si muhabbat mere mehboob na mang” (Do Not Ask of Me a Love like Before). She had a 78 rpm recording of Noorjehan's rendition, and once again I was forced to learn it to please a listener when I'd rather be singing “Summer Wine” or the theme song of *A Countess from Hong Kong*. But she thought that at thirteen my voice was just sweet and high enough to sing the upper notes of the ghazal: soon it would break, she said, become a tenor

My voice broke. And then I left Ooty for ever. The record stayed behind with my uncle, the only part of myself I gave to that grim town. Soon after my fifteenth birthday I relocated for the third time in about as many years; I was in London, in a flat with windows that overlooked Hyde Park. There my Faiz-loving sister Shahrukh, who was back in Karachi, sent me another 45 rpm record: Noorjehan again, singing “Tum aaye ho na shab-e-intizar guzri hai” (You haven’t come nor has the night of waiting ended) and “Aa, ke vabasta hain us husn ki yaadein tujh se” (Come the memories of that beauty are embedded in you) I had to take it over to a friend's house to listen because I didn't, for some reason, have a record player at that time. My friend didn't understand Urdu or take to Noorjehan's plaintive melodies; I didn't really follow much of what she was saying; my ear had changed, and I didn't sing much any more, so the record was left in my friend's rented flat when he moved to Lausanne.

But then I found Faiz. It must have been that same year, 1971. An easy walk away from us, there was a library at South Audley Street that had a small but intriguing collection of books in foreign languages. I'd developed a vague interest in learning Persian, which I did in part by borrowing bilingual volumes of Rumi's verse that I'd make my mother read out and explain to me. I must have been looking for a volume of Rumi when, entirely by chance, I came across Kiernan's substantial volume of Faiz translations. The first poem I looked for was “Aa, ke vabasta hain”, because some part of me felt guilty about not having related to my sister's gift of a song. They were all there, the words to all those songs we'd sung: and so many more: yearning, contemplative pieces about love and loneliness, carrying subliminal messages that appealed, beyond the beauty of sound and image, to the adolescent I was, who nurtured himself on Leonard Cohen, Cat Stevens, Carole King and the troubadors of their time.

phir koyi aya, dil e zaaar! nahin, koi nahin

rah rau hoga, kahin aur chala jayega[1]

or

is tarah hai ke har ik per koi mandir hai
koi ujra hua, benur purana mandir[2]

and

tum na a'e the to har chiz vohi thi ke jo hai
asman hadd-e-nazar, rehguzar rehguzar, shisha-e-mai[3]
aur ab shisha e mai, rehguzar, rang-e-falak
rang hai dil ka mere, khun e jigar hone tak....

Faiz had taken the metaphors of traditional Indo-Persian verse - flowers, gardens, longing, exile, cages - and crafted something new, poems that spoke of prison and companionship, loneliness and longing for the new day of liberation. He made the abstract images of classical poetry luminous and tactile. His birdcage was a prison cell, his exile a term in jail.

I suppose that finding that book of poems, hidden away on the bottom shelf of the public library's Foreign Languages section, tracked the distances in my own life, how I'd left one country (Pakistan) to study for two years in another (India), and then left India for England; travelled from North to South and then further North than I'd ever been; how I'd always lived between languages and changed scripts, from Urdu to Hindi, and nearly lost the former on the way. I'd written poems of longing myself - a few in the Hindi script - but Faiz's poems returned me to landscapes I'd left behind and dreamscapes I hadn't, reflected obliquely on what I felt about life and literature, and yet told me so much more than I knew; though I wouldn't have found the words for my reactions then.

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[1] Someone has come at last, sad heart!-No, no-one is there;
A traveller must be going by, bound some other way. (tr.Kiernan 1971: 77)
[2] It is as if every tree is some temple
Some ruined, unlit old temple (tr. Kiernan 1971: 227)
[3] You had not come, then each thing was the same that it is:
The sky the frontier of sight, a road a road, a glass of wine a glass of wine
And now a glass of wine, a road, the colour of heaven,
Are the colour of my heart, "about to turn into blood of the liver"
(tr. Kiernan 1971: 253).

There was also a practical aspect to this new-found passion of mine. Below each translation was a transcript, and on the facing page the original Urdu: I could not only find the words I couldn't understand, I could see them in three different shapes. Suddenly there was the rapture of watching Urdu giving birth to itself on the page, with its curves and broken lines, those half-familiar angles and dashes. I knew, too, that something in the music of his words reached my inner ear in a way English verse, which I was studying then for my 'A' levels, hadn't done. I probably realised then that English was a language that had been given to me by contingency, but Urdu was mine as both birthright and choice.

If Faiz had merely reproduced traditional rhythms and metres I might have been less intrigued, but over and over again his forms extended inherited structures and then broke their mould. The translations and then the Latin letters fell away, and I was reading, without mediation, in the language of the colour of my heart. Suddenly, too, I was in the presence of an iconic poet, to join Hikmet and Seferis, Cavafy and Neruda and the other international greats I'd been reading, a poet I could claim as my own, just at the time that my country, which I'd left for good a few years before, was threatening to fall apart. The poet in the garden became a poet of the world, who sang to of "some foreign students":

ai puchhne vale pardesi
ye tifl o javan
us nur ke nauras moti hain
us aag ki kachhi kaliyan hain
jis mithe nur aur karvi ag
se zulm ki andhi rat men phuta
subh e baghawat ka gulshan
aur subh hui man man, tan tan[4]

Or invoked Africa:

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[4] Oh questioning stranger-
These striplings, these young lives,
Are fresh-grown pearls of that light,
New-budded shoots of that flame
Soft light and devouring flame,
From which amid tyranny's dense night sprang
The rosebed dawn of revolt
And dawn was in every nerve and soul. (Kiernan 1971: 176-7)

aa jao main ne sun li tere dhol ki tarang
aa jao mast ho gai tere lahu ki taal
aa jao, aifriqa![5]

And he addressed us all, in that heady climate of the early 70s, with his words of many years before:

bol, ke lab azad hain tere
…
bol, ke jaan ab tak baqi hai[6]

When I think of the new words I learned from Faiz and the old words that came to life in his poems in unique images (I think of the night's tinkling anklets, those violet pain-anklets), I give him credit for teaching me the refinements of my language; or, more importantly, taking my understanding of my language to another level. So the Faiz of the garden and the poet of the vinyl disc was replaced by another figure, an invisible mentor, a giant.

But to claim that the door to the hidden treasures of Urdu poetry immediately swung open when I first read Faiz would be grandiose. What reading Faiz did - along with its poetic and its philosophical gains - was to bring me back, on a pedagogic level, my lost alphabet (which I'd never known very well), and give me a lexicon of abstract words. It turned what was becoming aural into visual images, sounds into signs.

I don't know exactly what made me decide to study Urdu for another "A" level when I was about nineteen. The working reason was that I needed an additional subject to go to university, but actually I was filling a growing lack. Whatever the reason, the chance to study Urdu had finally come.

Mirza Hadi Ruswa would be my passport to Urdu studies: Mr Shah, my teacher, was an expert in prose literature. (I remember him complaining: "The violet anklets of pain? What does he mean?" He said "Faiz steals from Yeats and others". I think he mentioned Eliot, too. Later I'd be told Faiz was influenced by

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[5] I have caught the madness of your drum,
My wild blood beats and throbs with it - come Africa, come! (1971: 209)

[6] Speak, for your two lips are free;
…
Speak, your life is still your own. (Kiernan 1971: 87).

Neruda. But to me these are signs of the poet's essential modernity: how he could speak to his poetic peers from different eras, and be both classical and contemporary, cosmopolitan and deeply rooted).

In my twenties I met Faiz several times. I heard him speak about culture and identity when I was twenty-two. I learned the phrase 'cultural Muslims' from him as he spoke to a group of us at a birthday party; the appelation seemed to answer so many of the dilemmas of our generation. Was it his syncretic idiom then that drew me to his words in my youth, or the fact that he remade or re-formed tradition that made him seem so approachable?

I joined university and one of my professors, ideologically sound (even hidebound), took exception to this very accessibility and syncretism. Faiz socialised with the bourgeoisie. His poems were sung by pop singers. But I never subscribed to the professor's views. If the living genius of Urdu enjoyed himself in living rooms, so much the better for me, as I could meet him there. And as for musical renditions, his verses lent themselves to classical and conventional interpretations and to postmodern compositions alike. As I was steeped in those canonical poets in whose verses Faiz delighted, I could listen to the redoubtable doyenne of ghazal singers, Malika Pukhraj, singing, in the identical melody, the verses of Quli Qutb Shah and Faiz's tribute to his forerunner's poetic diction that employed the same rhyme scheme:

piya baj pyala piya ja'e na
piya ja'e bhi to suna ja'e na

or

sukhan dard ka ab kaha ja'e na
kaha ja'e bhi to suna ja'e na

Or the young Nayyara Noor, singing Faiz's more experimental poems in avant-garde musical settings such as “Aj bazar men pa ba-jaulan chalo” (Today Come in Fetters to the Marketplace):

chashm -e- nam jan-e-shorida kafi nahin
tohmat-e-ishq poshida kafai nahin
[…]
dast afshan chalo, mast o raqsan chalo
khak bar sar chalo, khun ba-daman chalo

rah takta hain sab shehr-e-janan chalo.[7]

I've never heard a living poet of any language referred to with such familiarity - no, a mixture of awe and familiarity - by so many, the way people speak of Faiz, naming him with that one syllable, ending in a diphthong, that is his name. Again, the grandeur and the simplicity of the man and the poet are conveyed by that terse sound.

I remember an encounter with Faiz that serves as an illustration of the poet and the man's approachability. Unusually, I can't remember the year. But I do remember it was winter: we had coats on and it was raining, and I remember the place, Conway Hall in Red Lion Square. It was one of those deeply nostalgic occasions that expats and exiles arrange, and the hunger of the audience for their language was apparent. Faiz, looking tired but gracious, read his poems and answered questions with his usual generosity; among the poems the audience requested he interspersed the poems he had most recently written, collected in *Mere Dil, Mere Musafir* (My Traveller, My Heart). But most of the evening was taken up by the speeches of others, and - if memory serves me - amateurs reading out their verses. My clearest memory is of a suburban lady rising to recite - or rather sing - Faiz's ghazal, "Sham-e- firaq ab na puch"' (Don't ask of the night of separation) . She had a strong East Punjabi intonation, and couldn't pronounce the *ghain, khe* and *qaf* sounds in the couplets. When we went to greet Faiz at the end of the event, my mother asked the poet how he managed to keep a straight face when people mangled his words. (I knew, from an earlier conversation, that his favourite renderings were Noor Jehan's.) He smiled and explained that a reader's love of a poem made it, in a certain way, her own. And then he patted my mother's shoulder and said: "tum khud ga letin" (Why didn't you sing it yourself?). He evidently remembered her singing. And as a storyteller, I hoped it was these verses, which long ago she had set to music, he remembered her singing:

tum a'e ho na shab-e-intizar guzri hai
talash men hai sahar bar bar guzri hai[8]

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[7] Not enough the tear-stained eye, the storm-tossed life,
Not enough the secret love, suspicion's brand
[…] Walk with waving hands, run in a drunkard's dance
Clothes besmeared with blood and head begrimed with dust!
All the loved one's city is watching by the road. (trans. Kiernan 1971: 231)

We went out into the wintry London streets, singing to ourselves.

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[8] You haven't come nor has the night of waiting ended
Time after time the dawn's gone by in search for you.

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"FAIZ FEHMI": Understanding Faiz with Style
Review by Qaisar Abbas

Faiz Fehmi, Tehqiq o Tanqeed, Dr. Syed Taqi Abedi, Ed. Pages 1403.
Lahore: Multimedia Affairs, 2011.

In an event in Dallas a couple of months ago, I had a rare chance to meet the last survivor of the famous Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case, Zafarullah Poshni, who was also incarcerated with Faiz Ahmed Faiz in 1950.

Recollecting the memories of the days he spent with Faiz in confinement, he discussed with me his upfront and honest recollection of the days he spent in jail with Faiz. He said he was the youngest of all inmates who were confined in the famous Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case and Faiz saheb was always kind and caring to him. While most of the people in jail could not control their rage as a result of psychological distress in confinement, Faiz was always cool, well mannered, and respectful to others, he recalled.

"At times when Faiz looked miserable, silently smoking cigarettes walking back and forth, thinking and writing, we knew a poem was in the making and we started planning for a Mushaira" he said, "and those were the most precious moments of our internment."

Speaking in the event organized to honor him that evening, he said, technically there was no legal justification for a conspiracy case against us. The group met at the residence of General Akbar to discuss the possibility of a coup but the plan was rejected as it was not realistic and practical. The government, on the other hand, using some people as witness, by hook or by crook, tried to prove in the court that a conspiracy to stage a coup was hatched.

Comparing 2011 to the 1950s, he said, intolerance is creeping in our society to the extent that bigotry has replaced civility and violence has taken over common sense in our society. As the last survivor of the Rawalpindi conspiracy case, Zaffarullah Poshni, still in good health at his age, represents an extraordinary

group of individuals who cared about the miseries of people and struggled for their rights through a peaceful movement.

Zafarullah Poshni is also represented in the new book "Faiz Fehmi" with his article "Faiz or Zindan" (Faiz and the Prison). He concludes the article with paying glowing tributes to Faiz and Sajjad Zaheer, his friend: "I learned a lot from both of these and the knowledge I gained from them during confinement made the rest of my life a real ecstasy and delight."

In this new book, Dr. Syed Taqi Abedi, the editor, has documented life, legacy and poetry of the same legendary poet of the 20th century who was part of the so-called 'Conspiracy' group.

Published by the Multi Media Affairs in Lahore, the book is an astonishing anthology of articles, research papers, interviews, personal memories of his friends, and family members, and photographs and illustrations on his life and work. A voluminous work of over 1,400 pages with color printing and the fine paper quality, adorned with a leather cover, the book surpasses all other publications on Faiz in its quality, content and finesse.

In an era where you rarely see quality publications on the poet, the new book looks like an unexpected gift to Urdu literature and Faiz lovers. Although some of the articles are reproduction of published materials, most are new on contemporary topics. In fact, the editor claims in the preface:

"This document has been published to meet the demands of the 21st century so we can view his life and work from every possible perspective. We know that so much has been written on the poet and his life but we are also aware that there is a lot to write on the lament of his verse and the narrative of his prose."

It is in this context that the book attempts to fill a huge gap of quality work on Faiz and his poetic discourse. The editor also tried to keep up with the quality saying:

"We have consciously avoided 'cut-and-paste' articles using published materials without citations as we did not want to demean these writers."

The anthology includes articles of stalwarts of Urdu literature from across the world including India, Pakistan, Russia, England, Canada, the United States and other countries. Articles of several English and Russian writers such as George Fisher, Alexander Surikov, Lyudmala Vasilyeva and world leaders like Yasser Arafat also embellish the book.

The list includes Gopi Chand Narang, Syed Ahtesham Hussain, Kaleemuddin Ahmed, Mirza Khalil Baig, Sharib Ridolvi, Shamsurrehman Farooqi, Al-e Ahmed Saroor, Mlik Raam, Ali Abbas Hussaini, Indar Kumar Gajral, Kirishn Chandr, Knahiya Laal Kapur, Ali Sardar Jafri and Syed Sajjad Zaheer from India.

A number of writers from Pakistan are also represented such as Shanul Haq Haqqi, Ahmed Nadim Qasmi, , Ziaul Hasan, Zafar Iqbal, Abul Lais Siddiqi, Wazir Agha, Mohammad Ali Siddiqi, Jamil Jalibi, Qamar Rais, Mujtaba Hussain, Sahar Ansari, Karrar Hussain, Intizar Hussain, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabbasssum, Fariqh Bukhari, Syed Sibte Hasan, Iftikhar Arif, Qudratullah Shahab, Mirza Zafarul Hasan, I.A. Rehman, Noon Meem Rashid, Hilal Naqvi, Sadiq Naqvi, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, Mushtaq Ahmed Yousfi, Abullah Malik, Fateh Mohammad Malik and Safder Meer, to mention a few.

A unique section has been devoted to personal reflections of family members of Faiz including articles of his wife Alice Faiz, two daughters, Saleema Hashmi and Muneeza Hashmi, and his son in-law Shoab Hashmi.

The book also includes five articles by Faiz himself on a variety of topics including the progressive literary ideology, Josh as a revolutionary poet, films and culture, Beirut under the Israeli attack when Faiz was there, and his speech at the Lenin Peace Award ceremony in Moscow which was in Urdu.

Of the 162 articles on the poet, about one third (42) are written by the editor himself, Dr. Taqi Abedi. Thematically, the book has about 30 articles on the poet's life, interviews and personal memories of his friends while 132 articles are critical reviews of his poetry and work.

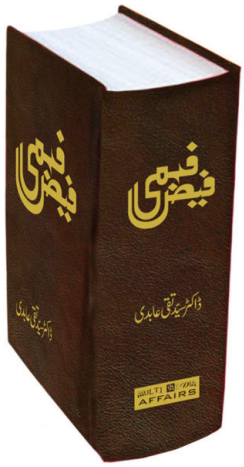
Unfortunately, the book is a limited edition not for sale which might be disappointing for a large number of readers. But the good news is the editor intends to publish a paperback edition to make it available to everyone, as he told me.

Because of its huge size, however, the book might be published in the following three thematic volumes:

1. Volume I with new and unpublished articles.
2. Volume II on poet's life and memories of his families and friends with illustrations and pictures.
3. Volume III with all previously published articles.

Publishing these volumes on paperback will make them more accessible and affordable to common readers and researchers everywhere.

In launching the book in Canada, Gopi Chand Narang declared "Faiz Fehmi" as magnum opus of Urdu literature, a rare and unprecedented work of art. Without any doubt it is a milestone work for which the editor, who spent a huge amount of funds from his own pocket to publish it, deserves recognition and felicitation.



Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013)

From Agha Shahid Ali, *The Rebel's Silhouette: Selected Poems by Faiz Ahmad Faiz* Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts University Press, 1995.

1. *Huzr karo mere tan se* (Stay away from me – Bangladesh 1)
2. Bangladesh II
3. *Dhaka se vapsi par* (On my return from Dhaka – Bangladesh III)

Editor's Note:

The selected translations from Faiz are on the spoken and unspoken subject of Bangladesh's war of independence from Pakistan in his poetry. The first two poems were written in March and April 1971 and the third in 1974. The focus on a Bangladesh trilogy of poems by Faiz echoes an intertextual comparative subject of Ali's poetry in English – Kashmir – as the lost beloved. There is also an intertextual connection with an earlier issue of *Pakistaniaat* edited by Cara Cilano on the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war that gives us a deeper historical context to the poems.

Agha Shahid Ali's translations of Faiz represent a comparative literary perspective that is well attuned to narrating cross-cultural encounters in a cosmopolitan metropolis. In the introduction to *The Rebel's Silhouette* Ali captures the essence of his task as a translator in a written communication to Faiz:

> "I wrote to Faiz in 1980 in Beirut, where he was living in exile, into which he had been forced by the military regime of Zia ul-Haq. He had "found a welcome of sorts in the ruins of Beirut. His closer friends were Palestinian" (Said, 50). Besides asking for permission to translate him, I told him that I would be taking liberties with the originals. But what I really did was to bribe him with a sort of homecoming. I reminded him that he had, years before my birth, stayed in our home in Kashmir. I created nostalgia".
>
> Ali thus self-consciously recreates an autobiographical and comparative nostalgia in his translated selection of Faiz's poems on Bangladesh.

حذر کرو مرے تن سے

بچے تو کیسے بچے قتلِ عام کا میلہ
کسے بھائے گا میرے لہو کا واویلا
مرے نزار بدن میں لہو ہی کتنا ہے
چراغ ہو کوئی روشن نہ کوئی جام بھرے
نہ اس سے آگ ہی بھڑکے نہ اس سے پیاس بجھے
مرے فگار بدن میں لہو ہی کتنا ہے
مگر وہ زہرِ ہلاہل بھرا ہے نس نس میں
جسے بھی چھید دے ہر اک بوند قہرِ افعی ہے
ہر اک کشید ہے صدیوں کے درد و حسرت کی
ہر اک میں مہرِ بلب غیظ و غم کی گرمی ہے

حذر کرو مرے تن سے یہ سم کا دریا ہے
حذر کرو کہ مرا تن وہ چوبِ صحرا ہے
جسے جلاؤ تو صحنِ چمن میں دہکیں گے

بجائے سرو و سمن میری ہڈیوں کے ببول
اسے بچھاؤ تو دشت و دمن میں بکھرے گی
بجائے مشکِ صبا، میری جانِ زار کی دھول
حذر کرو کہ مرا دل لہو کا پیاسا ہے

مارچ ۱۹۷۱ء

Stay Away from Me (Bangladesh I)

How can I embellish this carnival of slaughter,
how decorate the massacre?
Whose attention could my lamenting blood attract?
There's almost no blood in my rawboned body
and what's left
isn't enough to burn as oil in the lamp,
not enough to fill a wineglass.
It can feed no fire,
extinguish no thirst.
There's a poverty of blood in my ravaged body—
a terrible poison now runs in it.
If you pierce my veins, each drop will foam
as venom at the cobra's fangs.
Each drop is the anguished longing of ages,
the burning seal of a rage hushed up for years.
Beware of me. My body is a river of poison.
Stay away from me. My body is a parched log in the desert.
If you burn it, you won't see the cypress or the jasmine,
but my bones blossoming like thorns on the cactus.
If you throw it in the forests,
instead of morning perfumes, you'll scatter
the dust of my seared soul.
So stay away from me. Because I'm thirsting for blood.

تہ بہ تہ دل کی کدورت
میری آنکھوں میں اُمنڈ آئی تو کچھ چارہ نہ تھا
چارہ گر کی مان لی
اور میں نے گرد آلود آنکھوں کو لہو سے دھو لیا
میں نے گرد آلود آنکھوں کو لہو سے دھو لیا
اور اب ہر شکل و صورت
عالمِ موجود کی ہر ایک شے
میری آنکھوں کے لہو سے اس طرح ہم رنگ ہے
خورشید کا کندن لہو
مہتاب کی چاندی لہو
صبحوں کا ہنسنا بھی لہو
راتوں کا رونا بھی لہو
ہر شجر مینارِ خوں، ہر پھول خونیں دیدہ ہے
ہر نظر اک تارِ خوں، ہر عکس خوں مالیدہ ہے
موجِ خوں جب تک رواں رہتی ہے اس کا سُرخ رنگ
جذبۂ شوقِ شہادت، درد، غیظ و غم کا رنگ
اور تھم جائے تو کجلا کر
فقط نفرت کا، شب کا، موت کا،
ہر اک رنگ کے ماتم کا رنگ
چارہ گر ایسا نہ ہونے دے
کہیں سے لا کوئی سیلابِ اشک
آبِ وضو
جس میں دُھل جائیں تو شاید دُھل سکے
میری آنکھوں، میری گرد آلود آنکھوں کا لہو

۸ر اپریل ۱۹۷۱ء

Bangladesh II

This is how my sorrow became visible:
its dust, piling up for years in my heart,
finally reached my eyes,

the bitterness now so clear that
I had to listen when my friends
told me to wash my eyes with blood.

Everything at once was tangled in blood—
each face, each idol, red everywhere.
Blood swept over the sun, washing away its gold.

The moon erupted with blood, its silver extinguished.
The sky promised a morning of blood,
and the night wept only blood.

The trees hardened into crimson pillars.
All flowers filled their eyes with blood.
And every glance was an arrow,

each pierced image blood. This blood
—a river crying out for martyrs—
flows on in longing. And in sorrow, in rage, in love.

Let it flow. Should it be dammed up,
there will only be hatred cloaked in colors of death.
Don't let this happen, my friends,

bring all my tears back instead,
a flood to purify my dust-filled eyes,
to wash this blood forever from my eyes.

ڈھاکہ سے واپسی پر

ہم کہ ٹھہرے اجنبی اتنی مداراتوں کے بعد
پھر بنیں گے آشنا کتنی ملاقاتوں کے بعد

کب نظر میں آئے گی بے داغ سبزے کی بہار
خون کے دھبّے دھلیں گے کتنی برساتوں کے بعد

تھے بہت بے درد لمحے ختمِ دردِ عشق کے
تھیں بہت بے مہر صبحیں مہرباں راتوں کے بعد

دل تو چاہا پر شکستِ دل نے مہلت ہی نہ دی
کچھ گلے شکوے بھی کر لیتے مناجاتوں کے بعد

اُن سے جو کہنے گئے تھے فیض جاں صدقہ کیے
اَن کہی ہی رہ گئی وہ بات سب باتوں کے بعد

۱۹۷۴ء

On My Return from Dhaka (Bangladesh III) *

After those many encounters, that easy intimacy,
we are strangers now—
After how many meetings will we be that close again?

When will we again see a spring of unstained green?
After how many monsoons will the blood be washed
from the branches?

So relentless was the end of love, so heartless—
After the nights of tenderness, the dawns were pitiless,
so pitiless.

And so crushed was the heart that though it wished,
it found no chance—
after the entreaties, after the despair—for us to
quarrel once again as old friends.

Faiz, what you'd gone to say, ready to offer everything,
even your life—
those healing words remained unspoken after all else had
been said.

* *Revisited after the massacre.*

From Amina Yaqin, the Special Issue Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people without whom this Special issue would not have seen the light of day. I am very thankful to Masood Raja for hosting this special issue and for his understanding and patience as the General Editor.

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A special thanks is owed to the speakers who gave up their time to travel and participate in the workshop: Christina Oesterheld, Aamir Mufti, Iftikhar Arif, Geeta Patel, Aamer Hussein, Shahrukh Hussain, Salima Hashmi. All the contributors to the special issue are owed a debt of gratitude for their patience, goodwill and support. Samreen Kazmi helped out as an editorial assistant for which I am grateful. Apoorva Gupta assisted with the issue for a short time as a graduate student. Others who lent valuable intellectual support to the project include Alex Tickell and Louise Harrington. Francesca Orsini for intellectual and moral support. The intellectual companionship and generosity of Kai Easton has been invaluable. Last but not least, Peter Morey has been a constant companion and sharer of the project who has lived with its ups and downs for the past three years. Laila and Maleeha for their love and understanding.

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