FAHMIDA RIAZ

PAKISTAN LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

With a Foreword by
BHISHAM SAHNI

Pakistan: Literature and Society

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Are the dominant forces in Pakistan carrying on a genocidal campaign against the regional culture, language and literature in that less-than-four-decade old country? Fahmida Riaz undertakes a survey of the situation of irrationality, bigotry, fanaticism and fundamentalism, the cross-currents of the Pakistani reality.

The book reflects the centrifugation as seen in the regional literatures of Pakistan. The *Sindhi* and *Pushto* languages are rich in their literary traditions. The strident projection of *Punjabiat* against Urdu domination in Punjab makes for an emotional affinity with the confrontational challenge in the regions of Sindhi and Pushto. Not only that, it carries the seeds of positive assertion of their distinctive identities which permeates the book with perceptual validity and relevance.

It also reveals the predicament of a people. The geopolitical divisions do not get and cannot be mechanically superimposed on the literary and linguistic processes. It is evident from what Fahmida's study encompasses and lays bare. Here is Pakistan in ferment as it emerges in its multilingual literature.

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Literature and Society

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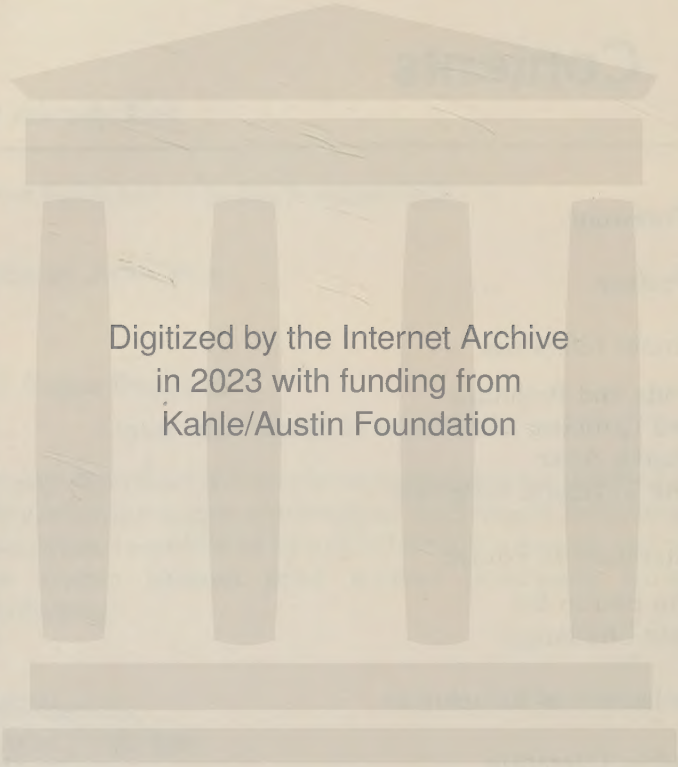

Foreword

For many of us who migrated from West Punjab at the time of the Partition of the country, Pakistan virtually became a closed book thereafter. As time passed, less and less came to be known about the way things were going beyond the borders, till they were confined to newspaper reports only, dealing mainly with political developments.

This book by Fahmida Riaz opened a window for me to see not only much of what had transpired during the last nearly four decades in the literary, cultural and social spheres, but also the currents that have been at work and which have powerfully influenced the course of events. The value of this book lies primarily in bringing to the fore the new social context, a product of currents and cross-currents against which the literature of that country was being produced.

Many chapters of the book make sad reading. Nothing can be more cruel than suppression of native culture and denial of those avenues which can lead to its free and unfettered growth.

Pakistan is not one cultural and linguistic entity, however much may be said about the uniformity of religious belief and of Urdu being the common state language. The author tells us about the different distinct cultural entities in Pakistan, viz. the Sindhis, the Punjabis, the Sirakis (people inhabiting the Bhawalpur, Multan and Khairpur divisions), the Baluchs and the Pakhtuns. Each one of them has its own distinct cultural heritage, its language, its way of life, its personality etc. And they are all inextricably linked with the history of this entire sub-continent. The book tells us of the havoc that has been played against their normal growth. Sindhis suffered first

under the virtual invasion of the *Muhajirs* who came and colonised Sindh, when Urdu was imposed on the people. So much so that Sindhis became foreigners in their own land, and for 'twenty years nothing of Sindhi literature was reflected in the literature of Pakistan'. Matters became worse when power was usurped by the army generals who comprised Punjabis and Pathans primarily, and under the dispensation of the military regime, democracy, human rights and social values were done away with. The misuse of Islam for political ends and the foisting of the Urdu language were the two major causes which brought about a suffocating atmosphere in the sphere of culture. The book reveals vividly the tragic fact that once you cut yourself off from your inheritance and seek to build a new nation on the strength of politically motivated slogans, you will never go far. Anti-Indianism may be a useful political slogan for the rulers, but it cannot serve as the basis for the edifice of your new culture. When anti-Indianism began to wear out, 'the bureaucracy initiated a debate on Pakistani culture with the explicit aim of establishing Pakistan as an integral part of the Middle Eastern culture, and getting rid of the persistently recurring ghost of India', says the author.

The writers underwent a severe strain. Literature needs freedom to flourish as a plant needs light and water to grow. The adverse conditions that developed demoralised quite a few good writers. Or it sent good writing underground, and a powerful protest literature began to emerge, particularly in Sindh.

We in India know that on the eve of Partition, when communal riots were raging in the country, the writers had produced some very significant work on the communal question and had raised their voice for secularism and democracy. Such writers included Manto, Bedi, Krishen Chandar and many others on both sides of the border. But a few years after Partition, the subject became taboo for the writers in Pakistan. The voice asking for secular values was throttled.

The book has many a lesson for us in India. Although we are fortunately placed and exercise greater personal freedom, yet linguistic chauvinism is very much present in our midst too, as also the tendency to join language with religion, and to use religion and language as tools of political aggrandisement. The need to strengthen our secular, democratic polity which alone

can guarantee the growth and flowering of a multi-lingual, varied culture, is felt in all its urgency, as we read this book.

The author of the book, as the reader must be aware, is an eminent Urdu poetess, who has only recently migrated from Pakistan to India, to which she originally belonged. She had lived through the period of cultural turmoil in Pakistan which had gone on for many decades, and therefore her experience lends authenticity to her observations. The book is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the situation in Pakistan.

BHISHAM SAHNI

Preface

The Image and the Reality

Pakistani literature, like its country of origin, has two distinct existence. There is a Pakistani literature that exists in the perception of the people of North India, written only in Urdu, which, again in their imagination, was the language of the Indian Muslims. Ironically, the image was so persistent that the language was, indeed, declared to be the national language (and, later, the only language) of Pakistan. The people of Pakistan, who had the misfortune to have this half-truth imposed upon them, have a long history of arduous struggle of dispelling it. Apparently both Muslim and Hindu protagonists of the two-nation theory (there were many among Hindus also who, though against the partition of their motherland, strongly subscribed to the theory that Hindus were a nation while Muslims formed another) by the very logic of this theory were led to believe that these two nations must also be having two languages; and since they were themselves living in the Indo-Gangetic belt, they, therefore, believed that these languages were inevitably Hindi and Urdu.

It was on this premise that efforts were made by certain quarters to banish Urdu from India. Later, Urdu was accepted in India as one of the state languages; still it does not prove that commonsense has finally triumphed, since even today Kashmiris are made to accept Urdu at the expense and to the detriment of their own language to serve the political expediency arising from Kashmir being the only Muslim majority state in India.

It is these fundamental issues that we have to clarify to get a full view of Pakistani literature. Urdu literature written in Pakistan does not comprise the entirety of Pakistani literature, but only a part of it. Areas comprising Pakistan, i.e., Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan and Sarhad, have had long literary traditions of their own, dating back to many centuries. Social values projected in the literature of all these regions have their own distinct identities. But after the creation of Pakistan, when these regions became its integral parts, the impetus for all literary activity came from the main events of that country's national life. But even then the singleness of direction and aspiration has not been implicit in this.

How is, then, Pakistani literature to be evaluated? In my opinion, to survey its development language-wise will again yield a false picture. Regions from which these languages emanate have not remained linguistically homogeneous after the massive migrations from far-flung states after the partition of the sub-continent. This has led to diverse literary trends in the same region. The interaction of these trends is more revealing than the evaluation of a single language might permit. A better course, therefore, is to examine this literature region-wise. This is all the more reasonable since in Punjab, though literature in Urdu has a long tradition dating back to pre-partition days, it has a flavour quite distinct from Urdu literature written in India or by immigrants from India settled in Pakistan.

The story of Pakistani literature is one of struggles between ideals and social forces operating at various levels under the specific cultural and political conditions of that country. It has been my endeavour to bring this struggle into focus, to objectively examine social factors responsible for the emergence of various literary trends, and analyse factors accounting for their continued presence in or disappearance from literature. For a better understanding of trends and values in the literature of regions comprising Pakistan, it would be helpful to discuss briefly their individual perspective.

New Delhi
January, 1986

FAHMIDA RIAZ

1. Sindhi Literature

Pride and Prejudice

Among the parts that comprise today's Pakistan, Sindh can legitimately claim to have the richest literary heritage. According to renowned linguist, Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the first Sindhi book to be discovered was written in 400-500 A.D. Titled, *The Education For A King*, it was first translated into Arabic by Abu-Saleh. In 1026, this manual was translated into Persian by Abul-Hasan Ali. Dr Chatterji held that the peculiar pronunciation of certain names indicated that the original language used in Sindh at that time was not Sanskrit. Sindhi was Sanskritised only later and, therefore, the view that Sindhi branched out from Sanskrit is open to further research and scrutiny.

With the invasion and consequent settling down of Arabs in Sindh, Sindhi began to evolve a new script of its own. In Sindh, this is known as the old script. Sindhi had many peculiar phonemes that could not be rendered into the Arabic script, and random methods were used to overcome this difficulty. The script was finally systematized by the turn of the 19th century and came to be known as the new script. Yet the literary flowering of the language dates further back to the 17th and 18th centuries, producing great literary luminaries, like Sami, Sachal, Shah Abdual Lateef of Bhit and Bedil Faqueer. With their works re-written in the new script, they still constitute a very important part of the modern Sindhi ethos.

Sindh perhaps presents a unique phenomenon in the entire Indian sub-continent. Here we observe a populace, with a Mus-

lim majority, living in perfect harmony with the Hindu minority. Ruled by several Muslim dynasties, Sindh remained steeped in Sufism. In the classics of Sindhi literature rarely does one come across any trace of religious chauvinism. Instead, they abound in Sufis like Qutab Shah and scholars of *Vedanta*, e.g., Rohal Faqueer, who spent a life-time in philosophical discourses with the Pandits of Jodhpur. The first and foremost social value Sindh inherited was something much greater than mere "tolerance". It was a deep-seated esteem for the other religion and the inner knowledge of the essential unity of the two.

In the galaxy of literary luminaries, Shah Lateef (popularly known as "Bhitai") undoubtedly shines the brightest. He enjoys a unique place in the literature of the sub-continent. Often aptly compared with Romi and Shakespeare, his voluminous poetical works could well be classed amongst the best of world classics. His *Kalaam* (Verses) is admired and sung in the remotest Sindhi hamlets even today. Throughout these centuries he has remained a poet of the masses; and yet, ever since he was first introduced to modern readers by Richard Burton in 1851, the excellence of the contents of his verse continues to amaze and delight serious scholars of world literature. Basically belonging to the Sufi tradition, the poet in him never shied away from the most beautiful and exhilarating erotic expressions. In the tale of Noori and Jam Tamachi, he describes the prolonged union:

The lake underneath and blossoms above
By the side, a grove of green.
She savours Tamachi now and again.
And in between
A light breeze rises,
To and fro Lake Keenjhar swings.

Like Romi, Bhitai has based his drama-poetry on folk-tales with the difference that whereas Romi recounts the story from beginning to end, Bhitai chooses certain turning points in each, relying upon the valid understanding that the tales are already well-known to the people. Within this framework, his genius blossomed in all its magnificent splendour. An unusual characteristic of his writing for his time was the choice of a dramatic rather than a narrative style. His poetic genius was, indeed, best suited to this style. Unique imagery, superb presentation of nat-

ural beauty as well as of things human, powerful characterization and remarkable use of language and poetics make his works true masterpieces of world literature. Bhitai knew the rare art of delving deep into human psyche, of taking up the finest human emotions like faith and love or the crudest outbursts of rage and envy and effortlessly interpret their spiritual content. It is for this reason that his poetry is said to be an embodiment of Sufism because here you find no difficulty in joining the worldly "self" with the spiritual "self". Through his deep understanding of the two, the concept of the unity of body and spirit is conveyed to the reader with considerable ease. His poetry seems to contain the deeper, hidden meaning of existence; and in Sindh, where culture bears pronouncedly Sufi trends, his *Kalaam* continues to evoke reverence usually reserved for religious books.

Bhitai's poetry concerns itself with universal values; at the same time it is full of love for his native land of Sindh. There is no Sindhi who would not remember his immortal couplet:

Lord God, for ever bless this Sindh.
Friends, sweet ones, lovers, bless them all.

He is also perhaps, the only writer to have transformed a folk-tale into serious literature that has no hero or main male character. The heroine of the tale Marvi, yearns only for her homeland and her people. She was the daughter of a common shepherd from Thar, and was kidnapped by the Soomra King Umar. Bhitai describes her imprisonment in Umar's palace. Discarding royal riches, she yearns for the simple life of her people. Using this vehicle, Bhitai sang of the land and of the people of Thar so lovingly that throughout Sindh Marvi came to stand as the most powerful symbol of patriotism and national pride. Marvi is, indeed, a unique character in world classics. In fact, apart from Bernard Shaw's portrayal of Joan of Arc (at a much later stage) such a character is not to be found in any other literary work.

It is to be appreciated that apart from very deep-rooted Sufi thought, another important part of Sindhi national heritage was patriotism and national pride.

Much before the creation of Pakistan, Sindhi language had come to acquire a stable position in the state. It was the official

language and in many respects much more developed than some Indian languages. A Sindhi's pride in his language and culture is age-old and justified. As early as the end of the last century, modern plays were written in Sindhi. Stage plays were received very well and there were many repertoires which were drawn upon regularly, not only in bigger cities such as Karachi but also in smaller towns like Sakkar and Hyderabad. By 1891, Sindhi dailies were brought out. Glancing through their columns one observes a Sindhi's deep concern for keeping his language away from the unnecessary influences of other languages. As early as 1925, a series of articles were written in a Sindhi daily *Bharatwasi* lamenting the vulgarization of the language, under the heading, "Outrage with Sindhi"; the author, Lalchand Amar Dinomal subtitled the articles "Hindu Tyranny" which was followed by "Muslim Tyranny". These articles appealed to Sindhi writers not to encumber the language with Sanskrit and Arabic substitutes when Sindhi equivalents were available in plenty.

Such was the land which, from 1947 onwards, was to be flooded by an alien race, with a totally different historical experience, a language that they firmly believed to be the very insignia of Islam and a completely different culture. These people had overnight turned into *muhajirs*. The word *muhajir* was cleverly chosen: it is derived from the word *hijrat*, and is loaded with religious connotation of our holy Prophet's migration from Mecca to Madina. The Islamic calendar is also based on this year and is known as the "Hijra". The word *muhajir* also implied the necessity of the complementary Ansars — those who were the original inhabitants of the land of migration and were to help the *muhajirs* (as they did in Madina). The Sindhis, then, were supposed to play the role of Ansars since the immigrants had become *muhajirs*. Sindhis, however, did not swallow the bait of words. The loaded word *muhajir* was never to be used by the Sindhis. Instead — perhaps more realistically — they called the immigrants *panah-geer*, which is the exact equivalent of the word "refugee". The immigrants were averse to this little difference in terminology. They considered the word *panah-geer* as derogatory, perhaps because of how it came later to be pronounced by the local inhabitants.

The *muhajirs* were soon to give up any hope of acts of

"Ansardom" from the Sindhis, not so much for any express unwillingness on the part of the Sindhis but because they realized that, in fact, they fared pretty well on their own. In any case, the local inhabitants had turned out to be only "so many ruffians" who dressed strangely, spoke some uncivilized tongue with most strange sounds, and to whom Islam was also highly suspect as many of them failed to lift the fore-finger at a particular point of *namaz*. They did not burst into raptures of joy at the mention of Mohammad Bin Quasim and his conquest of Sindh. The defeat of *Kafir* Raja Dahar, too, left them cold and unconcerned. It could not be just because long centuries had lapsed. It was perhaps because they were either secretive, enigmatic or outright renegades to the faith. The *muhajirs* decided to leave the people of Sindh alone. Their land, however, was another matter, a substantial part of which was soon to become their own property by virtue of the most unscrupulously filed claims of property, real or imaginary, left back in India as evacuee property.

For a while, the native land of Sindh was stunned. In bafflement and despair, Sindhis watched all their major towns being literally overtaken by the refugees. Almost overnight, the familiar city skyline was transformed into one of colonies, each named after one small town or the other in U.P., C.P. or Bihar. With remarkable zeal and fervour, peculiar to immigrants all over the world, the *muhajirs* were building a homeland for themselves, but it was a homeland in which the original inhabitants had very little or no place at all. They simply did not fall into the new scheme of things. Pushed back into villages by social pressure, bypassed in their own homeland, the Sindhis seethed with rage and bitterness. For centuries, no doubt, with them Islam had been a matter beyond debate. That they were Muslims was a matter of fact and not of fiction as the new slogan-riddled euphoria would have them believe. Indeed, the Sindhis were the first to embrace the Islamic faith in the Indian sub-continent. Yet now any mention of Islam or Pan-Islamism only aroused cynical laughter in intellectual circles. Constant condemnation of Raja Dahar became an irritant. In order to further condemn Dahar, it was stated that he had married his own sister. But gradually the Sindhis began to find this quite irksome. They interpreted the condemnation differently. They

said: "So, you hate Raja Dahar, calling him a *kafir*, yet you are not so inimical to the Hindu and Sikh rulers of your own region. Many of you would endlessly praise Asoka and others. You defile Dahar, not because he was a Hindu, but because he was a Sindhi. It is your hatred for the culture and people of Sindh that you project in your condemnation of the personality of Raja Dahar".

This feeling was well expressed in a short story, *New History*, by a prominent writer Ali Baba.

In this story, a Sindhi child talks to his mother about what he is taught in school. He recounts the glories of many Mughal rulers. The mother asks him whether he is told anything about Sindh, and whether he knows of any eminent Sindhi personality from history. In despair the child replies: "But they were all perverts, marrying their own sisters". The mother is shocked and slaps her son. "Take this for insulting your motherland", she tells her son with tears of shame filling her eyes. The child cries. "But this is what they tell me in the school, mother! I thought they were all perverts". The mother looks at him in silence. Then says: "It is all a lie. Tonight I will tell you the story of our King Dahar, who is our beloved martyr. He died defending his motherland against the invasion of Allauddin Khilji from the North".

The story ends with the child having grown up into manhood. He is sitting at his writing table. A disfigured old woman peeps into the room through the window. "I am history", she squeaks. He looks back at her with a stare and retorts: "Go away, old hag. You are but a distortion. I will now write my own history".

The story made the author immensely popular in Sindh. The obvious allusion made to the allegation against Raja Dahar and the symbolism of the motherland and of the sons of the soil were well understood; and the story came to be regarded as the first expression in literature of the hurt Sindhi national feelings.

The national poet of Sindh, Shaikh Ayaz, later owned the legendary king in one of his poems. He gave a powerful expression to his feelings. Referring to the story that after the fall of Raja Dahar, his daughters were imprisoned and presented by the Arabs to the royal court, the poet addresses Dahar thus:

"Raja Dahar,
Your daughters—
So beautiful, so well accomplished,
Who has dragged them out thus?
With a rope round their waist,
Their hair dishevelled
Dresses torn.
Still, they stand erect
With heads held high
Fiercely looking at the tyrant
With sheer hatred and contempt
How beautiful they look, how glorious
As if they are my own poems."

News about the publication of this poem spread throughout Sindh like wildfire. It delighted the vast majority of Sindhi readership. However, it will not be out of place to emphasise that this "owning up of Dahar" should not be misunderstood as a desire on the part of the Sindhis to belittle Islam or go back to Hinduism which, I believe, would be an equally irksome proposition for them, but should be seen in the cultural context. The main appeal of this poem to the Sindhi readership lay in the last line which compares the imprisoned daughters of Raja Dahar to the Sindhi nationalist poetry. In so many words, the poet said: "This is how one feels to be a Sindhi — his national pride trampled upon, he himself lying suffocated, imprisoned. Yet, this is how he would bravely withstand the oppressive onslaught of the ruling outsiders."

One may ask how these murmurs of protest, which later turned into loud outbursts, continued to be expressed and spread widely in Sindh without inviting reprisals from the authorities. Indeed, this was the most paradoxical reflection of the situation which prevailed in Sindh in the early years of Pakistan's establishment. The bureaucracy of Pakistan in those days consisted entirely of non-Sindhis who had no knowledge of the language. They did not react to this literature of protest because they simply could not read and understand it. The degree of the alienation and emotional aloofness of the settlers from the native Sindhis is also seen from the fact that for a long time they had no inkling as to what was going on in the minds of the original inhabitants of the land on which they had settled.

The situation remained practically unchanged for a long time, perhaps too long, without any hope of enlightenment for the settlers, or of solace for the original inhabitants of Sindh. When at long last a small sprinkling of Sindhis managed to force their way into the bureaucratic set-up, such as the provincial Ministry of Information etc., they quietly decided to look the other way.

Indeed, deep inside, Sindhis themselves were actually strong supporters of their national cause. It was for this reason that during the Bhutto era 108 Sindhi newspapers and periodicals were banned in Sindh at one stroke. Apparently, someone in the Ministry had taken the trouble of learning the language and of scanning the publications. The contents of their writing were found to be not quite in line with the ever-narrowing definition of "Pakistanism" as it continued to exist in the myopic bureaucratic vision, and were, therefore, to be removed forthwith from the public eye. The official order (or was it an ordinance?) banning the organs of public opinion left Sindh virtually without a press of its own. For long chained and fettered, Sindh was finally to be muzzled as well.

Before long, however, necessity gave rise to its own ingenious inventions. With the "declarations" of their periodicals standing cancelled by the authorities, Sindhi writers and publishers turned to publishing apparently irregular sets of "Book Series" for which "declarations" were not needed. The title of a story or the heading of an article from the banned papers and periodicals would be chosen as the title of a book in the series, and to identify the periodicals concerned a small advertisement would be inserted saying that it would soon resume its publication. In those days, many prominent writers also started contributing to women's and children's magazines. It was in this way that Sindhi intelligentsia fought its battle against suppression — a battle which was both brave and touching.

Muhajirs, meanwhile, were producing their own literature in Urdu that remained rooted in the past. Many poets and writers, now comfortably settled in the new milieu, resumed their writings of *ghazals* and short stories indistinguishable from the general trend which had prevailed in pre-partition literature. During this period, encompassing nearly two decades, nothing relating to Sindh found any reflection in their writings.

Even the settler's own prejudices or genuine criticism of the local social order was studiously avoided. It must be remembered that Sindh, in spite of its rich traditions, was also deeply feudal and its people suffered under many anachronistic and tyrannical social customs. The zamindars of Sindh were amongst some of the biggest landlords in the sub-continent, often owning thousands of acres of land. The peasants lived in conditions of almost bonded labour, and were treated in the most inhuman and cruel manner. Many big landlords, claiming descent from the Holy Prophet or his clan, had for generations proclaimed themselves to be the spiritual leaders of the peasants, obtaining from the poor, through terror and coercion, exorbitant taxes disguised as *nazrana*.

The cruelties perpetrated by *pirs* and landlords turned many a hot-blooded peasant youth into notorious dacoits. Often, the landlords later tamed their rebelliousness through gifts and bribes and then used them for terrorising the peasants or for taking revenge on rival landlords and settling old scores with them. The landed classes were busy committing acts of debauchery, with the womenfolk rotting away within the four walls of the impenetrable *havelis*. To avoid sharing property with sons-in-law or brothers-in-law, the Sindhi landlords devised a novel method with a sanctimonious halo around it. It became an accepted custom that, on reaching the age of puberty, the girls of these rich families would be wedded to the Holy Quran in a ceremony of mock wedding. They were then considered holy and were to remain wedded only to the Holy Book.

These and other facts of Sindhi social life and society could well have provided abundant material to a *muhajir* writer if only he could cross the barrier raised more by apathy than by cultural differences. The *muhajirs*, in fact were simply sitting pretty. They had no time to concern themselves with either the aspirations or the plight of the native populace. This apathy was not a built-in evil of the *muhajirs*, but was born of their social situation which had never necessitated any form of interaction with the Sindhis. A wise and farsighted settlement policy of the Government that did not aim at imposing integration (for that is always counter-productive) but, on the contrary, at helping create socio-economic factors congenial for contacts with the

Sindhis could certainly have altered this situation. But that was not to be.

On the other hand, *muhajir* writers of those decades were prompt in satirizing the opportunism and corruption rampant amongst the upper crust of their own community. In keeping with the pre-partition progressive literary tradition and style, their writings depicted the callousness of the rich and powerful *muhajirs* towards the sufferings of the poor, shelterless *muhajirs*. They often exposed the farce of poor immigrants migrating to their Islamic homeland for a better lot. An interesting example of this trend can be seen in the short story, "Her Honour", written by Ibraheem Jalees.

The story is about a *burqua*-clad young girl who meets a *rickshaw*-puller in the late hours of the night. He offers her a lift. Sitting in the *rickshaw* she begins talking to him. He comes to know that she is very poor and that hunger had forced her into prostitution. "Where are you from?" she asks him. On hearing that he is from Lucknow, she tells him with joy that she also belongs to the same city. Together, they reminisce about Lucknow and then he asks her: "And why did you migrate?" Without pausing to think, she replies: "What could one do; with all those riots, even your honour was no longer safe there."

Besides several writers of varying eminence, the one single writer who could truly claim to see and depict the stark realities of migration and its aftermath is the famous Urdu short story writer and novelist, Qurat-ul-Ain Hyder.

The recent honour accorded to this great visionary writer is, in fact, much less than the long overdue acknowledgement, not only of her remarkable creative powers but of her enormous contribution in infusing post-partition Urdu literature with modern and relevant political consciousness. A litterateur of great moral courage and integrity, she followed the dictates of her conscience as a writer in examining fundamental questions pertaining to partition and to the consequent developments in the newly-evolving society. She did this when no other Urdu writer dared to touch such subjects for fear of state and public disapproval. She practised freedom of expression while others simply assumed that it was impermissible. Her epic novel, *Aag Ka Darya*, a prodigious work of great vision and sensitivity, has

a vast canvas encompassing nearly a thousand years of Indian history.

Apart from its several equally important facets, the novel is also a moving literary testament of the fate of Indian Muslims. The intricately-woven story presents the Muslim community, through both male and female characters, in several eras of history. Making his first entry as a soldier, the main Muslim character, Kamaluddin, reappears in a different era as an Indian sage and scholar. Yet, in another age, we meet him in Bengal as an impoverished boatman. In the second half of the novel, he is an exuberant Muslim youth, and an Indian nationalist to the core, eagerly joining hands with his Hindu friends in the freedom struggle to build a new Hindustan. The novel traverses his course step by step. We see him advancing confidently to the point where circumstances beyond his control overtake him. The partition of the country creates its own social compulsions. Page after page, we see his anguish, his helplessness and his desperate efforts to hold onto cherished dreams of his Hindustan, till he finally breaks down and lets the flow of events carry him across to the other side of the Indian border. At this turning point, the author sums up this tragedy in moving, memorable words:

"...that was how Abul-Mansoor Kamaluddin entered India, and this is how he made his exit from here."

Kamal's departure from India is not the end of the story. The subsequent chapters subtly show the beginning of his degeneration. "I should now concentrate on constructive work in my new homeland". He writes from Pakistan. "Talking of constructive work, Bhai Saheb is constructing a palatial bungalow in the Italian Style...."

The tragic dilemma of the migrating Indian Muslims is eloquently captured when Kamal visits India only to go back to Pakistan. Both on his way to India and Pakistan, the train hurtles along, repeating to him the same accusation, "traitor". With his loyalties torn apart, he is doomed to suffer eternally with a double-edged guilt; to be considered a traitor by his new country for loving his real homeland and by India for deserting her. In the process, the man himself gets fragmented.

In the end it is not Kamal but the heroine of the novel, Champa Ahmad, who comes to symbolize the Indian Muslim

community. She has chosen to stay in her ancestral town in India. Along with another Muslim of younger generation, she too has decided to cast her lot with the rest of the Indians and on this final note of hope the novel ends.

At one point in the novel, Champa pleads with Kamal: "Do not leave us alone. Your place is amongst us here, where your ancestors lived and died". In a way, it was not just one woman speaking, it was the call of the motherland, or more exactly the call of the times, to the migrating middle-class Muslims who constituted the educated, progressive sections of the Indian Muslims — a call saying that they should not abandon India and Indian Muslims to the vagaries of the circumstances. Far from being sentimental, these words of Champa encompassed a world of historical wisdom, of a thoroughly-assimilated political consciousness. In the works of Qurat-ul-Ain Hyder, political wisdom is always woven with human emotions. She has, therefore, successfully presented political and historical developments in the sub-continent as these have actually affected the lives of the people. Her works are considered valuable both aesthetically and as a literary history of political developments.

After writing *Aag Ka Darya* Qurat-ul-Ain Hyder, as if responding to Champa's call, decided to re-migrate to India and thus set an exceptional example of the integrity of a writer. Unfortunately, the matching of words with deeds is a quality rare among a section of writers and intellectuals who keep endlessly bemoaning of alienation, of meaninglessness of life, forgetting that eventually it is only deeds that give meaning to words, to life — their's or anybody else's.

Qurat-ul-Ain proved to be a writer of unique moral strength and left Pakistan in obedience to her inner quest. However, before re-migrating she had gifted to the Pakistani reader two most valuable novelettes, *Chae Bagan* (Tea-Gardens) and *Housing Society* (named after the newly-developing residential colony of Pakistan's *nouveaux riches* in Karachi) — both remarkable documents of two important aspects of Pakistan's social and national development.

Of the two novelettes, *Chae Bagan* was set in East Pakistan. It is to the credit of this writer that she could feel, as early as that, the pulse of East Bengal as it withered away under West

Pakistani administration. Indeed, subsequent events have made this work a tragic document of the history of our subcontinent. It was but a forewarning of what was later to come. Reading *Chae Bagan* one is amazed at the author's deep political insight that verges on what seems to look today like premonition. Possibly, her sensitivity endowed her with an intuitive power and her courage helped her translate it into words. In the literary annals of Pakistan, this novelette stands as a single document probing the most important national question, the question of nationalities as it has come to be popularly known in Pakistan — a question of such magnitude that it continues to play a pivotal role in the political development of that country. In a way, by writing this novelette, Qurat-ul-Ain Hyder vindicated the role played by the *muhajir* community vis-a-vis posterity; with its publication it could not be said that no one cared for the people of East Bengal. The book is a proof that someone, somewhere did care for them.

The second novelette, *Housing Society*, is also a milestone in Pakistani literature inasmuch as it has obvious allusions to a very tragic incident that took place soon after Martial Law was proclaimed in Pakistan in 1958. An important member of the Communist Party of Pakistan, Hasan Nasir, was captured by the military police, taken to Lahore Fort for interrogation; and tortured and killed. The authorities failed to cover up his killing as suicide, and throughout Pakistan it came to be known as a typical example of the atrocities perpetrated by its Army. It is a shameful commentary on the times that this horrendous crime was committed and went without evoking any protest from the writers. Apart from some anonymous poems, there is not much which could be said to have been influenced by this gruesome killing. Again, it was only Qurat-ul-Ain Hyder who, as if spurred by some inner compulsion, recorded the incident through the medium of a story whose hero very closely resembles Hasan Nasir. In the novelette, the hero dies in prison and after his death journalists vie with one another to get the "scoop".

Qurat-ul-Ain Hyder also wrote another novelette, *Sita Haran*. She attempted to base it partly in Sindh, the main character Sita being a Hindu Sindhi *Sharnarthi*. However, her depiction of Sindhi and Sindhi society suffered from lack of first-

hand knowledge of the society.

For the *muhajirs*, the 60s, which may be called the "Ayub era", were fraught with frustration. The usurption of power by an army which was dominated by the Pathans and the Punjabis had rudely shattered their faith that Pakistan had been established primarily for them. This frustration found expression in many creative writings. A good example is a couplet written by Mohsin Bhopali that made him popular overnight:

> Oh, the trick that present-day
> politics have played.
> They have reached the destination
> who were not even co-travellers.

Here "destination" denotes political power, and the subsequent line makes the meaning clear that people like General Ayub had never participated in the movement for establishment of Pakistan.

This couplet was widely quoted among *muhajir* circles, because the *muhajirs* deeply believed that since Pakistan had come into being on account of their efforts and sacrifices, it was therefore their prerogative to assume political power in this state. After Ayub Khan tried to give a civilian facade to his military rule and held an "election" of a limited nature, the *muhajirs* cast their lot with the opposition led by Miss Fatima Jinnah. For this they were ruthlessly punished by the Ayub regime. In the name of victory celebrations, a reign of terror was let loose in Karachi and many *muhajirs* were killed by armed Pathans. No investigations were held regarding these killings and incidents of arson in the *muhajir* slums of Karachi. The incident is recorded in a poem of Faiz Ahmed Faiz titled, *"There is No Clue of Blood"*. Following are its famous lines:

> "There is no clue of blood anywhere. It was the blood of the poor. It was not written on a flag to be hoisted. It was not the blood of kings and princes. The blood of the children of the earth has been sucked up by the earth".

It is noteworthy that since power structure during the Ayub regime reflected *muhajir* interests in a considerably diminished form, the *muhajir* intelligentsia was beginning to offer resistance and go into opposition. Under these specific circumstances, in literature this was taking the form of protest against military dictatorship.

It is also a fact that during the early phase of opposition to the Ayub regime, the *muhajirs* played a very progressive role. They formed the vanguard of opposition to Ayub Khan which later became widespread throughout West Pakistan. But with the formation of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and with the massive support it received from the middle class and the working-class in Punjab, the *muhajir* role receded to the background, for the ordinary *muhajirs* came by and large from the middle-class and the lumpen proletariat. The Pakistan People's Party, therefore, did not appear to them to be reflecting their interest adequately. There were individual *muhajir* politicians in the PPP; some were in fact very close to Bhutto, e.g., Mairaj Mohammad Khan and A. K. Rahim, but their radical socialist stance did not appeal to the vast majority of the *muhajirs*, who were consequently finding themselves without any proper platform.

The sudden political upsurge in Sindh was another complicating factor, and it made the *muhajirs* very apprehensive. All this led to their subdued role in the later phase of the movement to topple over the regime of Ayub Khan, and provides an interesting study in the changing political and social role of a community living in a fluid situation.

The *muhajirs* were the very first stable middle-class in Pakistan. Its intelligentsia was the first champion of democracy, human rights and liberal social values. But this role was not to remain consistent in a power structure not entirely to their liking.

By and large, Urdu writers in Sindh did not choose the life in Sindh as their subject, nor did they touch upon certain social evils in the feudal society. This task was accomplished by Sindhi writers who were fast absorbing progressive and liberal social values and projecting these through their writings.

Self-Criticism and Protest in Sindhi Literature

From the earliest days of social and political awakening in Sindh, Sindhi writers had to accomplish the twin task of voicing protest against national oppression as well as attacking a feudal

system that had been causing rot in the social fabric. It must be acknowledged that they acquitted themselves well on both counts.

Soon after Independence, eminent Sindhi writers began to expose inhuman customs in the feudal society of Sindh. They wrote with great involvement and insight, creating many literary masterpieces. To acquaint ourselves with their powerful and imaginative approach, a couple of examples should suffice.

Seendh (hair-parting, *mang* in Hindi, where one puts the *sindoor*), a short story written by a senior writer, Jamal Abro, remains a memorable piece of literature for effectively focussing attention on the custom of *Karo-Kari* in rural Sindh. According to this custom, adultry is punishable by death. The murder of the suspected woman and her lover by the husband or any other relative is an accepted norm and often the matter is hushed up in the village without its ever reaching the law-enforcing agencies. However, with the establishment of more and more police stations close to villages, this practice is becoming a little more complicated, because the local police, coming from the same social milieu, "understands" the motive and lets the culprit quietly go scot free after extorting a suitable bribe. Almost always it is the suspected woman who is murdered in the name of *Karo-Kari*, male lover, being more mobile, always manages to run away. Murdering a man also involves the risk of revenge by his relatives; whereas in the case of a woman no such risk is involved. The acceptance of this practice by society has also led to its rampant misuse, (if such a word could at all be used for this crime) yet for a village "strongman it is easy to kill any woman amongst his kin on the pretext of adultry. In *Seendh*, Jamal Abro takes us straight to witness the scene of a woman's killing by her brother, with the family members watching it in helpless grief.

> "She tried to hide, but her brother caught her. Quickly, he got hold of his axe. As he turned the other way, all her craving for life rushed back like a mighty wave. She threw herself at his feet and sobbed: 'My brother, do not kill me!'. Her mother ran in, returning with the Quran: 'My son, for the sake of the Holy Book'. Her husband wailed: 'She is mine, whatever she might be, good or bad; give my wife to me!'. 'Shut up, bastard! She is *kari*'. Her mother placed the

> Quran on her head. He pushed her aside, and forced her head out of the mother's tremulous hold. The axe was lifted—and came down with a thud. Crazed with fear, she had brought her hand forward. First four fingers and then her head. Mother and the Quran both drenched in blood. Brother and mother together undid her clothings. The brother gave the last kick.
>
> "Hospital morgue...shaved off plait of hair...subdued murmurs...sweeper...doctor...buzzing flies, a naked breast-sister, respected daughter of her home...revered as Quran seven times over."

The last sentence refers to a common saying in rural Sindh: "A daughter of the house is revered as the Quran seven times over". In a society full of stark contradictions between preachings and practice, only monstrous exaggerations could be used to veil the actual heinous attitudes. In the end, it turns out that what is truly revered is neither the wretched daughter of the house nor the Quran, but only brute force.

Throughout the story, Jamal Abro has used the objective narration without any display of sentiments. The detailed narration thus acquires a nightmarish immediacy and renders the story a deeply-moving literary masterpiece. In fact, it is impossible not to feel shaken up after reading it.

Besides *Karo-Kari*, the peculiar Sindhi feudal custom of "marrying" girls to the Quran was also effectively attacked by many Sindhi writers. Often such girls were shown as either running away with servants or seeking outlets in lesbian practices. A remarkable short story on the subject, *The Doll*, televised as a play during the Bhutto era, was written by Ali Baba. The *doll* in the story is a landlord's young sister who is married to the Quran to avoid dividing land and other inherited property. The young landlord convinces his mother that Guddi will be quite happy looking after his children. "She has everything," he says. "The best for eating and drinking, the most expensive clothes and jewellery—what more could she want?" He is genuinely surprised at his mother's nagging demand to look for a suitor for his sister.

The landlord has everything going his way: females in the family dare not rebel. Only there is some trouble from rival landlords and some unwise peasants. To deal with them, he

employs a local dacoit and comes to rely on him more and more. The dacoit serves him well. However, his blissful life is interrupted by a headstrong peasant woman who refuses to respond to his amorous advances. When kidnapped with the help of the dacoit after he beats her husband unconscious, she manages to run away, inflicting wounds on him with broken glass. Enraged and piqued, the landlord comes to the dacoit for help. Only he chooses a wrong time. The dacoit is busy and would not open the door. Through the glass panes of the window the landlord sees his sister Guddi locked in the dacoit's arms. The story leaves him standing there, without his fabulous "honour", without his legendary power, and without the will to do anything to regain human dignity—a twisted bundle of pathetic impotence.

With remarkable craftsmanship, the story probes the inner mechanism of exploitation. When money and might join hands to suppress the helpless, this inter-dependence follows its own rules, each taking advantage of the other to the extent it can, each ruthlessly exploiting the weakness of the other. It is an endless game in which none of the partners has the essential moral strength to determine the limit of his exploitation. The victimiser cannot escape being the ultimate victim. It is an oft-repeated saying, yet the story succeeds in bringing home its essential truth with convincing logic.

In the mid-60s, another major development in Sindhi literature was a great breakthrough achieved by women writers. Many women writers, such as Zarina Baluch, Khair-un-Nisa Jafri, and Samera Zareen took to writing to tell stories from female point of view. Their subjects varied from the sorrows and pleasures of every-day life in cities and villages to more "daring" themes like lesbianism. They even dared to write about homosexuality among men as observed by women and garnish it with a feminine chuckle. Their style remained consistently without any affectation and also simple. In these writings, one discovers a joyous wonderment of these women who were surprised to discover their own courage. It is noteworthy that during the same period, no worthwhile women writers emerged in Urdu, nor did the Urdu women writers show any particular courage of expression. This was perhaps indicative of an era of comparative listlessness in Urdu literature in Sindh. While

Sindhi literature was flourishing, Urdu literature stagnated. It is also indicative of absence of interaction between the two communities living together in Sindh.

It was also in the mid-60s that Sindhi nationalism blossomed to its full in literature. During this period, the Anti-One-Unit movement in Sindh had gained momentum and young Sindhi writers had dedicated themselves to their national cause. Their literature fully reflected the aspirations of Sindhi masses. Many writers who emerged during this era, like Amar Jaleel, Muneer Ahmad and Ali Baba, were later to dominate the literary horizon for a long time. Regional identity, in a way, helped them to separate religion from politics. Unlike West Punjab, where no non-Muslims remained after partition, in Sindh a good sprinkling of Hindus chose to stay there. This had been possible because of the essentially non-hostile relationship between the two communities. There were practically no communal riots between Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims. However, the incoming refugees from India tried to spark off disturbances wherever they settled, which was mainly in large cities and towns. The migration of Hindus, accordingly, took place from these places, whereas in the interior of Sindh, peace continued to prevail and thousands of Hindu families were unaffected. The great, unprecedented influx of non-Sindhis, brought the local Muslims closer to local Hindus. They realised that there were many aspects of their identity which they shared with their Hindu compatriots rather than with the incoming Muslims. Faced with the pressure of an alien culture unwarrantedly striving to superimpose itself on their land with a smugness that gave the incoming Muslims a licence to do so in the name of Islam, the Sindhi Muslims felt a pressing need to unite with them their Sindhi Hindu brethren.

Imperceptibly, an alliance was forged. Since it was in the deep interior, in the faceless villages, districts and taluqs, initially it went unnoticed by the authorities. As years went by, all attempts at engineering communal riots in Sindh failed. The state of communal harmony greatly constrained the communal forces like Jamaat-e-Islamia. They set about their work with careful calculation, succeeding in creating disturbances in a village. A riot was engineered which failed to escalate. It was met by chilling disapproval from all sections of the village soci-

ety. Some of the members of the families affected by the disturbances migrated to India, while others were speedily rehabilitated by local people without any help or encouragement from the authorities. This incident became the subject of a short story written by Amar Jaleel. The story later became the subject of a historic law suit, in which the State prosecuted the writer and the publisher of the short story championing the right of security to life and property of a religious minority.

Amar Jaleel's short story, *Sard Lash Jo Safar* (Travels of a Cold Corpse), was published in a Sindhi literary journal *Sohni*. It graphically described the violence of Muslim fanatics against a Hindu family. The main character, a young Sindhi Hindu, has abiding faith in the Sufi culture of his land as projected by the poetry of Shah Abdul Lateef Bhitai. As the rioting mob approaches his house, he sits calmly with a volume of *Shah-jo-Risalo*. The writer then describes acts of gruesome violence indulged in with frenzied sloganeering and intersperses the description with couplets of Shah Lateef. The technique employed by the writer effectively brings out the contrast between this act of violence as against the real ethos of the people of Sindh. The story was widely acclaimed by Sindhi readership and literary circles. There was an unending spate of approving letters to the Editor, and overnight Amar Jaleel became a famous writer, his popularity transcending the literary readership and spreading among the common people. His popularity made the authorities wake up to the "rising threat" of secular thinking among Sindhis, and they wasted no time in filing a law suit against Amar Jaleel and Tariq Ashraf, the editor and publisher of *Sohni*. The journal was banned, and under the provisions of the Press and Publication Ordinance, Tariq Ashraf was put behind bars for three years.

This is a shining example showing how members of the majority community in Sindh suffered all kinds of harassments and imprisonment for coming out in defence of the rights of a religious minority. Throughout the prolonged court proceedings and even after the conviction of Tariq Ashraf, Sindhi intelligentsia supported and fought for him and for his publication, *Sohni*. It was not difficult to see on which side stood the Sindhi intelligentsia and a vast section of the Sindhi society. The event heightened their sense of disgust against an administration that

was completely insensitive to the feelings of Sindhis. As in Bengal, so in Sindh, without willing it, the ruthlessness of the powers that be were sowing seeds of secularism in the hearts of the masses and all in the garb of religiosity.

A logical corollary of secular thinking was the attitude towards India, which stood in sharp contrast with the official attitude. Although foreign relations hardly form an inspiring subject for creative literature, India was not just another foreign country for Pakistanis. One had either to accept India as the mother-country from which Pakistan, like a child, was separated; or, it was the "Hindu monster" from whose clutches Muslims had wrested themselves free. These two perceptions of India were diametrically opposite to each other.

The second perception, the official one, was fanatically projected by the State machinery. Objective conditions in Sindh did not enable the State machinery to succeed in its attempt to inject it in the Sindhi psyche. The Sindhis, unlike the Punjabis of Pakistan, were also never deeply affected by the Kashmir issue. One reason was the great physical distance. Another and more important reason was to be found in the belief that even if Kashmir had been made a part of Pakistan, the fate of Kashmiris would not have been different from that of the Sindhis, the Baluchs and the Pushtus, who were all suffering under conditions in which their participation in the governance of Pakistan, and indeed in the administration of their own regions, was insignificant.

During the two wars Pakistan launched against India, Sindhis at heart remained neutral. For them it was all a tragic show. This was well brought out by Shaikh Ayaz, the famous Sindhi poet, in several of his verses. One of these, *Ankhyun Samhiun* (Balanced Eyes), compares the feelings of the poet for India and Pakistan with the twin pans of a well-tuned scale, forever balancing each other. The poem wryly ends with the words:

For both these lands,
Equally wretched,
Are equally dear to us.

In yet another poem, written in a prison cell during an air-raid, Ayaz says:

Here is Abel and there is Cain.

Inhabiting the same womb.
Thirsting for each other's blood.
O cell-mate of mine.
Now you would recite scriptures.
Converse with High Heaven.
Just as you please!
But kindly go outside.
I wish to have a sound sleep.
I am not in pain.
Ha ha ha!
For one is Abel,
The other Cain.

In one of his most daring anti-war poems, which won him the wrath of the establishment and wide acclaim of his readership, he addresses a Hindu Sindhi poet, Narayan Sham, living in Delhi:

Ah! this war...
Come forward Narayan Sham!
Same hopes we have
And same fears
Same loves,
And same abhorrences,
Expressing in the same tongue
That I should point my gun at you!
That is something I can never do.

While poetry is a medium which naturally allows a certain degree of freedom of expression, the proverbial poetic licence (although that was never granted to the unfortunate Sindhi poets, and Shaikh Ayaz spent considerable time behind prison walls), prose offers little scope for conveying the message without being trapped by the so-called custodians of patriotism. As it was, the Sindhi writers were liable to be prosecuted and harassed at the slightest suspicion of dissent. Reaction to Indo-Pak wars, therefore, did not find full expression in Sindhi prose; but wherever the subject was touched upon, it was remarkably free from jingoism or bellicosity and was more concerned with human values.

That a war between India and Pakistan is an exercise in utter futility seems to have been the general consensus in Sindh. This has been brought out by an extremely talented and skilled

writer, Muneer Sindhi (also known as Mānak), who died recently while in the prime of his life. The short novelette he wrote in the early 70s *Lurhander Nasl* (Floating Generations) so ably captures the mood of a time, the flavour of an era, the very essence of the ethos of Sindhi youth, in that particular time and place, that it will always remain a milestone in Sindhi literature. Such authentic writings we do not find encompassed in Urdu literature for nearly a couple of decades. The novelette is a work of pure inspiration, or relentless critical evaluation and, at the same time, of a thoroughly humane and mellow sensibility. Covering several days of the life of a Sindhi youth it describes events as seen and experienced by him. A roadside scene takes us to the days of the Indo-Pakistan war:

> "Sirens blared everywhere. There was an air-raid. Every one was running helter-skelter. 'Go away, go away, all of you'. A Punjabi police constable was screaming on his hand-mike. 'Indian bastards have attacked again'. In seconds, the road was vacated. Not a soul to be seen except a lone Sindhi peasant who was struggling along with his bullock-cart. The constable screamed harshly. 'Move along, quick, you lazy lout'. The bull stopped in its track. The peasant looked around in bewilderment. He got down from his cart and tried to push the bull. The constable screamed abuses. 'Move, move! you so and so'. He looked at the clear blue sky and patiently tried again to persuade his bull. But the bull won't budge. A head-strong creature! With an uncaring motion of its thick white neck, it firmly stood in mid-road. The constable lost patience. Raising his thick stick, he threateningly advanced towards the peasant. 'Mother-f . . . ing Sindhi! Why do you stand in mid-road?' The air was filled with the rumbling of aircraft, now distant, now close. The constable dived for shelter, his tirade of abuses haltingly subsiding. There was no one on the lonely road. The Sindhi peasant and his animal stood alone almost clamly, and uncomprehendingly surveying the surroundings".

This is the subtle rendering of a collective reaction in a complex situation. Muneer painted the scene with great economy of words. The symbol of the animal, of the earthy vital strength of man, is not overplayed. It neither attacks nor plays any tricks.

It simply stands and would not respond to abuses. Indian fighter aircraft does not arouse fear in it. Perhaps, it prefers the distant aircraft of the menacingly close constable.

This, then, was the decade of maturing political consciousness in Sindh. Social practices were questioned, and political commitment merged with literary creativity. Certainly, there were also some aspects not fully immune to the virus of chauvinism. Some lesser Sindhi writers, during this era, nearly degenerated into racialism. They fantasied, as suppressed people, raping *muhajir* women and quite often saw them as prostitutes. The prostitutes in many stories turned out invariably to be either *muhajir* or Punjabi women. In a story or two, children born of mixed marriages were ridiculed as "adulterated". In a well-known song composed for re-establishing Sindhi as the state language of Sindh, entitled, *Sindhi Boli, Qomi Boli* (Sindhi is Our National Language), a stanza defines the true inheritor of Sindhi in very strict terms:

For this is the language of my mother,
Of my maternal grand-father
Of my maternal uncle
Of my paternal uncle.

Those who may have the misfortune of having a son-Sindhi paternal uncle or maternal grand-father are thus warned of their exclusion from the brotherhood of the "sons of the soil"!

Another rather better-known writer, Najam Abbasi, was so swept away by the national sentiments that he wrote a couple of very ridiculous stories. Since Islam had been relentlessly associated with "the ideology of Pakistan" which in turn was used to throttle and suffocate Sindhis, religious rituals had begun to exasperate the young generation. Yet, Najam stretched it a bit too far when, in one of his stories, he contrived a plot wherein the *azaan* from the mosque kills several people. For the sake of convenience, Najam had the mosque situated in the vicinity of a hospital. Each time the mosque loud-speaker suddenly blares out the *azaan*, patients simply startle out of their beds, their stitches breaking loose, their blood-bottles overturning, and most of them dying of sheer shock. The story turned out to be extremely hilarious though that was not the object of the writer. Najam Abbasi meant the story to be seen as a serious denouncement of blaring loud-speakers used in mosques. In

another story, he chose to ridicule and denigrate Urdu, weaving a plot in which the inconsistencies of that language completely destroy and ruin the life of a simple Sindhi. This man is involved in a court case. His legal papers being all in Urdu, he is unable to tell the word "yesterday" from the word "tomorrow" as for both there is one single word *kal* in Urdu. (In Sindhi there are two separate nouns for "tomorrow" and "yesterday".)

Trying to seek help from an Urdu newspaper, he is confounded for the day is given as *Jume'-Raat* (Thursday, *Khammees* in Sindhi). How can it be a day, if it is a *raat* (night), he wonders. He misses the hearing of his case which is decided against him in his absence, and the poor man loses every thing—all because of the cursed Urdu language!

This extremely ridiculous story made everyone laugh, although Najam wrote it in a very serious strain. Yet, so charged was the atmosphere with bitterness against the misuse of Islam for political purposes and against the foisting of Urdu on Sindh, that not only were such stories published in prestigious literary journals, but also people enjoyed them with glee and forgave Najam Abbasi's absurdities with a laugh.

These, however, were just a few eccentricities occupying only the tiny peripheries of an expansive literature, serious and worth-while, ennobled by espousing the cause of the underdog and the dispossessed and uncompromisingly seeking equality and justice. Even the chauvinistic traits did not escape the criticism of worthy Sindhi writers. As Muneer indicates in one of the scenes in his novelette *Floating Generation:*

> Time: Soon after 1970 elections.
>
> Place: Sindh University Campus.
>
> "He was the son of some *Wadera* (big landlord), well-built and obviously well-fed, prancing like peacock. When he caught sight of this shabbily-dressed *muhajir* girl, he approached her quickly. The girl lost her nerve. "O' you! listen, vote for me in the coming election', said he, in heavy, tones, 'or, I will f. . . you out of your wits', he added, his eyes twinkling. The girl trembled.
>
> "Nationalism: or *Waderaism* he thought with dismay".

The '60s also witnessed the revival of playwriting in Sindhi, in which a major contribution was made by Agha Khalid Saleem. Basically a short-story writer of eminence in a poetic

style, he belonged to a somewhat Chekkhovian tradition. Yet when he chose to write on the glorious national traditions of his land, the Chekkhovian air vanished away and, instead, emerged a writer of action-packed drama who excelled in creating a powerfully-moving dialogue. These plays, reflecting people's aspirations for freedom from alien rule, were staged in Sindh to resounding applause. Understandably, the "aliens" were symbolized by Arghuns and Tarkhans who had invaded Sindh centuries ago, but the situation was closely identified with the one existing in Sindh after partition. And the message was unmistakable.

Poetry-plays were also written by Shaikh Ayaz. He displayed great craftsmanship in executing dramatic twists and turns in historical stories.

In the field of poetry, it must be conceded that the living tradition of Shah Lateef still remains like an evergreen orchard and whatever new emerges cannot but be under the shadow of the other, already-existing trees. One single exception that managed to emerge with a distinct identity of its own is provided by Shaikh Ayaz. In fact, in the post-partition era, a poet of Ayaz's talent, versatility and genius will be difficult to find not only in Pakistan but, perhaps, also in India. Ayaz set such high standards in poetry that lesser poets tend to appear almost insignificant in relation to him. Ayaz is a poet of great stature. To do justice to the contribution he made in reflecting social values in Sindh, readers would naturally expect a fuller and wider evaluation.

Any research on social values in literature would be incomplete without duly acknowledging the contribution made by Joyo Mohammed Ibraheem who, though himself not a "creative writer" as such, has greatly helped in upholding and advancing progressive thinking in creative Sindhi literature.

An established and widely-respected savant of Sindhi literature, Joyo is known for his consistent and untiring efforts for promoting liberal, secular and progressive ideas in Sindh through various means. As Secretary of the Sindhi Adbi Board, he was deeply involved with Sindhi literature. The literary Journal, *Mehran*, that was published under his editorship, came to be one of the finest tribunes of its era. The best poetry of Shaikh Ayaz was first published in the pages of *Mehran*, it

was backed by a profound commentary and later defended against allegations of "anti-religionism" by Joyo Sahib.

Throughout the oppressive years of censorship, intolerance and absence of freedom of expression, Joyo Sahib created ingenious ways and means of keeping alive among Sindhi readers the spirit of resistance. Launching a Sindhi co-operative writers society, he published several important translations of Western literature of protest and revolution. These publications contained memorable prologues by the publisher. In his preface of *Freedom of Thought*, he writes:

> "For us, independence has brought in its wake repression of all ideas. All ideas are under suspicion except one idea. An idea that has no life left in it. They beat and go on beating it like a drum. Whatever is being written is but an echo of this ear-splitting, namely: 'We are the great defender of Faith, we are the best, the wisest!' Whether these are correct pronouncements is immaterial as long as we beat the drum louder and louder. There is so much terror that if a thought smacks even remotely of originality, people tremble to think of the consequences".

Shaikh Ayaz

SHAIKH AYAZ'S poetry is so closely intertwined with the national aspirations of Sindh that it has come to be synonymous with Sindhi nationalism. Its wide appeal, however, is evidence of the fact that its vitality does not rest entirely on the conditions which helped to give it birth. That a major part of Ayaz's poetry refers to the specific circumstances of a specific region only underlines and identifies a contemporary situation, with its own unique features. Only through this specific situation does the poet in Ayaz express permanent and universal emotions which impart an everlasting appeal to art.

The early '60s saw the publication of Ayaz's first collection of poems, *Bhanwar Bhre Akass (Bhanwar = Bhanwra)* in Hindi; *Akaas* = circling. This slim volume attracted immediate notice as it categorically discarded age-old notions of mysticism in Sindhi poetry. In contrast, poems of *Akass* were robustly sensual, earthy and pleasure-loving. He freely wrote of the pleas-

ure of the flesh, and his unabashed epicurianism at times suggested shades of hedonism. It is for this reason that, though this collection was belatedly accepted by Pakistan's Writers Guild (formed under the Martial Law of 1958) and an official award, it also became very controversial and raised many a religious eye-brow. Among Sindhi intellectual circles it was ungrudgingly acclaimed as it offered a refreshing change from stagnating spiritual symbolism, and its epicurian celebration of the pleasures of life were greatly relished.

Ayaz's poetry evolved fast in the '60s. Previously he had also tried his hand at writing in Urdu, but found the constraints of writing in an alien and basically urban language unsuitable to his native genius. Still, the language of *Akass* is interspersed with Persian words as used in Urdu. The fast developing nationalist movement in Sindh began to have an electrifying impact on his diction. With keen resolution he delved deep into the language of his native land and enriched poetic expressions with a treasureful of words and terminologies which, though still current in rural Sindh, had not been used in literature for a long time. Shaikh Ayaz, thus, achieved the near-miracle of reviving a language as has been achieved by writers of truly great genius in other languages. For instance, it is well established that Urdu received a new lease of life through the prose of Mirza Ghalib. Similarly, Ayaz's poetry injected fresh life-blood into Sindhi and revived the language with an invigorating diction. This was rapidly absorbed by all his contemporary writers. This achievement alone should suffice to give Ayaz a lasting and honoured place among the peers of Sindhi literature.

Not only his diction but even the imagery in his verse, his symbols, his metaphors, came to reflect the changing moods of the times in Sindh. No longer would he use the symbol of "flower and thorns" as borrowed from Persian and traditional Urdu poetry. Nor would he use the metaphors of "spring and autumn" or sing of "glorious rose". From now on, his imagery would reflect the land of Sindh.

I laughed and looked at my lap
It is the season of the red-berries.
Where the sun is baked like a grain of corn,
And fire is always ablaze.

Traveller, such is my homeland.
If only you had taken charge of your own camel,
Why would you blame the cruel brothers-in-law.

Consider the last verse. In English translation the meaning does not come out so graphically. But in Sindhi the same lines acquire great poignancy, referring to the character of Sassi (from a famous folk-tale) whose beloved was kidnapped on a camel by his brothers.

The contents of Ayaz's poetry demanded a vital and fresh language to save the emotions from becoming blurred and ineffectual. While reading his works one feels as though the contents themselves have shaped his diction, dictating a direct, primitive technique that was eminently suited to his subject. His pure native imagery lent a fresh edge to his patriotic verse, making it vividly concrete and freeing it from abstractionism which often results from a preponderance of Persian and Arabic words in Indian languages.

Ayaz's oeuvre is rich, varied and voluminous, the bulk of which concerns itself with Sindh, with its people with their present plight and aspirations. To convey his thought, he made fresh use of Hindu mythology. In one of his poems, he likens the poet to Lord Krishna:

And here I sit,
Driving your chariot
One day you will know
Why do I persuade you to fight
Again and again.
O Arjun! What has happened to you.

This was a powerful and refreshing refrain, yet even more powerful was the use of allegorical characters from the folklore of his native Sindh.

Allegory has been a centuries-old tradition in Sindhi literature. Of the countless eminent and anonymous poets of the past, Shah Bhitai has used this technique most consistently and elaborately. Though Ayaz did not attempt to re-write these allegorical epics, he modernised the technique by choosing certain allegorical characters and bringing them in sharp relief in the context of his own era. For this purpose the *Kalaam* of Shah Bhitai proved to be a rich treasure-store from which he could pick the best, and it is certainly to the credit of Ayaz that he

made great use of this literary heritage. The characters of Bhitai, such as, Sohni, Sassi, Marvi, Leela, Momal, and others were as if re-born in the verses of Ayaz. Whereas in Bhitai's *Kalaam*, their interpretation could be mystical, in the poetry of Ayaz they were unmistakably symbols of Sindhi nationalism and of the struggle of Sindhi people to regain an honourable place for themselves.

For writing these relatively long poems, (which, because of their content and style, may be likened to "ballads"), Ayaz chose the same form as was used by Bhitai. This is a unique Sindhi meter of poetry known as *bait*. The word *bait* in its original Arabic meaning stands for "verse". In Sindhi, however, it has acquired a different meaning, and is used for poetry only in a certain fixed metric form and rhythm. This form belongs to the *chhand* and *maatra* discipline of ancient Indian poetry rather than to the *bahar and arooz* of Persian and Arabic poetry.

Sindhi poetry, like poetry written in all modern Indian languages, had for many decades adopted new poetic forms used in Urdu and Hindi. Sindhi poets freely used the form of *nazm*, *azad* or *paband*. In this Ayaz was no exception, and some of his finest poems are written in modern forms. Why did Ayaz choose an almost abandoned form to create an absolutely new poetry? Or, rather, how did this form re-enter Sindhi poetry through the works of Ayaz? Was it a conscious, pre-meditated choice for the poet, or was it that essentially subconscious (and, therefore, magical) element in the genius of a poet that emboldened him to use the form of *bait*? These questions are difficult to explain. For often it so happens that the writing as well as the reading of poetry may stir such thoughts and point to such directions as we may not be even aware of.

Whatever the factors responsible for this choice, the form itself was a joyous celebration of Sindhi nationalism. Shorn of all alien trappings, the verses of Ayaz stood in their glorious native beauty. The response was effortlessly spontaneous. In these verses, the Sindhi reader recognized his total personality, his past and present, his agony and also his longings. It was like a fountainhead from where the Sindhi reader thirstily drank the elixir of all oppressed nations, the rejuvenating tonic of pride in their nationhood and in themselves. The poetry of Ayaz gave confidence to Sindhis; about this, there are no two opinions. His

poetry was and remains a remarkable phenomenon. For Sindh he became "Beejal", one of the most frequently recurring allegorical character in his own poetry. "Beejal", the singer — who sang to enthral but demanded in reward the listener's life. "Beejal", the beggar singer — who begged for the ultimate sacrifice.

The most distinguishing characteristic of Ayaz's poetry — which is also the secret of its instant, spontaneous rapport with readers — is his rejection of poetic sophistry. He instinctively recognized time-honoured social values in the society, and never considered it beneath poetics to use them with full force. It may be observed that his poetry goes straight to one's guts. Yet it is to his credit that his verses are never lacking in refinement. His approach is earthy, yet never coarse. On the contrary, his earthiness probes deep into the innermost recesses of the reader's psyche and makes him face the truth of his situation, no longer disguised by sophistry. It takes a lot of courage and conviction for a poet to call a spade a spade and not by any other fanciful name. When Ayaz writes of the compromising poet,

> You ridicule us,
> As a whore would ridicule a loving wife
> Coquettishly conversing with 'the *Thanedaar*'
> Her laugh jingling like coins
> And when comes Moharram
> Donning a black suit
> In mock mourning.

...the picture is graphic and gets a gut-reaction from the reader.

Ayaz's poetry appeals consistently to the emotion buried in the very deep of our psychic selves, the emotion of *ghairat* (for which honour is but a poor, ineffectual translation). The emotion of *ghairat* is the same as "shame", and yet is quite the opposite of it. Whereas shame is a smouldering, negative feeling, *ghairat* is a blazing, positive emotion. Whereas shame is often the driving force in human beings for many a misdeed, *ghairat* may render possible acts of great courage. This very real, positive human emotion has, for too long, been shunned by poets as rather "unartistic" and too awkward to handle. Perhaps, the concept is so unadorned that its nakedness frightens the genteel poet. Ayaz, however, understood the ethos of his people well

enough not to be frightened of this concept.

It may be argued that the concept of "honour" is basically feudal. In a more industrialized, urbanized society it invariably loses its edge. Yet modern psychology bears witness that the emotion of shame continues to play an important role for individuals. Strangely enough, "shame" fails to possess groups or communities as a driving force. When collectively experienced, shame becomes "grief". *Ghairat*, on the other hand, is capable of mobilising groups, communities or even nations. It may, therefore, be concluded that it is not the urbanization or industrialization that renders the emotion of *ghairat* redundant but only one component of the resulting ethos, i.e., an absence of "group-feeling". But if by any circumstance, a feeling of kinship, of a shared misfortune, or a sense of oppression emerges in a group or nationality, the sense of alienation is immediately removed and such a group can strongly experience the emotion of *ghairat* and, indeed, it may become a powerful motivation for action. It is for this reason that the expressions of *ghairat* in various forms are not uncommon in contemporary literature of oppressed and struggling nations, whereas contemporary Western literature is incapable of summing up *ghairat*, because of pervasive alienation. When Ayaz in his powerful verses again and again invokes the emotion of *ghairat*, he is not just falling back on feudal values, but his genius instinctively recognizes the great potentials of this emotion in the contemporary political and social situation of his native land.

Ayaz's poetry is one perseveringly ringing "war-cry" of an oppressed people. Its genuineness is borne out by the fact that it has never sought vainly to eulogize glories, conquests of the so-called "heroes" of the past. This, too, is characteristic of the authentic literature of the oppressed people the world over. One is compelled to mention here that, unlike Allama Iqbal, Ayaz has not written a single line such as

> O young Muslim, have thou ever imagined
> What heaven it was, of which thou art a fallen
> Star (or is it meteor?)
> You are lovingly brought up by a nation.
> That trampled the crown on the head of king Darius.

Here Palestinian literature readily comes to mind as a suitable analogy. Despite the fact that the Arabs at one point in his-

tory conquered nearly one-third of the world, modern Palestinian literature—which consistently concerns itself with Arab nationalism and is a fulsome expression of, as well as a powerful invocation for, resistance and struggle—is singularly free from any references to it. Like Ayaz, the Palestinian poet, too, who is dedicated to inspire his people to struggle against oppression, has never sought to fire the imagination of his people by such means. He has never put his pen to paper to remind them of

> O Great Arab people that thou were once!
> Vanquishing formidable kings
> Holding half the world in thy subjugation.

In other words, genuine literature of struggle has no deeply implanted or hidden or disguised seeds of chauvinism. Therefore, it is natural for this literature to steer clear of any base strivings, however subtle, for domination and subjugation of other communities or nations.

Shaik Ayaz's poetry has many dimensions. Its sensuousness and uninhibited celebration of "all things material" has largely contributed to its abiding freshness. Yet these verses are not all sensuality and no intellect. Ayaz is a deeply well-read intellectual—equally well-versed in Oriental classics and modern Western literature. All this has given him an insight into the making of good literature. Ayaz has well expressed this in his own beautiful, poetic style,

> "O Sindh! If ever I have come upon a single word, a single phrase of some Talented One, I have snatched it from him. For you, I have robbed the poor and stolen from beggars. Bit by bit, I have made a collection and, like a goldsmith, have scrubbed it clean and sparkling. . . . I have never been caught, nor have I left footprints anywhere. I confess this to you in confidence; otherwise of my deeds, there is no witness".

Ayaz's poetry is also inherently anti-romantic. "Eternal vigilance" seems to be its motto. In one of his poems he says

> Unlike Kavi Kalidas
> I can never mistake the snaker for the rope.

This "poetry of vigil", of anti-romanticism and anti-mysticism, evoked a sympathetic response from the readership as, perhaps, Sindh needed to be shaken into awakening from

the dulling monotony of mysticism. Ayaz was also conscious that his was a poetry of struggle and it should have the rhythm of the sounds of a battlefield rather than the serenity of peaceful orchards. He writes:

> "The notes of a *bansri* sound pleasant in parting, but those climbing steep heights have to play on the *sankh*".

Despite conscious effort, the aesthetic cravings of the poet in Ayaz could not totally abandon that particular note of the *bansri*. His patriotic poems are a combination of the wistful, moving melodies of parting in the traditional Indian vein, and resounding battle songs to inspire the reader for struggle, thus lending versatility and diversity to his poetry.

Ayaz has written copiously and there are not many subjects his pen might have left untouched. Indeed, it needs another talent of his stature and energy to wrest himself, at least partly, free from his engulfing influence. Or, perhaps, another set of circumstances as he gleefully predicts:

> "I drank deep, have drunk dry every drop of the wine, O Muse of my motherland Sindh! You, who come after me, will have to wait — till another wine is brewed afresh, then slowly matures and reddens".

The Changing Seventies

For a long time, the decade of the 70s will remain for many Sindhis an unforgettable decade. These were the years of rising hope, of the first savouring of success, and of even more complex, slightly confusing process of emotional and intellectual adjustment to it. The final abolition of One-Unit in West Pakistan, restoring the provincial status of Sindh, the reintroduction of Sindhi in educational institutes, the victory of the Pakistan Peoples' Party in the general elections under the chairmanship of Z A Bhutto, with his undisguised Sindhi accent, public appearances in the dress of common Sindhis — all these developments, unimaginable earlier, created ripples of optimism and joy. Mixed with this, however, was a feeling that the change at the top had not yet reached many layers of social order.

One thing at least was clear, namely, that changed circum-

stances also demanded a correspondingly modified approach towards literature from the writer. When we survey Sindhi writings of the 70s, we notice that in the realm of literature many such developments were taking shape. On the other hand, this seems to be the time when, freed from an all-consuming sense of national oppression, Sindhi writers could explore new avenues for their subject. That it was a fruitful respite is well brought out by several short stories and poems written during this period. Poets were experimenting with ever new expressions.

I am a cloud,
A cloud of smoke,
In a few moment's,
Will disintegrate.

Thus wrote Imdad Hussaini, a young and promising poet. And Tanveer Abbasi was writing:

I have carefully walked all my life,
It is time, I should stumble.

The young poetess Sahar Imdad was writing of "Lipsticks, Leeches and Cigarette Butts".

The colour of this Lipstick of Medora
Is more lasting than your kiss.
Elder poet of Sindh, Ustad Bukhari, was musing frantically about "Officer Poet".
Daily shave
New clothes
Expensive perfumes,
Poetic frustrations
Official exclamations
Hourly call to the Driver
Park the car
Right in front
. . . and then LOVE!
Then to the stage
Reading his verses

Oh I am ruined!
I am wretched!
This city is but a Shamshan!
(graveyard)

Time is vacant!
Oh this agony, agony!!
Oh! Ah, Alas!
Down he descends,
Same mood again
Same smiles
Same laughter
And the Driver
'Yes Sir! Yes Sir!'

Another younger poetess, Sultana Vaqasi, was creating fresh poetry

Life is a labyrinth
Still,
Let us refuse to die.

I have missed you
Whenever I laughed heartily.

In short stories, women writers were examining their situation in society and going into ethical norms, posing questions which, alas, remain unanswered in Pakistan or India.

> "When a man loves someone, or is loved by someone, it is worth being proud of. Yet if a woman loves, or is loved, she deserves to be beheaded. Two human beings, with similar emotions — But the world treats them differently. What a strange logic!!
>
> — Sameera Zareen *(I Am The Same Marvi)*

Young writers were beginning to laugh at the old order of things.

> "At the Springs of Saint Lakho Shah, watching people bathe in sheer reverence for health and peace of mind, I finally concluded: Sulphur is not only a chemical element

They were probing the complex, painful process of aging.

'Who advised you to cook corn-bread?' Looking at the hard, crisp bread, he exclaimed. 'Be silent and eat' retorted his wife, sitting next to him, fanning away flies. The very first mouthful made his teeth livid with pain. Stealthily, he glanced at his wife, who was mercifully looking down at the bread. Slowly, he began to move his jaws in a desperate effort to chew the blasted mouthful. Acute pain was bringing tears to his eyes. Suddenly she looked at him.

'Why are you eating like this?' She asked in surprise.

'Then how should I eat', he retorted and swallowed the mouthful unchewed. It stuck in his throat, his eyes were stinging, and a fit of coughing convulsed his body. 'Curse on you and your father', coughing, he glared at her in rage. 'Why did you have to cook this stone-hard corn-bread?'

'Oh this!' She understood, and then said good humouredly, 'How would I know your teeth are not good enough any more. You look quite young'.

'This is hereditary, Women! We are made that way. My father (May God give rest to his soul) lost his teeth in the prime of his youth — at least I have reached middle age now'.

It was in this ambience of quest, of newer, bolder ventures, to delve deeper into the myriad aspects of life that there appeared a novelette of a highly advanced sensibility and superior quality, namely, *Odah* ('d' pronounced as in Pahad Ganj). This creation came as a surprise from Haleem Barohi who was otherwise known as a successful humourist. *Odah*, literally meaning "A Blazing Furnace", was, indeed, a most sombre, almost morbid account of a man's sexual life and his inner spiritual processes.

It is a stark, highly original book whose authenticity goes to create haunting and tormenting passages. On the surface, it seems to be an account of a man's physical intimacies with several women, over a period of time. Who are these women? Nor is the central male character fully described. The reader can

convincingly assume only that these intimacies are of a purely physical nature. There is almost a Kafkaesque element of mystery in the narration, though Barohi's style is very different for its intensity and urgency. The remarkable feature of the book lies in the fact that despite its unending descriptions of the sexual acts with women, the sharp awareness it creates in the reader is not that of the lust of this character, but of his smouldering, torturing sense of unfulfilment.

> "He was walking, walking in a whitish marsh, stretching to infinity under a merciless, blazing sun".
>
> He describes a dream-like sensation, and elsewhere
>
> "A scorching, dusty gale was blowing through his life. It was always heat, heat! In his life, he had never seen a single season of coolness."

At many points in the book, the male character expresses revulsion at the sexual act. The reader, however, does not feel this revulsion, but, instead, is struck by a bleak sense of tragedy.

Sex as associated with suffering has, indeed, been the subject of some famous writers, Marquis de Sade being the most prominent among them. Then there are those who, like Jean Genet, gaining courage from de Sade, have written about sex in very bleak terms. Barohi's novelette is completely free from the influence of either de Sade or Genet. The approach is different. There is not even the slightest attempt to create mystical interpretation of the sex acts. In *Odah,* sexual acts are linked with a spiritual process that is essentially non-mystical.

In the history of creative literature, many creative writings have powerfully expressed such realities, phenomena and processes as have greatly contributed in the empirical study of individual and social psychology and have subsequently helped society in its own understanding and sometimes of re-defining social values. *Odah* neither seeks to point out the simplistic moral of the tale, namely, that loveless sex is inevitably unfulfiling, nor does it boast of pretentious profundities that would attribute the unfulfilment of a process to the so-called "Human Destiny". It is a book written in such earnestness that the reader deeply feels its very concrete, agonizing reality, and almost begins to understand the often blurred interdependence of sex with social relations and the spiritual serenity of the individual. Given enough time, this slim novelette is

bound to leave its impact on the empirical study of social and psychological factors which are responsible, sometimes, for a deep sense of unfulfilment in our society. As a piece of literature, *Odah* will certainly remain a milestone. Small but significant, a gripping document of agony, and despite its ostensible sensational subject, it remains a work of dignity and noblity. Had such writing appeared in a Western language, it would have at once become a modern classic.

It is often observed that successful culmination of political and social movements also leads to a sense of disillusionment. In the first place, there are always gaping differences between the ideals for which a movement was initially launched and the reality of the achievement. Secondly, every success usually achieves part of the goal. Sindh, too, was going through a social change, but it did not constitute an entire revolution that could alter the whole social set-up for the better. Sindhi writers, in this era, also appear to be examining their national scene in a new light. In some of the writings of these years, disillusionment, though not pervasive, is certainly present.

Floating Generation of Muneer Sindhi, to which reference has been made in these pages, stands as a good example of a conscientious writer's disappointment with the new political phase. *Floating Generation* tells us the story of an aimlessly wandering Sindhi youth. Unemployed, hungry and frustrated, he comes in contact with an underground nationalist organization most of whose members come from well-to-do middle classes. The novelette gives an amusing and disturbingly realistic account of the antics of these youngmen for whom underground work is a most romantic adventure. They go about in disguise (sometimes as Urdu speaking *muhajirs*!), and pledge themselves to work for total liberation of Sindh from all forms of oppression. For Bhutto, they have nothing but contempt and call him a "protege of Punjab". It is a motley crowd of nationalists, Marxists, Maoists, who supposedly are all revolutionaries. However, towards the end, as the PPP comes to power, they all remove their various disguises, surface "overground" and, at the first opportunity, take up cushy jobs in Bhutto's administration. Our poor Sindhi youngman, with no strings to pull, and no instinct for opportunism, is again left alone. Unemployed, hungry, frustrated and lonely, wandering aimlessly, slowly de-

scending down Tilak Incline in Hyderabad, Sindh.

Sindhi intelligentsia, during this era, was caught between conflicting emotions. Viewed objectively a certain goal had been achieved; but much remained still unachieved. This situation led to a serious re-thinking among Sindhi intellectuals about the "national movement" and about a fresh inquiry being made into the social order in Sindh. That the well-to-do Sindhi classes were in fact, in many ways in alliance with non-Sindhi upper-classes and were virtually a great hinderance to true national liberation from social, political and economic oppression, became, during those days, a more readily acceptable proposition. Consequently, this era saw the emergence of a number of radical (some quite ultra-radical) literary-journals in Sindh. Already existing ideological literary-cum-political magazines, such as *Tehreek* (Movement), became more popular. This magazine was edited by the well-known Sindhi politician, Rasul Bux Paleejo, Chairman of a peasant-based political party, Sindhi Awami Tehreek (Sindh People's Movement). Basically of strong Marxist orientation, this party became a forum for Sindhi intellectuals for making serious attempts at analysing and interpreting Pakistan's politics and the "national" question in Sindh in terms of class-struggle. Paleejo wrote a number of editorials elaborating upon his interpretation of the problem. A collection of the articles was published under the title *Subah Theendo* (The Day Shall Dawn). The conclusions Paleejo drew emphasised that:

1. Every State has many contradictions. In the state of Pakistan, national question is the "basic contradiction".

2. Sindh has been almost colonized by the upper classes (also the ruling classes) of Punjab and the *muhajir* community. These two (Punjabis-*Muhajirs*) have forged an alliance which is of an imperialist nature. Together, they ruthlessly exploit the poor peoples of Sindh, Baluchistan and the NWFP

3. Any movement that, under the circumstance, takes up the "class question" without combining it with the "national question" is essentially un-realistic and often fake.

4. The feudal classes of Sindh, the big landlords, *pirs* etc., are allies of the enemy. They act as effective agents of the exploiters. National movements led by these classes (such as, *Jiye-Sindh* movement of G M Sayed), which deliberately ignores the

vast mass of Sindhi peasantry, are weak, romantic, prone to betrayal, and inherently opportunistic.

The last of these contentions created a furore among middle class Sindhi supporters of G M Sayed. In their own literary journals, they bitterly contested Paleejo's theory and attacked his movement very viciously. Unlike several members of Sindhi intelligentsia, Paleejo had refused to denounce Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples' Party as "useless for the smaller nationalities" and "basically Punjab-oriented". On the contrary, he held that Bhutto had created on an enormous scale class consciousness among oppressed Sindhi peasantry through his mass-contact campaigns in which he openly condemned the tyranny of feudal lords. By unequivocally declaring himself to be on the side of the oppressed, Bhutto had given to the long-suffering peasants a sense of self-respect, an awareness of their rights, and confidence in their struggle as had not been known to them for centuries.

For this tacit support given to Bhutto, Paleejo was blamed for "opportunism". In fact, a tirade of "exposures" and mud-slinging followed which provided a lot of entertainment to the general reader.

Such limited campaigns apart, the truth of the matter was that Sindhi nationalists were finding it more and more difficult to oppose Z A Bhutto or his PPP. Not only was their condemnation of Bhutto, whom they called the "protege of Punjab", quite out of tune with the general mood of Sindhi masses — who were displaying great signs of hope and happiness in the new era of civilian rule under the leadership of Bhutto, loved both for being a Sindhi as well as presumably for being on their side as against the landlords and their lackeys — but also the increasing openings of fresh opportunities for young, educated middle-class Sindhi youth for socially prestigious and economically rewarding careers had all but taken the wind out of their political sail. Sindh was beginning to thrive. It was learning to breathe, to smile, and to look around, without fear and despair, for the first time in the history of Pakistan. However, cautiously and with nervousness, Sindhis were beginning to re-enter the capital city of Karachi! They were beginning to rent out and buy houses; they were venturing to settle down in Karachi which for decades had been a forbidden city for them, and for which

Shaikh Ayaz had once written so wistfully, comparing it to Sita:

Alas! My beautiful Karachi
You were taken away (kidnapped)
As you stepped forward to give alms.
This wound is like *Juttao* in my heart.

(Perhaps only a Sindhi can fully appreciate the eloquence of these lines, for Karachi was, indeed, completely taken away from the Sindhis as it offered shelter to the refugees. The last line, too, contains a beautiful simile as it likens the efforts of the poet for saving it with the wounded bird which had tried to save Sita).

Once again, the Sindhis were walking on the roads of their beloved Karachi. It was for them a thrilling experience. Short stories were written in that era by younger Sindhi writers about this novel experience. Some of them rather romantically compared the bustle of the metropolis with the serenity of life "back home" in the village. However, it was obvious that these comparisons were really only a vehicle for expressing in creative writing the experience of "exposure" to this capital city of their own native land which was now the largest and most densely populated city of Pakistan. It is noteworthy that in none of these writings did Sindhi writers express any chauvinistic feelings towards the *muhajir* inhabitants of Karachi. There are also no expressions of "regaining" or "recapturing" a "lost city". In short, in the Sindhi literature of this era there are no outbursts of anger and resentment.

Anger and resentment nevertheless were seething and simmering — but only on the other side of the linguistic fence, i.e., among the *muhajirs* who were forced by circumstances to face a situation for which they were not emotionally prepared, namely, that they were living in Sindh and that Sindhis had the right to all those privileges which they considered to be their exclusive prerogative.

Soon after the PPP assumed power, Sindhi once again had been reinstituted as the State language. This was taken as a great blow to Urdu. A popular poet, Raees Amrohi, wrote a couple of stanzas in the *Daily Jung*, the last line of which became a vastly popular dirge for the *muhajirs*.

Let us take the funeral procession of
Urdu with befitting aplomb.

Language riots broke out in Karachi and in many other towns of Sindh. It is to be admitted that the entire affair was somewhat mishandled by the Sindh Government from the beginning; but it remains purely a matter of conjecture as to what amount of tact and diplomacy can possibly appease a community that has a deeply-entrenched interest in the old order. The fact the *muhajirs* would now have to learn Sindhi (and live under a Sindhi Government) could never be accepted by them in good humour. The continual dilemma of the *muhajirs* was facing its final crisis. For decades they had perceived themselves as the creators and, hence, the legitimate heirs of Pakistan. Being brought down from this exalted pedestal and reduced to a mere cultural minority in Sindh was too "cruel" a comedown, and they found it extremely difficult to come to terms with the new political realities. As time passed the *muhajirs* found more and more cause for their grievances. A "quota system" for Sindhis had been introduced for governmental employment and for admission to educational institutes. It was deeply resented by the *muhajirs*. To obtain domicile certificates, one had to mention the father's place of birth in order to ascertain whether an applicant qualified himself for reserved seats. This became the subject of a sad poem by a well-known *muhajir* poet, Himayat Ali Shair.

My son, so that you may live happily
I am willing to disown you
Cross out my name forever from your life.

To understand the totality of trends of thinking among the *muhajir* during this period, a small but significant point needs to be taken into account. Those *muhajir* poets of Pakistan (such as, Saleem Ahmad, Athar Nafees, Josh Malihabadi, Aziz Hamid, Madani and some others) who were known for higher literary qualities and intellectual contents of their works neither lent their pen to anti-India campaigns during the two Indo-Pakistan wars, nor did they feel "inspired" to bemoan the lot of the *muhajir* community during the Bhutto era. The task was taken up by lesser poets. Perhaps, the *muhajir* intelligentsia found itself in situations where to discern the "right" from the "wrong" was exceedingly difficult. They chose to keep away from political and social currents and went their separate ways creating their own beautiful but individualistic poetry.

Amongst them, the intellectual sojourn of Saleem Ahmad provides an interesting study. Beginning his literary life as a modernist, he had created waves by his outlandish critical work *New Poetry and Complete Man*. In so many words, the book had torn the progressive movement in Urdu literature to shreds. In startlingly frank terms, he had insisted that the "lower half" part of "man" was absent from the works of progressive writers. It was not only sexless but also crippled and lifeless. Later, perhaps, to display as to how the "lower part" ought to be integrated into poetry, he wrote some *ghazals* that shocked the readership.

What use are words, mere stories of love
Whether true or false
Will be revealed in the loins.

His literary criticism and his shocking poetry helped bring him into the forefront of important literary figures. Undoubtedly, he was a writer of great intelligence. In the individual psyche, he recognised the presence of strivings to dominate, to overpower and to engulf. Could it be that this all-male figure of Saleem Ahmad's poetry was none other than our familiar Shaleen, the glorified bird of prey of Allama Iqbal, only talking in a different lingo, choosing sexual symbols in place of Iqbal's philosophical phrases? Saleem Ahmad, unlike Allama Iqbal, never found it suitable, to his modernist literary taste, to address the masses in his poetry. But, in his journalistic writings, he turned increasingly towards religion and propagation of a theocratic system of government. On the surface, this trend of development may seem unrelated to the social and political developments around him, but I feel that turning towards theocracy was the reflex-action of the *muhajir* intellectual in the face of rising Sindhi nationalism.

To sum up the *muhajir* literary scene during the Bhutto era, two important books, *Wedding Procession of Memories* and *From Moses to Marx* should be briefly discussed.

Wedding Procession of Memories, the celebrated autobiography of Josh Malihabadi, created a great sensation; it also became a target of attack in literary journals published from West Punjab. The book was, in general, a chronicle of the several love-affairs of Josh (around eighteen), narrated in his inimitable, colourful style and in richly seasoned language. It was, per-

haps for the first time that in Urdu literature, an author of unquestioned fame and renown had innocently entered in his autobiography that his first love had been none other than a young, beautiful boy. However, it was not these accounts of love that sparked off the anger of the Punjabi-Urdu intelligentsia, but the abundant praise showered on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In his flowery style, charged with emotions, Josh had written:

> *Nehru, the soul of humanity bows in reverence before you.*

He was taken to task in a literary journal *Fanoon* published from Lahore:

> *Josh Saheb, it was your own soul that you mistook to be the soul of humanity.*

Josh Malihabadi's *Memories* was much talked and written about. It was generally enjoyed with relish. The confession of homosexuality was not commented upon, which indicated a silent appreciation of the author's spirit of frankness. Perhaps, it was also considered proper to ignore discreetly such a "ticklish" issue, for fear of more people writing on it, leading to a further probe into a phenomenon, an open discussion of which had been taboo in our society.

From Moses to Marx, the second important book to be published during that period, was a history of faiths and popular beliefs in the world. It was written by Syed Sibte Hasan, a highly respected Marxist intellectual. This book was a significant contribution to rational thinking and scientific investigation in Urdu literature, which by then had developed a culture thriving only on sentimental exaggerations and glorification of irrationality. Gone were the days when writers like Niaz Fatehpuri of the pre-Independence era had un uninhibitedly attempted to trace the historical source of mythology. In Pakistan, Urdu literature had come to an impasse where all Semitic myths had to be taken as divine truths revealed to the chosen ones. Any discretion shown in this matter was unthinkable. *Moses to Marx* made its appearance in that kind of literary culture of unreason and fear of investigation. It boldly struck a note of contrast.

Moses to Marx was well received—its first edition having been quickly sold out—and is the real indicative that Urdu readers were, in fact, intellectuallv mature enough to be

favourably inclined towards rational and scientific thinking. For far too long they had held on to an abundant store of myths. Now they were ready to be weaned off from fantasies and were craving for writings with a substance more solid than that of myths.

2. Literature in Punjab

The Bhutto Era

Punjab has had a long, well-sustained and creative relationship with Urdu language. Having a large vocabulary of Persian words, Urdu has had historical connections with this region, as each passing caravan of Afghans and Iranians left in its trail ample sprinkling of words and expressions. Punjabi, thus, absorbed Persian words in literary and common usage. For long Persian remained the court language of Punjab and enriched all local languages, including Saraiki, Potohari etc. With the passage of time, the acceptance of Urdu as the established language of urban gentry came to Punjab effortlessly irrespective of religion. It was only later, with the rising communal feelings in other parts of India, that a section of Hindu Punjabi intelligentsia changed over to Hindi. One feature common to both Hindu and Muslim champions of these languages, basically of Uttar Pradesh, is their excessive reliance on Persian and Sanskrit. It may be observed that, by and large, Punjabi intelligentsia tended to write more Persianised Urdu and Sanskritised Hindi. Punjabi was relegated to the position of a "folk language", a language of the uneducated, rural masses, and not of the "classes" The bonds between the social and moral values of the great works of old Punjabi writers, such as, Ghulam Fareed, Madhu Lal Hussain, Bullhe Shah and Waris Shah, and those of the emerging Punjabi intelligentsia were, thus, gradually severed. Although Punjabi remained the spoken language of even the socalled "classes", yet in effect Punjab became a "bi-lingual" region. It should not be, therefore, surprising that the ethos of

the emerging Punjabi intelligentsia should have little resemblance to the deep humanism, liberalism and Sufism of its past.

This was an uncommon schizophrenic state in the entire sub-continent. In the Indo-Gangetic belt, the original language and dialects, with their inner vitality, had vanquished the "court-language", Persian, so thoroughly that even the last Mughal king, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was writing poetry in Urdu (or Hindustani). Local languages developed, merged with each other, absorbed a good deal of Persian vocabularly, modified literary expressions in varying degrees, yet remained rooted in the regions of their origin. With zest and resilience Hindustani gently escorted Persian out of the Mughal court. Far from being a language of outsiders as is so thoughtlessly alleged by certain paranoid elements in India — Urdu is a living triumph of Indian languages and dialects over the language of kings and commanders. It is an integral part of the organic cultural growth of a vast region of India and an outcome of the dialectical process of absorption and assimilation of Iranians and Afghans in a regional Indian culture. In the regions mentioned, Urdu never replaced the original languages. Rather those languages and dialects grew and developed to become Urdu. In contrast, Urdu completely replaced the Punjabi language. Consequently, in the Indo-Gangetic belt, in the realm of creative literature, Urdu has a wealth of varying dictions and expressions, depending upon local influences and individual inclinations. It could afford to be rustic as in the poetry of Kabeer, Persianised as in the works of Ghalib, or become the mellow expression of Meer Taqi Meer. It could choose to speak the proletarian lingo in the works of Nazeer Akbarabadi or to converse in the typically feminine language of Lucknawi *begums*. This most adaptive and flexible language seems to lose all versatility in Punjabi, where its literature, both in Urdu and Hindi, is uniformly Persianised, Sanskritised and strait-laced and is very "proper" urban middle-class in character.

It is, indeed, mysterious as to why the Punjabi intelligentsia, representing the middle and upper middle-classes of the Punjabi people, unlike their Sindhi, Bengali or Marathi counterparts, held their own language in such low esteem. The Punjabis are otherwise a proud people. A possible reason for this linguistic self-effacement could be that history provided

the people of this region scant chance to rule itself. But for the short spell of the rule of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, the region was always ruled from outside, the central nucleus of power always being in Delhi. In spite of its great energy and potentials, Punjab remained on the outer fringes of political power for so long that, perhaps, it hankered subconsciously to be treated not as a separate unit but as a part of the centre itself. To achieve this psychological reassurance, the Punjabi intelligentsia held on to Urdu and Hindi with the very skin of their teeth. It is often assumed that in post-partition India only the Sikh community owned Punjabi, because its religious scripture is written in the same language. This may be partially true, but in terms of social psychology Sikh adherence to Punjabi, perhaps, owes as much to Maharaja Ranjeet Singh as to Guru Granth Sahib.

Notwithstanding the virtual desertion of their language by the Punjabi intelligentsia, Punjabi intellect had vitality and dynamism quite in line with the legendary zest of the people of the land for hard work and tremendous entrepreneurial skills. Their collective psychic energy did not have to grope for long for a suitable outlet and there emerged on the literary horizon the daunting figure of Allama Sir Mohammad Iqbal, whose intellectual stature greatly impressed Indian intellectual community and whose poetry was to become the single most effective source of inspiration for Indian Muslims.

So much has been written about Iqbal, and every aspect of his work has been so thoroughly commented upon, that to add to the already overflowing ocean of commentaries will be a futile attempt. It is also well known that a good part (according to some critics, in fact, the better part) of Iqbal's poetry is in Persian. Since in Pakistan, Persian has become a very academic and specialized subject, this work is a closed book for most Pakistani readers who do not understand Persian at all. Even most of the creative writers have had no chance to learn this language in any systematic way. This hardly equips them for being profoundly influenced by the values espoused by Iqbal in his Persian works. Volumes of his Urdu poetry are widely read and have greatly enriched the language with a wealth of highly imaginative, original and effective expressions. Urdu as written in Punjab bears a distinct mark of the language of Allama Iqbal, which may be described as having been Persianised imagina-

tively. His Urdu works advance values which may broadly be summed up as pan-Islamism, redemption of Muslims from a state of lethargy, deep love for Islam, and realization of *Khudee* — a concept at once so inspiring and mysterious that it came to be synonymous with its creator and with which we would deal in some detail in the context of Pakistani literature.

Iqbal's poetry of *Khudee* was written before the creation of Pakistan. The concept was given interchangeable meanings, such as, "self-realization", "self-reliance", or "self-expression". In the poetry of Iqbal, which strongly pleaded the cause of Pan-Islamism, it also came to be popularly interpreted as the quintessence of a true Muslim's character. However, we find that Iqbal's concept of *Khudee* has been totally non-existent in Pakistani literature. This is, indeed, amazing and strange, because it was this concept that made a great impact on the works of Allama Iqbal and was instrumental in making his magnificient poetry unprecedentedly popular. It had caught people's imagination like the proverbial wildfire, evoking from them a most enthusiastic response. When people read Iqbal it seemed that they knew — indeed, that they had always known — about the cherished idea of *Khudee* in all its meanings and nuances. Yet so shortlived has been its impact that after Iqbal no Pakistani writer has ever even used the word *Khudee*. What could be the reason for the total obliteration of this word from Pakistani literature?

This, indeed, is a thought-provoking question. It could be suggested that the term used to express an ideal so obviously associated with a gigantic literary figure that other writers were embarrassed to dabble in it. Yet on close scrutiny we find that it is not only the term *Khudee* but also the very concept, with all its meanings, that failed to make inroads into the poetry written in Pakistan right after the years of its inception. Should one therefore infer that at a certain point in their history the bulk of North Indian urban Muslims, who constituted Iqbal's readership, needed a certain driving force to give a decisive turn to their destiny, and that to mobilise themselves emotionally they projected it on to the ideals of the great poet. This restlessness was born of a pervasive sense of impending doom, confusion and non-comprehension of their place and status in what they imagined India would be like after independence. Iqbal's

Khudee, in that era, gave some coherence to the strivings arising from a complex psyche. To the vast readers of Iqbal, *Khudee* seemed to be defining their own goals and ideals. It seemed to assert, in so many words, that they craved to be self-reliant and self-respecting, not to be "swallowed up", intimidated or placed lower than anyone else. They readily sought reassurance from past glories, from kings and conquerers, from emperors and soldiers; every image came in handy and was useful for dispelling doubts and gloom. At that particular stage in the history of the sub-continent, when its entire populace stood in utter confusion and was torn by conflicting motivating forces, the unambiguous clarion call of Iqbal's *Khudee* swept aside all other concepts.

Firaq Gorakhpuri has remarked in a summing-up of Iqbal that a poet who chooses to be proud of religious sectarianism may have little claim to universality. Whether Iqbal's poetry has a universal value and lasting utility (if one may use this despised, yet indispensable word) is a very controversial issue. The popularity he enjoyed recently in Iran (where his works are being published under the title of Iqbal Lahori) amply proves that his poetry can still strike sympathetic chords under certain circumstances. The universality of Iqbal's ideals for the Muslims can be endlessly argued for and against, since it is largely a speculative proposition. Facts, however, provide a safer and firmer ground for an objective observation, namely, that in post-Iqbalian literature in Pakistan, the ideal of *Khudee* has been conspicuous by its permanent absence. *Khudee*, with all its implications of Muslim selfhood, made an unannounced exit. Iqbal's readership in the new geographical reality of Pakistan was now confined to the urban and semi-urban Punjab and to the Urdu-speaking immigrants from India who are facing new challenges quite different from those of the past. The ideal of pan-Islamism, that at one time so refreshingly broadened the emotional horizon in undivided India, was rapidly frittering away as the concrete realities of nation-states became clear in terms of political perception. Muslim masses in Pakistan no longer faced a threat from the "Hindu majority", and with the sudden removal of what they had earlier considered to be the main obstacle in the course of their progress and prosperity, they found themselves in a new situation where unforeseen

problems were emerging everywhere.

Yet everything had not changed. Pakistan still had a "selfhood". If not so defensively-pronounced "Muslim selfhood", some other kind of "selfhood" had certainly replaced it. Why was then the ideal of *Khudee* with its multiple connotations, never to make its appearance in post-partition Pakistan? This still remains a puzzling question, because whatever identity a "selfhood" carries, yearning for a full "self-expression" still remains valid and, therefore, the concept of *Khudee* should also continue to remain attractive and find expression in literature. Nor was the readership of Iqbal, and the intelligentsia born of that milieu, so demoralized in Pakistan right from the beginning as to abandon all hope of achieving the ideal stated here. On the contrary, they were filled with a renewed zest and vigour peculiar to the people of newly-born states.

It may, therefore, be concluded that it was, in fact, the unequivocal association of *Khudee* with the "Islamic *Khudee*" that rendered this concept irrelevant in Pakistan. It lacked the essential flexibility to lend itself to new meanings. But for its rigidly-defined narrowness, this concept was, undoubtedly, forceful and universal enough to become a living component of the literary language of Pakistan. Unfortunately, now one may find *Khudee* mentioned only in the enormous commentaries on *Iqbaliat* in which many a scholar has spent a life-time defining and redefining it. But the creative writer, who could actually breathe life into it, has only respectfully shelved it in the galleries of a magnificient but archaic literary heritage. So incompatible with the changing realities was the *Khudee* of Iqbal that it has not been used even as a backdrop, or a point of departure by Pakistani Urdu writers and poets.

The point of departure was provided by a totally different literary approach, by the progressive movement in literature, which heralded a new attitude to life, transcending linguistic, religious and regional barriers in the Indian subcontinent. In this Punjab was no exception. During the independence movement as communal consciousness started deepening, parallel forces of a different kind of consciousness, national consciousness, were equally at work. These forces were giving expression to people's aspirations for social justice, creating values of

humanism and beauty. It was during this period that Urdu became much more inter-regionalized and acquired a revolutionary flavour. It was so deeply imbued with revolutionary fervour that it became a language most suited for expressing political and social aspirations of the Indian masses. Thus, it gifted the immortal expression of *zindabad* and also of *murdabad* to all Indian languages and made the slogan of *Inquilab Zindabad* such a familiarly cherished and invigorating expression in every part of India.

In the years preceding partition, Punjab gave to Urdu literature some of its best progressive writers. Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Saadat Hasan Manto, Krishan Chandra, Rajindra Singh Bedi, Sahir Ludhianvi, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi — these are only a few names from the long list of only the very best. The impact of progressive and socialist thinking was far greater. It would not be incorrect to assess that although the poetry of Iqbal had its own charismatic influence, the literary scene was in reality dominated by forceful affirmation of socialist and progressive values in Urdu literature of Punjab.

With the creation of Pakistan, Urdu literature lost many progressive writers to India. Yet for many years the progressive tradition in literature continued to remain uninterrupted. Immediately after partition, Urdu writers in Punjab wrote against communal frenzy with an intensity and passion which have made many works of those years immortal literary masterpieces. Each one of those poems and short stories so eloquently upheld the values of humanism and secular thinking that they went to greatly enrich literature with the most beautiful and noble universal ideals. It was during this period that Manto, with a flourish and poignancy all his own, was creating *Toba Tek Singh*, a sardonic satire on communalism. Toba Tek Singh is the name of a Sikh patient in a mental asylum whose village was now in Pakistan. The authorities decide that since there are two states, Sikh and Hindu inmates of the hospital should also be transferred to India, whereas Muslim lunatics should be transfered to Pakistan. When the transfer deal is carried out Toba Tek Singh dies in the no-man's land. As the summing-up of the intensity of the communal frenzy of those days and of the still more crazy idea of transfer of population on communal

basis, the short story remains as the most moving and eloquent metaphor.

Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi's story *Permisher Singh* is so moving that it remains a classic in Urdu literature. In the communal carnage, Permisher's family is separated from his child. In India he is offered a Muslim child by some villagers so that he may adopt him as a substitute for his lost son. Personal tragedy has made Permisher sensitive to the sufferings of others. When the child falls ill and yearns for his mother, Permisher can bear it no longer. Quietly, he picks up the child and, when night falls, under cover of darkness, he carries it to the border. Kissing the child, he tells him: "Across this border, there lies your Pakistan. There you will find your mother." The child runs towards the no-man's-land. He is caught by Pakistani soldiers. Suddenly, Permisher realizes that he had forgotten to cut the child's hair. He rushes back towards the child and is caught between the crossfire of Indian and Pakistani guards patrolling the border. Permisher Singh dies in no-man's-land.

Another classic short story on the subject of communal madness was written by well-known writer Ashfaq Ahmad. It was titled *Gadarya* (The Shepherd). In a village in West Punjab, lives a Hindu Pandit. A scholar of Persian, Mathematics and Theology, he has a compulsive passion for teaching. His young, playful pupils are exasperated by his unrelenting efforts to impart knowledge to them. In his own simple way, Panditji has dedicated his whole life to his passion for teaching children. When communal riots break out in Punjab, Panditji is also surrounded by a blood-thirsty mob. They are going to kill the "unholy infidel", but someone from the village recognizes him and says, "Let us not kill him. Poor chap, he is a teacher. Let him live here. He will go on teaching our children." "Then he should embrace Islam", yells the crowd. They agree and, cutting off his Brahmanic plait of hair, they order him to recite *Kalma* (people are converted to Islam by reciting the *Kalma*). "Which *Kalma* should I recite"? asks Panditji helplessly. The mob is at a loss. What does it mean? They are confused. Panditji must be trying to hoodwink them. Someone shouts in anger: "Are there many *Kalmas*, you scoundrel? Now quick, recite *Kalma* or you have had. There are, indeed, four *Kalmas* in Islam. And the irony of

the situation lies in this: Panditji was much more conversant with the tenets of Islam than the crowd that was trying to "convert" him!

These examples are given to show that, following partition, the writer's commitment to and zest for humanism were not drowned in communal bloodshed. He was much more intensely committed to his secular, humanistic ideals than ever before. A generation of readers and writers who were brought up on progressive Urdu literature in Punjab and, consequently, whose mental make-up was shaped by values upheld by this literature, could never become communal-minded, religious bigots. This was a literature socially ennobling and spiritually enriching, and no tribute paid to this outstanding contribution by Urdu writers of Punjab to human values will be fully adequate.

Naturally, in the context of Punjab it is a very painful puzzle as to what befell this great movement of progressive literature. How did the bubbling mainspring of secular and progressive thinking begin to be completely swelled by the endless stretches of barrenness! Why did the progressive movement in literature fail in Punjab?

Some may, however, say that the progressive movement never failed. It was banned. What is meant to be understood as its failure is, in fact, its suppression by official decrees, indiscriminate harassment of writers, and intimidation of its supporters. It is a fact of history that with the ban imposed on the Communist Party of Pakistan in 1954, the offices of the organisation for progressive literature were also sealed. Writing and reading progressive literature was classed as "subversive activities", considered in terms of "danger" posed by them equal to manufacturing of bombs and grenades. It is noteworthy that during those early years the bandwagon of "Islam", which was to be used later by the establishment for steamrolling all basic human rights, was not quite ready. It had not then been greased by Arab Petro-dollars for its smooth and speedy functioning. The emphasis in those days was more on Pakistan as a political and state entity than on the religion of its unfortunate people.

However, unanswered remains the question whether official decrees could really crush ideas if they had strong roots among the intelligentsia. Do not such ideas reappear in ever

new guises? In the history of literature no idea worth its name has ever been crushed.

For understanding the real reasons lying behind the decline of progressive movement in literature in Punjab, we will have to go deeper and dispassionately evaluate the social forces at work, both in the province and in the rest of Pakistan. We will also have to take into account that the middle-classes in Punjab had, in fact, gained enormously both by appropriation of valuable properties, land, business concerns and trade of the migrating Hindus and Sikhs as well as by the sudden opening up of unlimited commercial opportunities for them in the rest of Pakistan, including East Pakistan.

As in any other society, in Punjab social values were subject to the impact of socio-economic structure of the society and the inherent characteristics of new class formation. In the situation of Pakistan, there was no established framework incorporating the distribution of power between the federating units of the State. Even the Constitution of 1956 (that is, nine years after independence) did not in anyway help correct the imbalance. Prior to that, in 1955, the introduction of the so-called "One-Unit System", amalgamating the four "provinces" (a meaningless term used by the British rulers to define administrative divisions in British India and blissfully accepted by Pakistani rulers), had virtually given a licence to the upper classes of Punjab for unhindered rule over the rest of the country. With the death of Liaqat Ali Khan, the factor of Urdu-speaking and middle-class oriented refugees had begun to rapidly recede to the background in Pakistan's political scene. In its place had emerged the factor of powerful civil servants from Punjab who had natural alliances with feudal lords and military bureaucracy which also by and large belonged to Punjab. Later, during Ayub's regime, the shifting of the country's capital from Karachi to the suburbs of Rawalpindi (later named Islamabad) struck another mighty blow at the *muhajir* psyche. This is underestimated by many political analysts. The *muhajirs* were literally made to feel "left behind"; the real political power was now residing in Punjab. This gradual but very visible ousting of the *muhajir* from Pakistan's *realpolitik* will remain a regrettable development, because, whatever their weaknesses and illusions, it is undeniable that in Pakistan *mujahirs* were the only

community without any feudal roots in the region. Being non-feudal, their natural aspirations came closer to the ideals of liberalism and democracy. Even the values of social justice and economic equality — which in feudal societies invariably develop into mysticism and renunciation — could be much more readily acceptable to these classes as viable social ideals. Short of a genuine participation by the peoples of Pakistan, even if only the *muhajirs* had a hand in shaping up the social and political culture of Pakistan, its features certainly would have been very different. Unfortunately, even that was not to be. Power was residing in Punjab, and was creating rapidly new and large classes of beneficiaries.

The emerging Punjabi intelligentsia belonged to a regional entity, thriving on exploitation and suppression of the rest of the country. Amusing though it seems, even the most unchallenged exploitation appears to be desperately hankering for some kind of moral justification. This was provided by "patriotism" as perceived rather peculiarly by a confused layer of the Punjabi middle-class. The elite had carefully cultivated a feeling of "permanent crisis", in Pakistan. It was continuously drummed in that the state of Pakistan faced grave threats to its very existence. Unseen traitors and enemies were festering everywhere. Every social or political movement was shown as yet another conspiracy to do away with Pakistan. Punjabis had grown very attached to the idea of Pakistan — their new homeland which had given them both prosperity and self-esteem. After the creation of Pakistan, rural life in Punjab was continuing as before and the urban middle-classes were far from experiencing new cultural or economic stresses and strains. It was impossible for them to realise that conditions may be totally different in other regions of Pakistan. A line of thinking which came to them naturally was: "Why talk of being Punjabis or Bengalis when now we are all Pakistanis"? In this sincere perception, all Pakistanis were equal and constituted a fraternal community. Since within the framework of Pakistan Punjabis were not culturally or economically dominated and threatened by any other nationality, they totally failed to sympathise with the genuine aspirations of other nationalities of their State.

Our vision of the phenomenon is, of course, invariably coloured by our immediate surroundings. In fact, it is this illu-

sory way of perception that forms the bedrock of all idealist philosophies. Nevertheless, realities continue to exist outside and independent of our illusions. In the situation prevailing in Pakistan, though Punjabis acted in a typically clannish manner, for instance, when posted in Sindh or Baluchistan they tended to take along with them to their far-off places of postings not only their domestic servants but even their Punjabi *dhobees* and sweepers; and when buying land in Sindh, they considered it natural to import into that region armies of Punjabi peasants for tilling their lands so that they formed whole Punjabi villages inside Sindh. Yet they did not perceive themselves as Punjabis, and they felt constrained on even mentioning their ethnic origin.

The subcontinental reality is a unique phenomenon of "unity in diversity". But in the State of Pakistan, where newly-acquired religious homogeneity was an added uniting factor and therefore cultural diversity became less threatening to national integrity — it was propagated that diversity gravely endangered Pakistan. Underneath the ideological pronouncements lay the solid vested interest, namely, that acknowledgment of diversity would hamper hegemony.

The formation of a new middle class in Punjab, which had benefited either directly or indirectly, from the ouster of Sikhs and Hindus from Punjab as well as from the non-federal political structure of Pakistan, also resulted in dulling the class consciousness. The newly-emerging middle classes had hopes and their realization was not impossible under the system. Even by subcontinental standards, Punjab was not a fully industrialized region, and the working class was in its rudimentary stage of formation. Large sections of the lumpen proletariat and poor people were not organised. Progressive forces were not only officially contained by law, but the propaganda against them — that they were anti-Pakistan — was also proving very successful with the middle classes who were willing to swallow it readily.

In a social atmosphere where untruth becomes truth and wrong becomes right — because this perception helps several layers of society to thrive and prosper — the fate of the sensitive truth-seeking creative writer is an unfortunate one. His natural striving for noble social values is not supported by the social

strivings of his own people. It is these social conditions that go to create the "alienation of the artist" — that his spiritual strivings are not in harmony with the native strivings of his own people. For the social classes are never moved by ideals unless they promise solid material gain for them. Recognizing this primary reality should go a long way in our understanding of the mass movements including their weaknesses.

As we have explained social conditions in Punjab were not ripe for a collective appreciation of secular and rational ideals. The writer consequently had only two choices. He could either conform to a culture of bigoted falsehood or quietly retire into his own private world. When circumstances are not at all conducive for social commitment, even finer individuals tend to choose the latter course, for it least hurts their integrity and inner sense of honour. In post-independence Punjab we have the instance of two prominent poets, Muneer Niazi and Nasir Kazmi, who excelled in the genre of writing poetry "for the sake of art". It is no mere coincidence but indicative of the social situation in the region that the two aesthetes are also the best Urdu poets Punjab has produced since independence. Of the two, Nasir Kazmi, an emigre from Uttar Pradesh, was more visibly influenced by the lyrical and philosophical poetry of Firaq Gorakhpuri. He wrote of love and sorrow, of the pains of parting, and of the yearnings for re-union with a freshness and individuality which went a long way in reviving and giving a new lease of life to Urdu *ghazal* in Pakistan. His poetry, undoubtedly, gives immense aesthetic pleasure to the reader.

Muneer Niazi, a master in creating beautiful, vivid images, wrote poetry of fascination for the mysterious. His poetry has the untarnished innocence of a child. For him experiencing the world is inexplicably mysterious and beautiful.

Another important writer of *muhajir* origin in Punjab was Intizar Hussain. Physically cut off from his cultural roots and emotionally very involved with his new homeland, Intizar Hussain continuously strove to understand and interpret life through a combination of fables and fantasies. "My granny used to tell". This was often the refrain of his stories so that among his Punjabi contemporaries he came to be known as "Intizar Hussain of the granny's fame". In literary circles, he gained great prestige with his famous short story *Zard Kuttà* (The Pale

Canine) a fantasia symbolically presenting man's spiritual struggle against worldly desires. Though he commanded considerable respect, his references to life in India were not easily digested by the Punjabis; and the satirical comments made on this aspect of his writing — though often made in good humour — hardly concealed the real puzzlement: "Why talk all this when now we are all Pakistanis?" And this has been the one-track trend of thinking of the Punjabi intelligentsia who have been feeling more and more puzzled, harassed and betrayed by events in their beloved country. The non-federal political structure of Pakistan and its oppressive system have not given them the slightest opportunity of a free exchange of ideas with the intelligentsia of other regions to broaden their intellectual horizon.

Side by side with the newly-emerging introverts in Punjab also existed the old guards of the progressive school, such as, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Ahmad Nadeem Quasmi and Abdullah Malik. They were Punjab's ideological links with a movement which had flourished in the pre-partition era and did not represent the new social dynamics.

The intellectual scene in Punjab has always been complex consisting of many parallel trends. On the one hand, the newly-emerging Punjabi intelligentsia was faced with the task of evolving an ideology of Pakistan. The raw material they had at hand was the two-nation theory, which had led to the division of the sub-continent. This needed now to be elaborated upon and expanded. For this purpose, intellectuals were working out theories, largely depending upon their own individual inclinations and the class interests they, consciously or unconsciously, sympathized with. The bureaucracy had also assumed the mantle of the ideologues of the nation, and their puny intellectual stature had shown itself for what it was worth. The task of giving ideological orientation to a great mass of humanity, who made up the largest Muslim State in the world, fell into the hands of these pygmies, the bureaucrats, who considered it expedient to base it on a negative foundation. For the bureaucracy, anti-Indianism became a cardinal principle of ideology. It bothered them little that anti-Indianism, fast degenerating into anti-Hinduism, could distort a people's vision to a degree that they would come to comprehened humanity in terms of reli-

gious identities. If at that juncture someone were to pose the question, "What are the national ideals of Pakistan?", the answer of the bureaucracy would have been: "To completely free ourselves from India and to become a different people." This was a queer complex of great magnitude manifesting itself in a crude form.

"Gandhi is a snake with a thousand tongues", wrote Waris Meer in a paper at a seminar held on the subject, "Pakistani Ideology and Children's Text-books". In the same paper, he wrote: "If we wish to understand the Hindus, we should carefully read the works of Manu and Chanakya — Manu is worse than Machiavelli, and we all know how bad Machiavelli was!"

In this seminar, attended by intellectual luminaries, it was only our emigre Intizar Hussain who wistfully posed the question: "Through text-books, do we wish to create minds that have curiosity, that ask questions, or do we aim at perfect docility and tameness?"

Altaf Gauhar, the zealous commander of the bureaucratic "intellectual" brigade, was busy harassing the intelligentsia to conform to the model of narrow-minded bigotry, thinly disguised as "authentic" patriotism. Writing for *Mah-e-Nau*, a publication of the Government of Pakistan, he himself made comparison of his fanaticism with a fire-spitting Islamic zealot. He wrote in the essay, "Our Own Language and an Appropriate Tradition":

> There is an elderly pious gentleman in Lahore.
> At the time of Namaz, each day he stands on the steps of the Shahi Mosque and addresses the passing public at the top of his voice —
> 'O you Muslims — *Namaz!*
> 'O you fidels — *Namaz!*
> 'God damn you — *Namaz!*
> I, too, sometimes wish to stand similarly and scream,
> 'O you — your own tradition'!

(Altaf Gauhar will be pleased that now under Zia's rule more than 80,000 pious people are employed at the Governmental level to shout similar slogans all over Pakistan as *Nazim-ul-Namaz).*

What was actually meant by this holy passion for "our own tradition", etc.? It was a clever ploy to exploit the anti-

imperialist feelings of the intelligentsia, and dismiss all ideals of democracy, human rights and social justice as Western and alien. That this bait was never swallowed by Punjabi masses or by the creative writer is a proof of the superiority of people's collective wisdom and of the creative writer's in-born resistance to falsehood. On the one hand, camel caravans were marching on the streets of Karachi with large placards, "Thank you America!", dangling around the necks of the poor camel, and, on the other hand, Messrs Gauhar & Co. were asking people to be "authentically their ownselves" and not to be lured by alien Western ideals of democracy and human rights!

Bureaucracy was determined to watch sternly over the writer's conscience for fear of the worst deviations. As early as 1948, Dr. Deen Mohammad Ta er, in "patriotic confusion", framed and circulated among creative artists the following questionnaire:

> Are you proud to be a Pakistani? Do you have complete faith in the future greatness of Pakistan?
>
> In your opinion, what should be Pakistan's policy towards Kashmir, Hyderabad, Russia, Anglo-American bloc, India, and the Islamic bloc?"

In sheer terror, the creative artists never replied.

It is noteworthy that although much credit is given to Dr Mohammad Hasan Askari, a *muhajir* intellectual, for hammering out the ideological framework within which Pakistani writers were supposed to create, it was in fact the Punjabi intelligentsia which was really involved in the consistent practical application of the ideology. Askari soon took quite a different path, and got completely engrossed in the writings of French mystics and ceased to take any active interest in Pakistani writers' ideological orientation.

Jilani Kamran was another young Punjabi aspirant for occupying the gilded seat of the nation's ideologue. According to him writers who displayed symptoms of "Indian-ness" were not the representative of Pakistani culture. He attempted to relate Pakistan's ideology to the writings of Abn-e-Arabi, an Arab philosopher. Unfortunately, most Pakistanis were less familiar with his name than with the name of Karl Marx. The bureaucracy had the near-impossible task of working out a comprehensive ideology setting out the following objectives:

Underscore the separateness of Pakistanis from Indians;
Discredit Western liberal ideals;
Negate the necessity of a federal structure for Pakistan;
Leave the landed gentry in peace;
Leave the status quo of other social classes undisturbed;
Keep out of the way of State's alliances with imperialist powers.

It is significant that at that time it was not deemed profitable directly to refer to the *Quran* for ideological guidance. In the Muslim psyche the *Quran* is their most dependable ally in their struggle for a just cause. With its powerful and unambiguous condemnation of social injustice, it could prove to be absolutely counter-productive for bureaucratic purposes. The *Quranic* spirit, in fact, is so egalitarian that the self-styled "guardians" of the national ideology were frightened out of their wits. Nor were they, till then, audacious enough as to tamper with its contents and pick up a line here, a phrase there and brazenly use these to justify each misdeed. They were painfully aware that Muslims held the *Quran* dear not for the forms of punishments referred to in it (which, in any case, belonged to a specific era in a specific society) but for the eternal values of equality, social justice, courage and perseverance and for the heartening assurance of the ultimate triumph of good over evil. Even the *Sunnah*, with its obvious seeds of democracy, was hopelessly useless for evolving the suitable ideology. The last words of Prophet Mohammed, "Choose my heir from amongst yourself", made the bureaucracy shudder and recoil in dismay. Till then, no one had struck upon the "bright" idea that the contents of the *Quran* might be used in such a way that a total divorce between the letter and the spirit could be brought about.

The *Quran* and the *Sunnah*, were thus not contemplated as the possible sources, for creating the required comprehensive ideology for Pakistan, the bureaucracy found itself facing insurmountable odds. Not only were many desired goals found in conflict with each other, but even the times were against them, for the natural social thrust of the rising middle classes was certainly orientating towards Western liberal values. The rising

middle classes, which had largely filled the vacuum created by migrating non-Muslims, were fast developing social practices in keeping with their new status. They sought education, not only for their sons but also for their daughters. They strove for an all-round development that necessitated freedom of thinking and expression. Having acquired a comfortable economic existence, they craved for "the finer things of life" such as music and art, and this clearly pointed towards the forbidden Indian roots. Even before the dogmatic stranglehold clamped on Punjabi society could take a firm grip, it began to give way under new social pressures. By the '60s, a healthy revolt was in the offing.

Muneer Ahmad Shaikh wrote in an article, "Lack of Direction in Urdu Literature":

> "After independence, it so happened that some people have styled themselves the sole guardians of the nation's morals".

He added:

> We are told that our nation may lay no claim of being proud of any Taan Sen or Ameer Khusro. That singers and musicians are low-caste bards — poets mere entertainers and scholars imbeciles. Our national slogan is 'Danger to Islam'. Islam faces such a great danger at present in Pakistan that even in Karbala it was not so endangered".

This essay was published in *Fanoon*, a journal of literature and culture, which was the brain-child of veteran Urdu litterateur Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi. The publication of *Fanoon* in the '60s was like a breath of fresh air in the stagnating world of Urdu literature. Under the liberal-minded editorship of Qasmi, *Fanoon* became a very stimulating literary forum in which the young Pakistani intelligentsia began to express itself without any constraints. Its contents were refreshing and full of youthful vitality. At the same time it was making valuable contribution to literature and culture by initiating serious dialogues on important cultural issues.

Through the spirited columns of *Fanoon*, young Punjabi writers courageously came out against the dogmatic suppression of Pakistan's cultural growth. In an article, "Past, Present and Future of Music", Inayat Illahi Malik wrote:

"After the creation of Pakistan, some narrow-minded ele-

ments have restrained the fine arts and have declared them to be out of the purview of our cultural life.... They never tried to comprehend that if we severed centuries-old links with our tradition and attempted to import music from Arab and Ajam (West Asia), what would be the plight of our own culture".

In the "partitioning" of Urdu writers Pakistan had lost Asmat Chughtai to India while two women writers, Khadija Mastoor and Hajira Masroor, had come to Pakistan. They belonged to the pre-partition tradition of progressive literature and remained firmly committed to its ideological norms.

New sensibilities were represented by women writers who made their appearance after partition. In the '60s, Kishwar Naheed confidently entered the realm of Urdu poetry which till then had remained male-dominated. She was warmly accepted as an equal by her contemporary poets. This was indicative of the liberal values which had come to be acceptable in Pakistani culture, because even in India poetry had been considered a suitable form of expression only for men. Muslim women had made their mark in prose, but writing poetry for them was not considered proper, because of its past association with professional singers and dancers. Young Pakistani intelligentsia was mercifully free of this inhibition. Aspirations for women's liberation were beginning to surface in women's writings.

"Within me blazes a centuries-old fire. Flames of hell are licking my existence. My lot has been darkness, suffocation, the musty smell of closed rooms and sins! Extinguish these flames! Wash out my sins!"

This is an excerpt from a short story, "Light, Air and Water" written by Altaf Fatima. The two main characters, Zohra and Azra, are young girls, belonging to the middle-classes, who are forbidden to look out of the window lest they are exposed to the gaze of male neighbours. On the pretext of protection of women, they are segregated from the basic freedoms necessary for healthy human growth. The story ends with these words: "Amazed, she looked at the firmly sealed window, behind which there was bright light, air and sparkling water".

Fanoon not only introduced many young and promising writers, it also revived the slackening interest of some older ones and brought them back, as a gift, to Urdu literature. Most

valuable among them was Mohammad Khalid Akhter, a writer of remarkable moral strength and devastating satirical prowess. Soon after the creation of Pakistan, Mohammad Khalid Akhter had written a hilarious novelette "Bees Sau Gyarah" (Twenty Hundred Eleven) on the model of George Orwell's *Nineteen* Eighty-four. It tells the fantastic story of an army ruler who takes out his procession with professional wrestlers and is so ferociously anti-Communist that, watching competing horses on the race-course, will jump up and shout: "The red horse! Pull back the red horse!" On the occasion of addressing his "subjects", the military dictator applies in his eyes a magic antimony bought from a street magician who had guaranteed instant love from the people when he beheld them. The antimony does not work. It only makes his eyes watery so that he appears to be profusely weeping while addressing the people. Looking at the contents of this novella in retrospect, one wonders if Mohammad Khalid Akhter had a premonition of what was later to befall his country.

Making his contribution to literary criticism through the columns of *Fanoon*, M. Khalid Akhter tore to shreds the moralistic and "holier-than-thou" pretensions of the "official" writers. They became a favourite target for his delightful satire, and it is noteworthy that the tone of his writings was not resented but greatly relished by a substantial section of the readership of *Fanoon*.

Parallel to these trends, also emerged a modernist literature. Influence of contemporary Western movements in literature was visible in the style and approach of these writers. They made several experiments with the language. Generally, they did not deal with the immediate surroundings or ideology except at a very different plane, such as, "destiny of man", etc., which, in their opinion, was hopeless in any case. Noted among this group were Iftikhar Jalib, Saleem-ur-Rehman, Anees Nagi and some others. They held progressive literature in contempt for being both dogmatic and romantic.

In Punjab, an intelligentsia was emerging which did not wish to associate itself with the established and well-defined progressive movement in literature. It aimed at an original interpretation of history and the individual. Most prominent amongst them was Abdullah Hussain, who set about this task

in a colossal novel *Udas Naslain* (Sad Generations). In a way, this novel is a delineation of Punjab's modernist thinking, since it is the most comprehensive literary work produced by a writer belonging to that group. Although the novel impresses by its great ambition, — when published, it was indeed considered profound by many critics — a closer scrutiny reveals that it was actually its vagueness and ambiguity that created such an illusion. The book encompasses the period between the Second World War and the creation of Pakistan. The main character rambles through the course of this period, experiencing war, love, his life in his village, marriage etc. But nothing connects him either with his times or the events of this period of history. By the time the main character turns mad towards the end, the novel becomes a treatise in non-comprehension. The characters, for instance, express revulsion against the meaningless warfare. The novel is more revealing in respect of certain traits which are absent in it. It has no anti-Indian or anti-Hindu overtones, nor is it permeated with a holy patriotic fervour. In short, it is not in strict conformity with the bureaucratic design of Pakistan's "ideology". However, because it lacked direction, it was deemed harmless enough to be officially awarded.

Punjab's literature presents several other trends running side by side through the years. One such trend was the respectful hearing that progressive writers, belonging to pre-partition generation, such as, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, continued to receive although attempts were openly made in the national press to malign them.

When Martial Law was declared in Pakistan in 1953, the people of Punjab did not react to it unfavourably. In fact, they had heaved a sigh of relief. During the years preceding Martial Law, the power scramble in the upper echelons of politicians and bureaucracy was too complex to be comprehended by them, besides, it had little relevance to their problems or aspirations. Due to suppression in the national press and slanted reporting, they also had no understanding of the complex situation developing in East Pakistan; and when, in a crude attempt to create parity between the more populous Bengal and West pakistan, "One-Unit" was imposed and the federal structure of the country was completely abolished, it was perceived by large sections of politically immature Punjabi people as merely a measure of

patriotism. The armed forces also were a respected and well-loved institution, enjoying an untarnished image. But once the army assumed power, it became clear that greed for money and lust for power were not solely the vices of condemned politicians whom the generals had so self-righteously elbowed out of the corridors of power. The martial champions of "clean administration" only excelled in these vices — and all with a ruthlessness that could not even be challenged. As has been mentioned earlier, the upper classes and upper layers of the middle classes were given sizable morsels from the sumptuous cake of power, but the lower middle classes were left to feel the sharp sting of their deprivations. Once the awe and terror of Martial Law started wearing out, political activities again began to make a stir.

Industrialization in Punjab led to the creation of a sizable working class; their aspirations found an expression in the poetry of Habib Jalib, a unique writer who, after making a mark as a competent poet in Urdu, declassed himself to write only for the working classes. The poor and dispossessed people of Punjab courageously challenged the dictatorship of the military ruler and Habib Jalib became their spokesman.

A lamp that lights only your palace
A morn that has no radiance,
A Constitution that you impose on us,
I do not accept, I do not accept.

Habib Jalib became the beloved poet of the masses not only in Punjab but all over Pakistan.

At a lower level, urban Punjab had not completely discarded the Punjabi language. Side by side with Habib Jalib, Ustad Daman was writing poetry in Punjabi, and he was emerging as the most popular poet among the urban lower middle classes.

In the '60s, for many reasons the Punjabi intelligentsia was becoming restless. Anti-Indianism, on which they sought to base their ideological orientation, was proving an ever-rising wall blocking growth. Repeating that India was bad and evil did not help to make progress, ideologically or intellectually. The logic of deciding to be permanently anti-India dictated the adoption by Pakistan of diametrically opposite stances vis-a-vis India in every sphere of life. If India espoused the cause of de-

mocracy, non-alignment and socialism (even as an ideal of a very distant future) should Pakistan in that case hold high the flag of dictatorship, imperialist alliances and neo-colonial economic dependence? The intelligentsia was beginning to feel embarrassed. Supporting the cause of socialism, especially, presaged terrible consequences. It evoked horrible images of total denouncement, of being branded with the stigma of an Indian agent, a KGB spy, an anti-state pariah, a subvert, anti-Pakistan, etc.

The India-China war of 1962 provided a God-sent opportunity to the groping Punjabi intelligentsia. Pakistan's improving relations with China made it possible for them at once to embrace socialism along with anti-Indianism and receive State patronage. Overnight, the modernist turned Maoist. This event also gave them an excellent opportunity of dismissing democracy and human rights as "bourgeoisie". "We can by-pass the capitalist stage", they pronounced glibly. But the capitalist stage was nowhere in sight. The stunted, rootless Pakistani "capitalist", whose highest ambition went no further than obtaining import and export licences, posed no threat whatsoever to bringing a flourishing capitalism to the country. It was not capitalism but the spectre of democracy, the spectre of the will of people having a say in moulding their destiny, that was haunting the oppressive dictatorship. What could be better than using socialism as an "alibi" to thwart the rising expectation of the people! So, when they talked unceasingly of by-passing one stage of development of society or the other, all that they really meant was that they could not by-pass the people of Pakistan, without suffering the shame of becoming their known enemy.

The problem in evolving convenient designs however, remains that along with the desired results they also give rise to many unforeseen developments (and so life continues to cause surprises). As the wise Buddha had observed, "it is not one cause, but always a number of causes that bring forth an effect"; the same appears to be true of "effects" which are invariably multiple. Sino-Pakistan friendship did not only serve the ideological opportunists, it also made it possible for the people to read Marxist literature openly and discuss socialism as a possible economic system for their country. For the first time in Pa-

kistan socialism ceased to be a dreaded word. Writings of Marx, Engles and Lenin began to be sold openly. To the political activist the "newly-acquired respectability" of socialism provided a foothold soon for political work. Friendship with Communist China left an impact on the politics of Pakistan much more far-reaching than could be envisaged by the regime at that time. In retrospect, we can now appreciate that it was this particular development in Pakistan's foreign relations that made it possible for Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto to place socialism as an economic ideal before the people of Pakistan. Earlier, socialism had been viciously attacked by the establishment as just another word for high treason and anti-Pakistan conspiracies. Friendship with China considerably blunted this very effective weapon. This absence of paranoia also found itself reflected in literature. In 1964, Fatah Mohammed Malik, in an article boldly captioned, "Fear of Thinking", pointed out:

> "It seems we are afraid to probe beneath the surface of any concept of national import. Ideas become current in writing without their dimensions ever being discussed. Dissent or even difference of opinion is dreaded. Name-calling plagues intellectual discourse. Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi and Faiz Ahmed were at one point accused of being too socialistic. Later, intellectuals like Safdar Meer condemned them as un-representative of progressive thinking for being too mild.... Why do we not let ourselves think freely!"

In the mid '60s, Urdu literature in Punjab held a promise. In the air was a flutter of hope to think freely, to articulate doubts and formulate questions, to discover the individual and national self without the ever-present pressures for "expressing" hatred against and fear about India.

The Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 dealt a telling blow to this short spring of liberal thinking. So much was lost so suddenly. In mortal fear, liberal values retreated into hiding; once again fanaticism came to rule the roost as a "sole respectable ideology". Urdu literature suffered a "patriotism" so imbecile, so sloppy and so infantile as could never find a worthy place in print at any other time.

"The waters of Ravi began flowing with the birth of Prophet Mohammad, and all its effects are due to the radiance that was

born with the Prophet", wrote Jeelani Kamran in a phantasmagorical story *Lahore Gives Evidence*. Of the most astounding revelation, namely, that the waters of Ravi were associated with Islam, no explanation was deemed necessary. Imagination ran wild. Time, space and logic lost all relevance. Long back, in Sindh, Rasul Bux Palijo, in a wry satire on the exclusive "appropriation" of Islam by the *muhajirs*, had predicted that one day they would finally claim that the Prophet was born in Uttar Pradesh and that what is now known as Arabic was but a dialect of U.P. (that frequently employed the term *"Are Bhai, Are Bhai"*. This was actually happening in Punjab, as its intelligentsia was seeking to establish "territorial rights" on Islam. Symbols freely mingled with reality and superstition confidently presented itself as faith.

> "The people said, a rider, clad in green appeared before our eyes. He caught the falling bombs (from Indian fighter planes) and threw them into the water".
>
> "Just before the curfew, we saw two riders on a white stallion — and then another, who had his face behind a helmet. 'Who are you?' We asked. 'No time to talk —' he retorted. 'Talk less and work more. The whole world knows the name of Ali. Hasan and Hussain have gone in advance'." (*Lahore Gives Evidence*, by Jeelani Kamran.)

In frenzied patriotism, veteran writer Mumtaz Mufti gave vent to the following sentiments in a write-up on Pakistan:

> "Who is rowing the boat of Pakistan? How is it that Pakistan is working at all?? These amazing questions have continuously confounded me."

Caring little that far from his faith in Pakistan the above-quoted lines may betray his nagging doubts regarding the very viability of Pakistan, he proceeds to assert with full confidence (and with a straight face) that Pakistan was being run and guarded by many a pious, departed saint. Some of them appear at night under forlorn *peepal* trees. Some lie in tombs surrounded by mysterious halos — Pakistan was not only protected but also administered by supernatural forces. He ends the write-up thus:

> One day, again, I sat ruefully.
> 'Why so pale and wan, Mufti Saheb?' asked the pious Pir.
> 'I am worried about Pakistan', I replied.

'It is for God to worry about Pakistan. Leave God's task to Him.

Who are you to worry about Pakistan? You think about yourself, worry about yourself'.

(Thus advised and satisfied, Muft Ji gives up worrying about Pakistan, perhaps to the great relief of the readers of Urdu literary journals.)

In the pastiche that was smugly passed as literature of that turbulent year, reference to divine helpers of Pakistani army, the "Green Rider", became so frequent that a short story writer, Ghulam-us-Saqlain Rizwi, had to give a rational explanation in a story, *The Green Rider*, in which an army officer muses to himself: "We are ourselves the green riders".

This shows that the superstitious mish-mash was only causing all-round embarrassment.

The Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, fought on religious and national slogans, so much absorbed Punjabi imagination that its sudden termination disappointed the people. Although India was perceived as the "aggressor", somehow, war had acquired another purpose that was not limited to the defence of the country. War propaganda had successfully generated an ambience of self-righteous militancy that was not to be easily appeased. In this atmosphere of combativeness, the Tashkent Declaration signed by India and Pakistan was seen as a great betrayal and a humiliating compromise. This pervasive sentiment was brought home by Intizar Hussain in a short story *The Trench*. It recounts the hopes and disappointments of a gentleman living in Lahore, who, like many citizens, has dug a trench close to his house during the war. After ceasefire, people begin to fill their trenches, but this gentleman persists in keeping his trench in a state of readiness. However, as news of the Tashkent Declaration reaches Pakistan, he discovers a dead rat in the trench and in revulsion decides to fill it up with earth.

The war of 1965 left in its wake pathetic intellectual casualties. Many fine sensibilities were maimed. Ashfaq Ahmad, who had once brought tears of compassion in the readers' eyes for the victims of mindless communalism, dedicated himself to abusing Hindus. He created a character, Talqeen Shah, for Radio Pakistan who expressed such ideas: "Hindus are evil idol-worshippers; they don't believe in the oneness of God, they

are monkeys, etc." Even Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, with all his humanism was driven to denounce India's "cultural invasion" and advise the patriotic people to shun song and music broadcast from All India Radio. The claustrophobia was made worse as the bureaucracy re-captured literature with a vengence. Intellectual degeneration reached an all-time abysmal low as literary journals began to be freely exploited for bureaucratic sycophancy. Mumtaz Mufti (having rid himself of patriotic anxieties) dedicated himself to this particular brand of literature. Senior bureaucrats were eulogised as mystic saints. Prominent among them was Qudratulah Shaheb, a very senior bureaucrat perpetually in power. Mufti forcefully advanced the proposition that Shaheb possessed supernatural powers. There was a mysterious magnetism in his bureaucratic eyes, and at times his celestial being transcended the bounds of time and space. He was spotted in Gujranwala, whereas he was supposed to be in Faisalabad. Similar "sketches" were penned about other top officials disclosing to the readers as to how, despite their apparent luxurious life-styles, they had the most austere eating habits, and behind their front appearance of cold blooded calculations, they furtively helped countless anonymous widows and orphans. Such writings became a permanent fixture in the literary scene of Punjab, so humiliating and insulting to a common reader's sensibilities as to render literature almost insufferable.

Apart from sycophancy, degeneration also showed in other literary forms, such as, the image of women in creative writings. In this respect, too, Mumtaz Mufti did his best to present women in a disgraceful manner. We have earlier mentioned his patriotic and mystic preoccupations, but his fancy also took a tangential flight and "psychology" became his new obsession. Friendly critics called these writings Freudian, which should make Freud turn in his grave. For the perverse thinking of Mumtaz Mufti, Freud could never be blamed. The style and structure of Mufti's so-called "psychological" writings make one conclude that he had for long "suspected" — indeed, had even made clever observations to the effect — that women enjoy sex! His tone emphasises the message that if women were contemptible as sexual objects, they were doubly despicable because they also enjoyed sex. Working on these "suspicious —

and hell-bent to prove them correct — his stories present many situations strongly suggesting how women enjoy insults, humiliations, arm-twisting and physical aggression by men. His writings abound in "subtle" observations like: "As she sat angrily, lost in deep thoughts, her left leg jerked faster and faster".

To complete the picture of Punjab's Urdu literature, contribution of Dr Wazir Agha needs special mention. A prosperous landlord of Sargodha District, he initiated a very different train of thinking in literature, quickly gathering a number of disciples around him, who more or less, subscribed to his view of nature and its relationship with man. Contrary to official dictates of the prescribed framework of thinking — that would strictly define everything with reference to Islam — Dr Wazir Agha, in his writings, put great emphasis on geo-social development. His theory emphasised that societies were rooted in the land on which they originated and developed. The earth or a land shaped its men. This came to be known as the Sargodha School of thought. Commentators quickly began to use the terms of the "Cult of Earth Worship" in the context of Dr Wazir Agha. He never contested or contradicted his critics and patiently continued to pursue his own philosophy. Here we find yet another anomalous phenomenon — that in the midst of Islamic whip-cracking, a man of letters in Sargodha, without making rebellious noises, and in fact quite unselfconsciously came out with a theory that did not conform. The merits or demerits of his theory and of his elaboration of it may, indeed, be open to criticism and evaluation. What is important is that he did come forward to present his thesis. The response of the Punjabi intelligentsia to his works makes an equally interesting study, for we observe that he was never attacked as an anti-Islamic or anti-Pakistan element. This, however, is not an evidence of the liberal-minded attitude of the intelligentsia. It is indicative of a very different aspect of the alignment of social forces and classes in Punjab. The particular ideological framework constructed in Punjab was representative of the needs and expediencies of the rising middle-classes in Punjab. Wazir Agha's theory came as a response of the Punjabi landlord to the Punjabi middle class. If the middle class intelligentsia (in the context of Pakistan, it had come to be none other than the reigning bureaucracy) was not angry, it was an evidence of the fact that the contradiction

between the feudal elements and Punjabi bureaucracy was not antagonistic. For their philosophy, they could make room albiet with slight reservations.

Again, this fact does not negate Wazir Agha's own moral courage in advancing his theory, because he could not have anticipated the official response. He went about working on his line of thinking though not completely without caution. In an article on Pakistani culture, Wazir Agha goes to the roots of the culture of Mohen-jo-daro, to trace the origin and development of Pakistani culture; he adds that the lower layers of Mohen-jo-daro have yet to be excavated and, once completed, may bring to light its links with Iraq and other Semetic cultures. In so many words, he seems to re-assure the uncomfortable bureaucracy: "If Pakistani culture has to be somehow linked with the Middle East, do not despair of my 'earth' theory. There may be room at the bottom to accommodate both of us".

The debate on Pakistani culture was initiated by the bureaucracy with the explicit aim of establishing Pakistan as an integral part of Middle Eastern culture, and getting rid of the persistently recurring ghost of India. India haunted them ceaselessly. They saw India all around — in music, paintings, folk songs, literature, in the very ethos of their people — and it unnerved them. They never tired of inventing more and more reasons for Pakistan's creation although not a single Pakistani had ever questioned its existence. For ordinary Pakistanis, it did not seem unnatural or illogical that the Muslim majority areas of the sub-continent should form a separate state. Pakistan was a *fait accompli*, for whose creation further slogan-mongering and breast-beating was hardly called for. Yet the bureaucracy persisted in its quest to "justify" the creation of Pakistan. Debate on Pakistani culture was supposedly the last *mantra* to exorcise the laughing ghost of India. It did not work. The oppressed and long-suffering Pakistani intelligentsia, refusing to follow the straight path of falsehood, engaged itself in a game of hide and seek, desperately trying to come out with the truth and not hurt the bureaucratic sensitivities. It is to the credit of a substantial section of Punjabi intelligentsia that it resisted intellectual coercion. They are not to be blamed if in the effort they trained themselves to theorise in a somewhat round-about manner. During the decade of army dictatorship they had tried not to

conform. They did not always express resentment, but perhaps they had nursed it for use in future. Anwar Sadad, eminent member of the Sargodha group, wrote:

> "In the social life of Pakistan, 1958 is significant, because it was in the last quarter of this year that dictatorship waylaid democracy. The country came under Martial Law. Freedom of speech, writing and expression became a crime punishable by law".

The important point about these brave words, however, lies in the fact that in Punjab this could be written only after the people had savoured a spell of democracy, the historic Bhutto era, which for Punjab had its own characteristic features.

New Challenges

During the long decades of army dictatorship, Punjab intelligentsia manoeuvred to survive through a strategem of compromise and resistance. Anti-Indianism was one of its main features, which for them was but a necessary corollary to Pakistani patriotism. That this patriotism was completely devoid of any understanding of the totality of Pakistan is amply substantiated by the fact that transformation of East Pakistan into sovereign Bangladesh left them in total confusion. The most traumatic national crisis which led to the break-up of the country, does not find any reflection in Pakistani literature. The *Green Rider* of the war of 1955 failed to reappear in Punjab's Urdu literature. The Punjabi intelligentsia was not trained to own a defeat or to face other people's reality. Towards the end of Ayub's regime, deep class-consciousness had grown in Punjab, but there was not a trace of an understanding that regional aspirations for justice were very real motivating forces and that these were not necessarily unpatriotic. Being themselves beneficiaries of Pakistan, they could not realize that loyalty to the State becomes a sacred emotion for people only when they find the State worthy of it. If the interests of a group, community or regional entity are trampled upon, loyalty to such a State becomes "treachery" in the perception of the victim community of regional entity. In such cases, the desire to secede from the State acquires a sacred halo. Few Muslims had suffered qualms of guilt while seceding

from India and forming the sovereign State of Pakistan. In their perception, this desire had become a sacred Islamic emotion. Similarly, under different circumstances, awareness of regional identity had become a sacred emotion for Bengalis — and they had separated from Pakistan to constitute a new state of their own.

When the final shock came, Punjabi intelligentsia was virtually caught napping. Yet the explosion had such a ring of finality that they did not bother to bemoan it in their writings. Indeed, as soon as they realised that Pakistan still existed they forgot all about Bengal and began to concentrate on the rebuilding of whatever was left. It is noteworthy that when Bhutto set about recognizing Bangladesh, Punjab did not offer much resistance. It was the *Muhajirs* in Sindh who made loud noises against this move, because of their fraternal ties with Biharis in Bangladesh. This kinship, indeed, was never mentioned in the campaign against the recognition of Bangladesh. Slogans were raised for the "unity of Pakistan". How is that the same issue failed to arouse passion among the greatest champions of the State of Pakistan, the Punjabi masses and intelligentsia? Of such stuff is "patriotism" made, its fabric woven of such elastic skein, that groups or regions by turn would at times stretch it at will to cover up all unjust cravings to perpetuate tyranny, to subjugate others, to crush and trample upon the aspirations of other community or region. It is regrettable that the *muhajir* concern for Biharis in Bangladesh found expression in slogans against Bangladesh. It operated under the cover of Pakistani patriotism in the hope of mustering support from Punjab which did not materialize. If the issue had been stated clearly and not mixed up with "unity of Pakistan" the task of rehabilitating Biharis could have become easier by concentrating attention on their plight. It was mainly because the *muhajirs* had never the moral strength to stand up, and speak as *muhajirs*, to face their real situation of a displacement community which had been rendered most vulnerable to social and political changes in Pakistan. Forever they had to speak as the creaters and champions of Pakistan. Sometimes, it worked while at other times it did not work.

The Bhutto era in Punjab gave rise to a most interesting development. The Punjabi intelligentsia, for the first time in Paki-

stan, began to take increasing interest in Punjabi literature. One can hardly call it a "revival" of Punjabi, because in Pakistan the Punjabis had never owned their mother tongue as a language fit for creative work. With solitary exceptions like Ahmad Rahi, a romantic poet of Punjabi, Pakistan's Punjab had produced no Punjabi writers. How the change of heart towards their language came about should be an interesting study for social psychologists. There may be several reasons for this phenomenon. It is possible, for instance, that the democratic experience — the realisation of the power of the people through the process of election on the basis of adult franchise — restored, in the esteem of the Punjabi intelligentsia, the prestige of the language of the masses.

There may be yet another rason — more subtle,deeply buried, and hence more powerfully motivating — for the growing awareness of Punjabi identity. The head of the first elected government of Pakistan was not a Punjabi. He was very much a Sindhi, and so were several of his federal ministers. The corridors of power in Islamabad were humming with murmurings in an alien language. Or, did power still reside in Islamabad? Had it not, by some strange quirk of circumstances, left it to reside in Larkana? Of course, they loved Bhutto; his anti-India rhetorics providing the necessary certificate of patriotism. They were then free to evaluate positively his egalitarian postures, his support for socialism, his dedication to the cause of the poor and, his calibre as a politician of world stature. The Punjabi masses loved Bhutto, and the intelligentsia admired him. Nevertheless, their writers began to write in Punjabi. The *muhajirs* gasped in dismay and disbelief: "Even Faiz is writing in Punjabi — what a change!" Even Faiz was persuaded by the Punjabi intelligentsia to compose a couple of poems in Punjabi. It is again noteworthy that though Punjab remained neutral on the issue of recognition of Bangladesh, it had shown far more sympathy for the *muhajirs* on the language issue. When the Sindh Government declared Sindhi the official language, riots broke out in Sindh; Punjab had simply grimaced in distaste. "Whatever is transpiring? We had not bargained for this..." This was their reaction. During that episode of our national life, it had become a popular ditty in Punjab:

"Roti kapra our makan

Wichon nikli Sindhi zaban!"

However, the language issue died with time and so did the Punjabi reaction. Punjab got preoccupied with other issues and problems. Punjab's perception of India had not changed. If at all, it had become worse. More frustrating was the fact that in the face of a massive defeat at Dacca, resort to jingoistic jargon and conjuring of the "Green Rider" were becoming impossible. Rejuvenating the national pride was such difficult task that, when Bhutto declared the first day of repatriation of Pakistani prisoners of war as a "Thanksgiving Day", Sarwar Sukhera, editor of a popular magazine, *Dhanak*, wrote in an editorial:

> "...and today as we thank God, our eyes, brimming with tears of gratitude, our hearts throbbing, we pray to you, O God Almighty! Kindly do not give us such a day of thanksgiving ever again!"

We thus observe that, for a number of reasons, Bhutto's era witnessed the flourishing of Punjabi literature in Punjab. Some of these writers, like Sarmad Sahbai, Munnu Bhai, Shafquat Tanveer Mirza and others, were bilingual, writing both in Urdu and Punjabi, while others wrote only in Punjabi. Broadly, this new Punjabi literature can be classified as a continuation of the progressive writers' tradition in subcontinental literature. Taken collectively it is, a literature of social commitment. Though it varies in style and in its approach to interpretation, this literature, created by writers of considerable diversity, has one common feature. The whole of it is totally free of anti-Indian rhetoric, which so marked Punjab's Urdu literature. It is a most surprising and thought-provoking distinction. In fact, it is impossible to find a single anti-Indian sentence in the bulk of Punjabi literature whereas in Punjab's Urdu literature one can hardly miss such overtones. The Punjabi literature in Punjab is also not preoccupied with Pakistani nationalism. It is as though, while writing in Punjabi, the Punjabi writer shed the outer crusts of a mould showing from inside a completely different person. We find that, in essence, the ordinary Punjabi writer is not different from the Sindhi counterpart. By making contact with his real language, he at once transcends the gulf created by conflicting regional orientation and actually unites Punjab with other regions of Pakistan, effortlessly and without indulging in patriotic polemics.

It should be pointed out that in Punjabi literature we do not mark the hankering for India as we find in Sindhi literature; nor does it show an awareness that other regions of Pakistan experience — of oppression and suffocation. It is only the throwing away of the compulsive "India-factor" which brings it closer to Sindhi literature. In Punjabi literature we do not come across any compulsive hatred nor do we find writers saying that Islam lies in danger. The Urdu writers of Punjab and its writers in Punjabi language present the two faces of a single personality, which, because of their different expressions, baffle and surprise an observer.

The Punjabi literature of Punjab (this quaint term has to be used to distinguish it from the Urdu literature of Punjab) had in its mainstream fine progressive short story writers, such as, Azal Ahsan Randhawa, Saleem Khan Gammi, Sajjad Hyder, Shafqat Tanveer Mirza, Khalid Malik, Nazeer Qaisar, Tanveer Bukhari, Majid Siddiqi and Mannu Bhai. Most of their writings are permeated with a captivating genuineness especially characterised by a direct approach towards the subject, a humane point of view, and unambiguous social commitment to the cause of the oppressed and the downtrodden. This is well brought out by their choice of style which belongs to the genre of social realism in literature. On the periphery are also poets like Sarmad Sahbai whose rather laboured works sometimes smack of pretentiousness. Also we have Fakhre-Zaman who wrote clever but interesting poems mostly using modern contraptions of utilitarian value as sustained metaphors. A couple of his poems are given here as illustrations

The Sign of 'L'

Put an 'L' plate
In front of your car
And behind it.
Then in this congested traffic,
The responsibility to save themselves,
And to save you
Would be other people's headache.

Contact Lens

We decorate the pupils of other's eyes
Without us, they find at distance
What lies close
Without us, they are doomed to darkness
Yet we are so helpless
Unless we fit into the socket of an eye
We are nothing.

New Punjabi literature had poets of much higher stature as well, such as, Nasreen Anjum Bhatti, Mushtaq Sufi and Najam Hussain Sayad. Their poems had a superior intellectual content and were more intensely passionate. This group of poets and intellectuals was led by Najam Hussain Sayad, who greatly influenced them. Strangely though, it chose to keep aloof from the mainstream, thus acquiring an elitist aura. Though avowedly Marxist, writers of this group despised direct expressions. Somehow they tended to interpret Marxism in a way that was almost mystical. The elite of Punjabi intelligentsia, we observe, even in Punjabi, did not concern themselves at all with simple issues of democracy and human rights. They were for ever preoccupied with the "reality of the self", an undefined goal that transcended the issues of democracy and human rights. Najam Hussain Sayad was the guide and mentor of this group. It is, therefore, worthwhile to examine his ideas as he expressed them in his literary commentaries. In an article, "Ranjha Lives Across The River", he interprets the legend of Ranjha, and the role of the river in the legend:

> "The river stands guard over us. It stops us from transcending ourselves, from extricating ourselves from our 'I' and reaching out our 'You'.

From the above, the reader may infer that this refers to the "I" and "You" of the mystic poetic tradition. But in the mystic tradition, the "you" could be the "other people". Since Sayad's writings abound in references to "being" and "existence", one suspects that he may be having a Sartrian interpretation in mind. But the Sartrian definition of "you" has absolutely no connection with the mystic "you". Sayad usually begins his commentary on an ambiguous note.

In the same article, he goes on to explain that "the river" is the limit circumscribed around us, by our parents (or elders). It

is an attempt to keep us confined within certain limits to keep the status quo. Beyond these limits is the abode of the beloved. In this sense, "the river" is a symbol of our confinement. Yet, if we have courage to risk our lives, then it is the passage to the beloved. Ranjha crossed the river. He defied limits imposed by elders and achieved his "I" (or Selfhood). One wonders if this is the vernacular version of Allama Iqbal's ("selfhood").

> "When you cross the river, you leave behind pre-defined limits, forsake the protection of the elders, make your existence self-dependent, and show the sum of your being. Crossing the river, you go by your own wisdom, testing your own strength, giving evidence of your being a 'human being'. Thus, crossing the river is a symbol of being a 'human being'. Thus, crossing the river is a symbol of being independent. At the same time, it is a symbol of creating deep relations (unity). Old relationship given by parents are hollow. Carrying hollow loads renders the man hollow. New relations are of his own making. They make his 'being' blossom. Old relations, too, have a root in man's being. Parents, family etc. are all layers of man's existence. The oldest layer of man's being is his relationship with nature and of man's relationship with man. (Here it is implied that they are the same thing.) This layer is often lost under the load of other layers and can only be achieved when one sheds the consciousness given by the elders and the society and creates a new life by means of his self-earned, self-born consciousness.

So, here we have an interpretation of a folk legend in which psychology, philosophy and ideology are so inextricably mixed as to render it evocative but hardly enlightening. Actually these works are not for understanding, but are to be enjoyed as Sayad's own personal poetic expressions in prose. However, Sayad's insistently explanatory style compels the reader to try to understand them as (Marxist) interpretations of folk legends. It is then that one wishes he had stuck to one discipline, either interpret it psychologically or philosophically, or as was most expected, ideologically.

Sayad, proceeds to build his contention by interpreting Ranjha's return journey as "retrogression".

> "The journey across the Chenab is the journey for a new

> life, to give a new colour to one's inner self, to construct everything anew. Once you sail forth on this voyage you have to stick to your commitment, else you are even worse off then before. When Ranjha decided to return, death waylaid him...he lost his being, accepted death, non-being. But Ranjha's death proved that in the world there are two denominations, one desires to keep the people within bounds and creates laws for this purpose, while the other strives to set the people free from frantic competition. There can be no compromise between the two. Their conflict is eternal. If the dissenting sect agrees to compromise, it meets certain death. dissent is the spirit of Ranjha, his 'I' (ego? selfhood? being?). It is his wholeness. As he strengthens his dissent, he reaches closer to Heer. Once his dissent is weakened, his 'I' is shattered.... Once he crossed the Chenab, setting foot in Heer's territory, he cannot return. When he returned, he met his death".

Sayad's insistence on the "inner-self" makes it difficult to relate his interpretation to class struggle. How is the working class to cleanse itself of the inner contamination? Who are the "parents" of the working classes. (Sayad deliberately uses the words "mother and father" repeatedly.) This leads one to assume that he is addressing the middle classes. Seen in its totality, these interpretations of folk legends appear to be addressed to middle class revolutionary who can succeed only when he frees himself of all pulls and pressures and become totally liberated. (In the legend of Sassi and Punnu, he interprets the desert of Thar, where Sassi wandered in search of his abducted beloved, as "an area of regret". This is a very beautiful and poetic interpretation, but again it substantiates the assumption that he is talking about the middle classes with their famous inner agonies and regrets.)

It is a continuing feature of Punjab's super-intelligentsia that they lay down near impossible conditions for political action. Allama Iqbal created the ideal of *Marde-momine*, a character so pure and perfect, that no ordinary mortal may aspire to attain his perfection. Sayad projects the ideal of the liberated hero, who, according to him, remains flawed in the folk legends. He insists that, without achieving inner liberation, political action remains inauthentic. Applied to the individual middle class

revolutionary who must rid himself of class complexes and class pulls and pressures, it still remains idealistic in essence, for this almost yogic state of complete inner harmony, of total absence of contradiction, is an impossibility in itself. The yogi knew this fact thousands of years ago. This is why they lay down the condition of renunciation, of not only wordly wealth, but also of human society to achieve *nirvana*. In practice, this theory actually boils down to inaction for the individual, because he has first to fight the inner battle. Faiz Ahmmad Faiz has aptly summed up this dilemma.

Muqabil-e-safe ada hoi thi jo aghaz
Woh jang apne hi dil main tamam hoti rahi.
(We began a battle facing the enemy. Alas, it was fought to end only inside our own heart.)

In the context of the middle class taken collectively, this interpretation becomes quite irrelevant. A class does not, indeed, cannot, cleanse itself of its characteristics. Whatever role it plays in bringing about social change it does so despite its moral flaws.

Sayad's consistent exposition of the contradiction between "the old" and "the new" (a Maoist formulation) again leads to impossible ideals. "Uproot the old from the existence and acquire a new being. This may sound fantastic and, indeed, even spur explosive "cultural revolutions!" One has to write in time only two letters of apology: One for creating decadent art and the other for writing the first letter of apology.

The elitist Punjabi intelligentsia preaches the value of renunciation of wordly wealth and old ties. This, according to them, leads to achievement of real power. (One notices that, in whatever complexion and by whatever means, power remains the most coveted ideal for Punjabi elite.) For the middle class, they had sheer contempt and they romanticised the peasantry. Established progressive literature was discarded by them as being weak and romantic, yet their own writings became idealistic and mystical. They preached to reject the past, but in practice they rejected only the present and turned towards the past for

inspiration. It is sad, because they had tremendous creative capabilities and social consciousness. Their materalisation into socially and politically relevant creative work was impeded by elitist tendencies and ultra-leftism. In the process, political activity turned into an internal battle to cleanse the "self", achievement of the 'I' and such other intellectual extravaganza. Disdain for open, direct expression failed to equip them for a better expression. It only left them speechless on important issues.

During the Bhutto era, another literature began to emerge in another part of Punjab. The Saraiki-speaking area of the vast region, loosely termed as Punjab, began to show signs of awareness of a separate cultural and linguistic identity. It is a great paradox of Pakistan's linguistic priorities that Saraiki, which was never given even a regional status, is the language of the largest section of the peoples of Pakistan. Mainly concentrated in Bhwalpur, Multan and Khairpur divisions, Saraiki-speaking people branch out and penetrate deeply into all regions of Pakistan. In Sindh, Baluchistan and the Frontier Province, there are solid blocks as well as scattered areas of Saraiki-speaking people. If the number of people speaking a language were the criterion, Saraiki could well qualify to be the national language of Pakistan. Yet many Punjabis strongly resent acknowledging it as a separate language and insist on defining it as a dialect of Punjabi. An outsider, however, can easily observe that, despite its kinship with both Punjabi and Sindhi, (many of its phonemes are common only with Sindhi) Saraiki is distinct from both and is a complete language in its own right. Saraiki people have a distinct ethic and ethos. Saraiki culture is distinct from Punjabi culture, for it is free of flamboyance. It has a quiet inner resilience. For a long time, there existed an incipient self-awareness among the Saraiki people. During the Bhutto era, it began to take coherent shape as writers like Mohammed Ismail Ahmadani, Mumtaz Haydar Dahar, Arshad Multani and Aslam Rasulpuri began to publish their Saraiki works. Most outstanding among them is Ismail Ahmadani whose reminiscence in *Peat De Pandh* (A journey of love) was

highly acclaimed. His impressionistic novel *Cholian* (Waves), though published later, eloquently speaks for this awareness. In the context of language and culture, writes Ahmadani:

Arabic, Persian, English?
Urdu?
Saraiki?
Which one amongst these is good, beautiful and useful?
Dear Sir,
The town is full of lovely faces.
But for me there is but one.

Tó present your images in your own language can never be in contradiction with the laws of nature. But then — there is the question of bread.... People often refer to 'capability' (of a language) — but capability can be cruelly crushed, or it may be enhanced. Such has happened to language, too.

The language of our culture has never been Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian or English. We communicate with each other only in Saraiki.

In this land of ours, gods and angels, trees and wells and the tillers of the soil, all communicate through the images of this land. New people brought new images. So receptive were our people that new images descended upon them from the skies, and the mountains and the seas. So the canvas of our images is panoramic. On this Dravidian land of ours, there has flourished;

Literary romance of Persian
The mythological characters of Sanskrit
The folk heritage of Prakrit,
The vast vision of English
and the popular appeal of Urdu,

All these are integral parts of our culture, such an inalienable component of our persona.

But now the rounds were over, so, to win the last round, a drama of *Enquiring* the people's will has to be enacted.

The two main characters of the drama were the Tricolour

and the Crescent and Star. Farangi, if not the Director, was certainly the Producer. There were many side actors. Many a god played villain. It was a grand drama. It was a clever production. The main actors performed *par excellence.*

The twin symbols had twin manifestations.
Tricolour — Crescent and Star
Gandhi Cap — Jinnah Cap.
Unite unite! Divide, divide!
We have been rulers. Will not become the ruled!
We are brothers, let us live in brotherhood!
Let it be an undivided house, the old joint-family system!
Look after your own house, we will take care of ourselves.
(Part 25 — *Soliloquy*)

"They suffered from an eye disease. Distant objects appeared close, and what was close receded far away. Small things appeared very large, big things looked small. Beauty appeared ugly, ugliness seemed pretty. Yet no one was prepared to take off the glasses, knowing very well that the distorted vision was self-created. They had all become cross-eyed. It was an epidemic and people fell victim to it in towns, cities, villages. Habib Khan and Mohan Lal, too, could not escape the disease.

Om Prakash was a follower of Netaji, believing strongly in resurgence of a Bharatvarsh of Chandragupt and Ashoka.

Hayder needed partition, for like the proverbial crow, he had hopes of dead fish after the storm.

Mansoor... hid under the shade of the Crescent and Star — aspiring to assert his existence.

Partition—? Of the country—? Of People?

Partition resulting in parting of people — a parting of hearts — people's migration — let that never be — let all stay here.

Let Muki Mohan Lal live on. Savantri — ? Yes! Savantri too. Om Prakash? If he so desires....

The uncertainty of 'what will be?' giving rise to the important question of "what should be?" resulting in the ancient contention of "what is right?"

The naked eye can easily discern wrong from right, but in

that land everyone wore his own pair of cross-eyed glasses.

They were so cross-eyed they could see only their own particular angle of vision. There are in all 360 angles, on both sides of the straight line — as well as in the innermost depths of the circle.

The contention garlanding itself with *Ram Leela*, following the professions of *Taazia*, clashing with idol-worship and grave-worship would get trapped in the fourteenth chapter of *Satyarth Parkash* Mansoor would tell Om to migrate to Hardwar, so the *Isthan* of the *Paks* may come about. And Om would point to Mansoor the straight road to Mecca and Madina, so *Ram Raj* may be established".

(Part 28 — *Soliloquy)*

There is another aspect of partition that no Punjabi writer has dared to touch upon in recent times, a subject that would still make many very uncomfortable, very uneasy, defensive, even aggressive. What was the fate of the Hindus in the Muslim majority areas?

Let us see how Ahmadani refers to this.

"What is wrong with partition? If a line is being drawn on the earth, what is so strange about it?

The world is criss-crossed, with such lines.

Another line — the earth would not stop in her track — nor would the sky fall".

'The line sinks deeper. It turns into a gaping wound.

It tears hearts to shreds'.

'We will not let that happen'!

'O yes! But what is happening right now — right at this moment?'

Just try to stop it. Out of this wound, live human blood is streaming forth. Hide it, my friend.

'This line of Partition — that has turned into a wound, from which are flowing rivers of blood, is the handiwork of some devil, some Satan. It is not of our doing. We are innocent, spotless'.

'Look again, you say *spotless'*! So deep is your attire dyed

in crimson! Adorn yourself with it. It is bright, bright red.
Then at some other time, talk of your innocence'.
'We have no hand in it. We plead not guilty.'
'Ah! watch the balance sheet. Watch yourself, measure for measure — can you still look history in the eye?
Forgo this pleading — for in the verdict of history, you are all guilty. Guilty — not of drawing the line, but of turning it into a bleeding burning wound? The guilty hands stretched out — reached out — to other peoples' possession — to their honour — their faith — even their lives
What a free-for-all! To each according to his reach. Lord God forgive us, for this is not a line — that some hands trembled also.
The restraining hands existed but they remained tremulous, weak. Whatever could be done by tremulous hands — was done'.

"Balach had accompanied a marauding mob to a close-by *basti* — had brought back a new quilt and one *maund* of brown sugar. Sikandar Khan rode in front of the procession.

Reading these lines, one wonders why something as simple and obvious should elude the official intelligentsia of Pakistan for so long as to make the very word "culture" such a confusing and dreaded issue. The Punjabi intelligentsia especially has not yet reached such a state of tranquillity in which it could express the obvious without resorting to all manner of verbal acrobatics. In contrast, the Saraiki writer does not seem to be so burdened with fear.

Except for a short period immediately following partition, when Punjab's Urdu progressive writers freely wrote on the subject of partition, this issue also has been a taboo. It is an unwritten law of literature that the partition and its aftermath would not be mentioned in creative writing. Writes Ahmadani:

To enquire after one's desire is a custom, ancient and good.
We ask the will of the bride and the groom.
In business and trade, we ask each other's will.

Wish men also allocate power after asking the will of people.
It is an old tradition,
In Athens — in the Temple of Delphi — at the foot of the mountains...
At the *Mumbar* of the prophet (peace be upon him) they asked the people 'What is thy will?"
The tradition to enquire the people's will was brought to this land by the *Farangi* — but only in theory not in practice.

The Hindus of Nurpur, on the requests of Akhunds, and beseechings of Mohan Lal, had been taken to a camp. Habib Khan had returned a good turn. Mohan Lal always presented sweets to him on Holi and Diwali. Now in this Holi of blood, he made his own present — indeed he also took possession of Mohan Lal's extra belonging — land as well. The Khan had got many things in writing.

They sat under the cool shades of —self congratulation.

Good deed?

Why not? They will manage to save their lives, honour, their faith. Is it not enough?

It was Akhund (Mansoor's father) who had made it possible that the Hindus of Nurpur be taken to the camps.

But where was he?

No one could understand.

He lived in Nurpur, yet he was not there.

He attended the usual evening gathering but took no interest in incidents of looting going on all around. It was he who pressurized Habib Khan to send back the Hindu girl. He succeeded in persuading them because he had chosen to seal his lips about Mohan Lal's property, although he knew everything.

Not Mansoor — he had not sealed his lips. He had opposed migration of Hindus, thought that looting them was inhuman — he had put an end to all his disagreements with Om Prakash.

'We wanted partition — Let that be but nothing more than that — we won't let it...'

'What will be, will be! To stop it is beyond our control,'

said Akhund Ahmad Khan.

'We would not let this spread further — we won't be party to it,' said Mansoor.

'It is all right with me — so long I have no hand in it', said Hayder".

(Part 29—*Soliloquy*)

"In the square of the eternal Baghdad, God alone knows, for how long, Mansoor remained nailed to his cross...the cross of his reason and rationale!

"This wave in the ocean of time has manifested that I, Mansoor Ahmad Khan, exist. I have asserted my existence. Mine are the forts of Hurand, Multan, and all these forts. The Red Fort of Delhi and Taj Mahal are mine. Paujnad is mine — Jamuna, Ganga, Krishna and Kaveri — they too are mine. This part of the earth is mine. In the past, all this land was mine! I am free — Om Parkash is also free — free from whom?... Where is Om's Bharatvarsh?... Om has left — gone away — Mohan Lal too... and Savantree — yes — Savantree too has gone away! If only they did not go — they did not go! Could I stop them? ...how? ... Why I should have stopped them? By what right of relationship? And if I had no relationship with them, why then do I yearn for them? Do I have a need for them?... No—none at all — But only if they had not gone away...

"Mansoor, my son, go to sleep. Why do you keep awake so?...."

"Mother does not know — why I lie awake — her innocence....

She has no knowledge and so sleeps soundly. But even father lies asleep! Why did he go to sleep? He knows everything — then how could he sleep! Perhaps he asserted his existence, and having achieved this goal, has gone to sleep — that's all. But I ...I cannot sleep. Why father has chosen to be silent? Such a knowledgeable man — a man of wisdom — at this important moment — a time of greatest urgency — has sealed his lips! has gone to sleep. He wanted partition — was happy for it — does he regret now? Never — not at all — then has the mass migration — the

bloodshed — saddened him? ...possibly — But it happens in a tempest — some people are carried away — Others drown and some manage to swim across — when you prayed for the tempest, why shy away from advancing waves!"

(Part 30—*Soliloquy*)

The Punjabi intelligentsia has spent a span of its intellectual life enumerating reasons for the creation of Pakistan. Yet they have never mentioned one factor which could go to strengthen their case, namely, the Hindu prejudice against Muslims which alienated the Muslims from the Hindus. In all their writings, they have taken great pains completely to by-pass this factor lest the creation of Pakistan appears a mere "reaction" of the Muslims. Laboriously directing their intellectual endeavours to one single aim, that the creation of Pakistan was the culmination of a glorious Muslim struggle for a separate homeland beginning from the Revolt of 1857 (or the birth of the Prophet, when water began to flow in Ravi, according to Jeelani Kamran), they never even hint at the pre-partition Hindu prejudice against Muslims. Ahmadani is very unlike his Punjabi compatriots when he points it out as the single most important reason for partition:

"In those days old and young, children, and adolescents thought and talked on these lines".
"It is only a line that is being drawn. Let us see, how long it will last".
"Let the line be drawn — we will make it last".
"But who wants the line?"
"You!"
"No, you!"
"We?"
"Yes — all of us".
"It is a British conspiracy. Why get trapped when you know this well?"
"*Moosla* invaders! *Mallech!* You still consider them foreign marauders? Call them *Moosla* — in a thousand years, they still remain dirty, unholy for you! Why?"
The Hindu is afraid of contamination. This, after living to-

gether for a thousand years. They could not change their 'nature'; could not end the 'contamination syndrome' Why? After all — Why?"
(Part 29 — *Soliloquy*)

It is then appropriate that, in our homage to the land of Saraiki and to Saraiki-speaking people, to their intellectual integrity, to the clarity of their vision, and to their confidence, we round off this write-up on Saraiki literature with an extract from the same novel Cholian by Ismail Ahmadani — the Aftermath of Partition:

'—What? what has happened?'
'Our own people — they have left —!
In their place, strangers have come!'
'Our own people? Strangers?
Who were our people? Who are strangers to us?
Realization of 'our own' and strangers?
Recognition — !
Of Geography? ... History? ... Faith?
Some disembarked — others boarded
... The ship — and the waves —
And the captain! Akhund Ahmed Khan watched the captains,
and felt the ship rock'.
'Mansoor, my son, whatever is happening? What is all this!'
'Father, you have brought it upon us. Now the wind has risen. We are all afloat. And now you ask, us?'
'But the waves are turning into a tempest.'
'O Yes?'
'Son, I had not visualised it so....'
'But ... Father, I think ... at least we are moving.'
'But whither, son?'
'Baba, what is this? Towards the shores of our destiny, where else!'
'Not necessarily. Sometimes it so happens, when we sail through the long night, in the morning, only to find ourselves where we began.'
'Is that so! We will not let that happen!'

'Son, how long still to go? What hour of night is it?'
'It is close to morning, Baba — we are close to our destination — there — in a distance, can you make out the outlines of our holy mountains, Koh-e-Suleman!'
"How long we have travelled, son, It seems like centuries... hundreds of centuries. 'Long long ago, when we learned the nouns of things and searched for verbs, in the arms of mother earth, we heard the lullaby in sweet Saraiki, I have been travelling ever since'.
'Baba, are you not tired, you have journeyed so long...'
'Son, individuals tire, but human genius knows no fatigue. How can I tire when you are not tired! You can never be tired, for you are 'present', stretching out to 'future'".

3. Balladeers of Baluchistan

Who are the Baluchs? These finely-built, agile and soft-spoken brethren of ours who have contributed so much to the growth of political consciousness in the State of Pakistan. In the distant, misty past, did they travel long distances, crossing hills and dales, to settle down in our sub-continent's most daunting mountainous region which is now named after their race, or were they like the rest of us, always absorbing and assimilating incoming tribes? These questions still remain unanswered. Most theories regarding their origin are so riddled with inferences and conjectures that they cannot be totally relied upon. Even the origin of the word 'Baluch', is shrouded in mystery. A Western historian, E Herzteld, would have us believe that it is derived from *Barza Wachia*, meaning "Loud Scream" Certain medieval Muslim historians ascribe the root of the word, "Afghan" to *Fughau* (Persian), thus concluding that the race was known as "The Noisy Lot", those who made too much hue and cry. Following this line of inference, Baluchs are rendered "The screaming lot". In the minds of the outsider, however, even a fleeting contact with the race creates a totally opposite impression. For the Baluchs, in spite of their legendary valour and martial skills, are a remarkably non-aggressive people. Soft of word and serene in temperament, they reflect an inner sophistication indicative of a highly civilized psyche. The other side of their characteristic non-aggression is their passion for freedom from subjugation to invading races or nations. In self-defence, the Baluchs had to engage in long, arduous battles — and their history is replete with these heroic tales. War ballads, therefore, are the earliest and the richest literary heritage of the Baluchs.

Baluchistan is in such a far-off part of the Indian subconti nent that most people, indeed, know very little about its people's gallant struggle against British occupation. (In Pakistan, this knowledge has been deliberately suppressed for some curious reason. The only authentic history of Baluchistan, written by the great Baluch poet and scholar, Gul Khan Naseer remains banned to this day.) Few people, for instance, know that the British were never able to conquer the whole of Baluchistan. After putting in great effort, they only succeeded in controlling parts of the territory which came to be known as the British Baluchistan or the Baluchistan Agency. Even in these parts, the British hold was at best tenuous. Except temporary spans of uneasy peace, they had to battle constantly against numerous rebelling tribes. To crush the spirit of independence among the Baluchs, the British authorities ruled the Baluchs with unprecedented brutality. To prevent their passion for independence from gaining political consciousness, reading and writing were declared criminal activities in Baluchistan, the punishment for which being whipping and imprisonment. It is mainly for these reasons that Baluchi language could not acquire a generally accepted script even by the mid 90s of the last century. Like most subcontinental languages, Baluchi is an ancient tongue whose modern form closely resembles ancient Persian (that later developed into Pahlvi and modern Persian). Another reason for its not continuously accepting the evolving Persian script could be its absorption of the Dravidian-based language *Brauhvi*, spoken by the people inhabiting Baluchistan from time immemorial.

In the absence of a script, the treasure of Baluchi poetry could be only partly preserved. Rhymed stories of love and ballads have been passed on to generations through memorised words and only lately have been preserved in writing. Most of these belong to the early 19th century when battles fought against the invading British army provided an inspiration to the poets.

In the tribal society of Baluchistan, the wise bards occupied an exalted place. They composed lengthy poems to be sung before the tribal chief and the common folk. Poems are usually addressed to the chief who is often given good counsel, in an uninhibited and frank manner of speech. Consider the following

poem of an anonymous bard of the Dreshak tribe in which he describes the famous military campaign of Sir Robert Sandamon and his Political Agent, Richard Issac Bruce, in 1866. Says the poet:

> Listen to me, honoured and kind Chief,
> Comprehend my wave like thoughts
> May you hold court in happiness and in riches.
> Where, you with justice pass judgements
> God is ever vigilant.
> Forgo deceit, falsehood and
> Exploitation.
> Falsehood destroys the faith
> and is most barren.
> It is the thirteenth century (Islamic Calendar)
> Alas, Greed is ruling the roost.
> For wealth and property, brothers
> pounce on each other.
> Lo! I beheld a Farangi
> Who had no shame at all.
> In Rajan Pur, he held court,
> Rounding up many Chiefs
> Deciding to attack the mountains.
> In a cloud of dust, countless fighters on
> horse-back trampled the heights.
> Sandamon and Bruce besieged the mountains
> From Siah Aaf to Kahar and Barkhar;
> Confronted with their might, brave
> men choose to be silent like women.
> Then the Farangi returned to the planes of Sindh,
> Collaborating Chiefs were well rewarded,
> They brought the rebels in handcuffs.
> Alas! wealth and contentment have
> departed from these parts.
> Even from the fearless Mari and
> Bugti areas
> I would go on to say
> Honesty and honour have departed
> from our land.

This excerpt provides a glimpse of the values traditionally

dear to the Baluch's heart. Cowardice and treachery are held as the most despicable of all evils. The artless frankness and adherence to a truthful recounting of events, again, set these ballads apart from any other poems composed for royal audience. Poetry recited in the courts of even very minor Rajahs and Nawabs of the subcontinent is always sickeningly flattering and laden with hyperboles.

Besides, in no other part of the subcontinent could a poet dare to choose defeat and dishonour as a suitable subject for poetry to be recited before the royal court.

The poet's relationship with the chief is a reflection of the social relations in the tribal society of Baluchistan. It is claimed by Baluch historians that, many centuries ago, a form of primitive communism existed in Baluchistan. Under this system, that came to be well-defined in the period of a famous tribal chief, Mir Jalalhan, all cultivable and grazing land was the collective tribal property. This gave rise to a deep-rooted sense of equality among the people who also considered the Chief as an equal but more responsible and accountable member of the tribe. However during the British Raj, the egalitarian social setup was much weakened and many of the Sardars became all-powerful tyrants.

The growth of modern Baluch consciousness should really be traced to the writings of Meer Yusuf Ali Magsi, a radical political leader and reformist. Born in 1908, into the family of the Chief of Lashar tribes (Magsi, one of the sub-tribes of Lashar), he was deeply affected by his turbulent times. To overthrow the British rule on his land, the Baluch had taken to armed resistance that continued from 1839 till 1919. Yusuf Ali's father, Nawab Qesar Khan Magsi, gave considerable financial support to the tribes of Jhalawan who were rising in revolt against the British Agency. Qesar Khan was arrested and deported to Multan where he died in imprisonment. Meanwhile, young Baluchs had formed an underground political organisation which was known as "Young Party". When in 1930, the organisation became an open, public platform, it was given the name of Anjuman Itthad Baluchan (United Baluch Organisation). Later, Yssuf Ali Magsi became its well-respected president. He began his career by writing essays, articles and poems in Persian and Urdu in the journals and newspapers of Punjab. For his

poems, he used the pen-name of Azeez and came to be known as Yusuf Azeez Magsi. The following is an excerpt from one of his poems:

> I pledge to wash off the stigma of
> slavery. Baluchistan, you will relish
> the wine of freedom.
> The lamp of the heart is lit by the marrow of our bones,
> So that light may reign in my homeland.
> The lost lives of my beloved friends
> are but a *Zakat* (religious offering)
> of the nation.
> To my people I will teach
> Bravery, love and fraternity.
> Baluchistan, you will flourish once again.

Yusuf Azeez Magsi had a flair for writing. His articles in the Urdu newspapers of Punjab were a source of great inspiration for his people. The following is an excerpt from one of the articles that is still widely quoted in Baluchi literary and political journals:

> "The world today is fast advancing on the path of progress but the Baluch remains in deep slumber, sleeping till doomsday, it seems. Most sincerely we plead to the Baluchs, for heaven's sake, do not become a laughing stock for others. Now is the time! If the blood of your ancestors still warms your veins, rise and break the shackles of political slavery. Let us become harbingers of freedom for every nation. Forget your petty rivalries and envy. It is only the martyrdom of your fellow Baluchs that should be envied by each one of you. Listen to the call of history and honour, the immense sacrifices of your motherland."

Magsi had received a catholic education. Apart from Arabic, Persian and the history and civilization of the Middle East, he was also well-tutored in the English language for which his guardians had acquired a teacher, Lala Kanhia Lal, from British India. Thus, he had access to world literature and the political and ideological writings of the contemporary period. There are

some indications that this pioneering leader of Baluchistan was favourably inclined towards the teaching of Marx and Lenin. In one of his sarcastic poems, "Laments of the Sardars", he writes:

> "Oh Respected Sir Resident (British Resident Governor, Baluchistan),
> We are your most loyal servants.
> Yusuf Magsi is our enemy.
> He hates our power, our glory.
> Does not distinguish between slave and master.
> He is enemy of the great British rulers,
> Catch him at once.
> A criminal most dangerous
> Heralding the principles of Socialism,
> Spreading the thoughts of Lenin
> Among foolish Baluch youth.
> Dissolve his horrid Organization
> Dear Sir,
> Or else,
> He may bring doom
> Not only to your humble servants
> But also, God forbid!
> To the benign British Rule.

We thus observe that modern Baluch thinking which had its beginning in the '20s had traditional patriotism as well as the new aspirations of social justice as its integral components. The foundation was laid by Yusuf Azeez Magsi and Baluch intelligentsia of later generations imbibed these values: their works reflect the twin national strivings. At the time of partition of India, Baluchistan, like many other Indian states ruled by Nawabs and Maharajas, had aspired to become an independent state. Its final accession to Pakistan was a gradual process achieved over the span of several years. Apart from the viability or impracticality of the Baluch aspiration to form an independent state, the manner in which accession to Pakistan was secured was, to say the least, not very inspiring for the Baluchs, because it had in it a full measure of coercion and deception — the two things the tribal people of Baluchistan despise the most.

Baluchi literature in Pakistan grew in this atmosphere of re-

sentment against coercion. It is, therefore, not surprising that it is staunchly nationalistic. Even though the Government of Pakistan even today does not officially recognise a Baluchi script — and this has been advanced as the reason for not making Baluchi the state language of Baluchistan — the Baluch intellect did not express itself in Urdu after 1947. Instead, people gradually devised a script which may be summed up as a cross between Pushtu and Persian script, suitably modified for certain peculiarly Baluchi phonetic sounds. Using this script, the Baluch intelligentsia has been writing in its own mother tongue.

There have been many distinguished writers in Baluchi, the most eminent among whom was Gul Khan Naseer, a great poet and scholar who enthralled his readers with the sheer beauty and powerful flow of his verse. A prolific and versatile writer, he has more than a dozen volumes to his credit, but each one of his poetic collections and historical works was banned by the authorities at one time or the other. Closely associated with political movements for the rights of Baluchi people, Gul Khan spent many long years in prison at various places in Pakistan. (Our country has had the "distinction of, perhaps, being the only country in the world which, after its creation, within the short span of 30 odd years, has flung so many of its very best poets into prisons for up to 12 years.")

Gul Khan Naseer sang, in his verse, not only of freedom from oppression but also of end of degrading poverty of his people His powerful poetry is full of pathos for his people and gives a clarion call to them to rise and change their circumstances. Gul Khan was, indeed, a gifted as well as a learned bard in the true Baluchi tradition. His valuable and voluminous works place him among the best poets of the Indian subcontinent to emerge after independence. With his passing away in 1984, Pakistani literature has suffered an irreparable loss.

Besides Gul Khan, Baluchi literature was also greatly enriched by the dedicated efforts of several other eminent writers of the same period. Among them, Mohammad Hussain Unqa, Meer Eesa and Azat Jamaldini are prominent. Azat deserves special mention for, in shaping the minds of a whole generation of Baluchs, he played a very significant role through his poetry and prose and by continually publishing and editing Baluchi

literary journals, providing a forum for creative expression to the young Baluchs. Azat began publishing a monthly journal, *Baluchi*, from Karachi in 1955. As the journal advanced a progressive ideology, successive Pakistani regimes found it very undesirable. Azat was a poor man of no material means or resources. Yet he was so thoroughly dedicated that he achieved the miracle of continuing the publication of a beautiful sophisticated literary journal by sheer hard work in spite of continuous economic and governmental pressures. When, at last, he had to discontinue its publication for 18 months under severe pressure, he nearly fell ill, stricken with remorse and sorrow. He then assumed the editorship of another Baluchi journal, *Nokeeri Daur*, that was being published by Abdul Karim Shorish. Under the able editorship of Azat, the journal acquired a very high standard, attracting the best of Baluch talent. In 1975, Azat resumed the publication of *Baluchi*, his own beloved journal, this time from Quetta and continued to bring it out regularly till his death.

Azat Jamaldini was a phenomenon, perhaps, peculiar to the struggling communities and nations of the Third World. His life-long dedication, quiet perseverance and most unassuming style of work may, perhaps, give the reader an idea of his dignified personality. Such intellectuals are very rare. Among the more privileged languages which thrive (or degenerate) under state-patronage, perhaps, a figure like Azat Jamaldini is unlikely to emerge. The fanfare and hullabaloo surrounding even minor creative achievements of writers of a privileged language usually take a toll of the writer's creativity and of his capacity to be deeply involved with the issues of the common people.

Azat was a socialist revolutionary to the core and his poetry brings out his message clearly and powerfully. He writes in one of his poems:

> Dust and darkness surround my world,
> faces are sad, dresses torn,
> Days are dark as night
> And nights even worse.
> How shall I believe I am free?
> Ruled by the same British Law and *Jirga* (Sardars)

The Chiefs and the rich ruling the roost,
The poor still tremble with dread,
'All Muslims are equal'
This — your claim
Was that a farce?
That I am free, how shall I believe!

Azat introduced modern free verse in Baluchi poetry. This encouraged younger poets to adopt the same course for their creative expression. Basically, however, he was a poet of metered verse (*nazm*). Baluch literary critics point out that even when Azat wrote *ghazals*, these tended to read like *nazm*. The following is one of his *ghazals*:

Beloved of mine, delicate as life,
In the night of my sorrow, you are the moon,
Dispelling my tears,
Exquisite beloved
But the sweet talk of love
Dries on my lips
To the slaves, they are unbecoming,
For amour is a jewel, worn by those
Who are free from want and endless sorrow.

4. Pashtu Literature

Emergence of Pashtu literature dates back to the 15th century. One of the earliest books discovered in this language is *Daftar* compiled by Shaikh Mali in 1470. Poetry thrived in the 17th and 18th century. Kazim Khan Shaida, Rehman Baba, Abdul-Hamid and Afzal Khan Khattak were eminent poets of this period. The tallest literary figure remains the famous poet of Pashtu, Khushhal Khan Khattak, the 17th century warrior-bard who led the historic insurgency against the Mughal rulers of India.

Pashtu is the language of an essentially tribal people who over centuries had to engage in fierce battles against outsiders as well as in inter-tribal feuds for survival. This mode of existence makes "honour" and "bravery" virtues deserving the highest praise. Pashtu poetry celebrates these gloriously and eloquently. On the other hand, the bountiful land of the Pashtuns could not but reflect itself in its literature. Pashtu poetry is, therefore, full of joyous appreciation of nature. In Pashtu poetry, images of blood-soaked battlefields are invariably intermingled with the glorious blossoming of roses, the lush greenery of the mountains and the music of sparkling brooks and streams. The image of the Pashtun shepherd, with a gun slung over his shoulder and a rose stem held in between his teeth, remains perennially alive and fresh.

British occupation of the land of Pashtuns, which they called the North-West Frontier of their empire, willy-nilly united the proud and gallant Pashtuns with the rest of India. Common struggle against British rule and political and social interaction with other parts of India opened new vistas for the Pastun muse.

Important pre-independence poets of Pashtu, such as, Ghani Khan (son of Khan Ghaffar Khan) and Fazal-e-Haq Shaida sing of this struggle with great feeling, reflecting the general mood of the Pashtun people. Writes Ghani Khan:

> This land of Pashtuns,
> Will have to be free
> Or else
> Reduced to ashes.

The poetry of Fazal-e-Haq Shaida requires attention for evaluating the natural leanings of the Pashtun people in that era. In 1927, he wrote a poem addressed to Ghaze Aman-ullah of Afghanistan:

> Your call is the call of our caravan,
> You have alerted us all.
> Your call is now our only hope;
> Asia will be for Asians,
> You will teach us to walk
> On the hazardous path of struggle.

It is significant that in the Pashtu poetry of that era (and even till much later) the glorification of Afghan rulers, such as, Ahmad Shah Abdali, Ahmad Shah Durrani and Mahmood Ghaznawi, was fairly common.

Shaida's poetry also reflects other trends current in the writing of Pashtun intelligentsia. Pashtuns are, by and large, known for a somewhat severe adherence to religious practices like namaz and roza. Yet the character of the *mullah*, the preacher, remains a favourite target for the poet's ire. In a poem, "*Life*", Shaida writes with characteristic Pashtun frankness:

> Your *Qibla* is different
> Mine is different
>
> Your *Ka'ba* is somewhere else.
> Mine is a different *Ka'ba*
> You bow your head before powerful men.
> I bow only to God.

You are a slave of fate.
I can transform the whole world.
For me the Universe is a book.
On every page is written
'ReVolution'.

In another humorous poem, "*The Puzzle*", Shaida addresses his adversaries:

How strange!
I say a single thing
He will tell you,
I said three things.
Surprise, surprise!
He is convinced, he knows.
Every secret of my heart.
For me, there is starvation.
For him, the best of delicacies.
O Mullah! In this creation,
Something will be certainly for us, too.
Or did God prescribe *Namaz* only for the poor??

In post-independence Pakistan, an important poet to emerge was Ajmal Khan Khattak. A collection of his poems, The Call of Honour was banned in Pakistan for its allegedly seditious contents. Ajmal Khattak, like Gul Khan Nuseer of Baluchistan, is a poet politician and a part of his poetry reflects his political leanings. It is a fact that, immediately after partition, sections of Pashtuns remained in doubt about the accession of their homeland to Pakistan. This trend of their thinking was reflected in the poetry of Ajmal Khattak as well. However, it was not the banning of such books, but the gradual sharing of power and wealth that has today eliminated fissiparous tendencies among the Pashtuns. This is "another instance showing that changing circumstances give rise either to regional nationalism or make it merge with larger concepts.

The works of Ajmal Khattak essentially represent and also transcend his times. In his poem "*Our Destiny*" he writes:

In my beautiful land
For the Pashtuns I want

A life of love.
Of beauty and fraternity.
That alone is my destination
That alone is my Heaven
That alone I will pursue
For I do not like
The Mullah or the Khan.

In another poem *Protest*, he writes:

A fresh universe
I strive to create
Of humane values, love and freedom
O world, enough of your brand of Islam
It goes dancing in clubs
And faith is sold for wealth.
My Islam is different
My Islam is for the innocent
And to rescue the oppressed.

In a longish poem *Song of the Gypsies*, he writes:

O my homeland!
Cradle of the greatness of Asia
Land of bounteous blessings and beauty
All your gifts are usurped from us.
I will wander along
The path of toiling masses.
I will return
When the people are triumphant.

The following are excerpts from two of his beautiful and moving poems:

What should I do.
If I look like a human being!
This is a question for the human beings.
When in my insignificant hutment
There is a spark of light

Why darkness grips your heart?
This is a question for the high and might.

(A Question)

The green bough stretches
But no swing adorns it.
Is it then spring?
The *sesam* field is in blossom
But no lass dances with its bloom
Is it then spring?

The green stream laughs
But no brass pitchers tinkle
The shepherd sings his song
But no one understands.
Is it then spring?

— Is it Spring?

In today's Pakistan, Pashtu is a well-developed language having a vast and varied literature of both prose and poetry. Many a novelist exist in Pashtu, eminent amongst them, are Hamza Shinwari, Sahibzada Idrees, Ashraf Durrani, Dehqan, Qalandar Momand, Mian Syyad Rasul Raza and Sher Zaman Ghamyan. Most of their novels are written in the genre of social realism, their themes centring on certain rampant evils in the tribal and feudal set-up of the Pashtun society. The well-known custom of blood-revenge, that eventually forms a vicious circle of counter-revenge and is the cause of endless tribal feuds, has attracted the attention of many a writer. Child marriage has been condemned in some of these novels as a inhuman and outdated practice. Prostitution is another theme on which the Pashtun writer has elaborated upon. In the words of a Pashtun writer, they are "girls who are forced into life of sin only by the blood-sucking social set-up".

One legacy of British rule in the Pashtun area has been the introduction of the system of lengthy and costly law suits in courts. The futility of these law suits, which often become the all-consuming passion and issue of life and death for people, has been exposed by Pashtun writers.

Apart from novels and short stories, the writing of plays has also fared well in Pashtu. Writers like Aslam Khan Khattak have written plays, basing their themes on social evils similar to those taken up in novels. Amongst the essayists, Aysha Malik holds a high place writing extensively on many aspects of Pashtun life — poverty, simplicity of people's life, their deep sense of honour and consideration for others.

To sum up, we may state that Pashtu literature is inherently a literature of deep commitment and social consciousness. The Pashtu writer is involved with themes of social ills and always strives to expose their ugliness. A unique aspect of Pashtu literature is the fact that, unlike Sindhi, Baluchi and Punjabi literatures, it embraces popular writings along with avant garde creations. This has not been possible in other languages in other parts of Pakistan. Since its inception, popular literature has found Urdu as its vehicle. Pashtu is the language of Pakistani Pashtuns as well as the Pashtuns living across the border in Afghanistan where Urdu has never been used as a literary language. Popular literature in Pashtu seems to owe its existence to literary norms in Afghanistan.

Epilogue

To sing, to sing, to sing
So that the shadow becomes human
As Sunday blesses the week
And as hope sweetens truth.

— *Aragon*

Pakistani literature, examined collectively as well as regionwise, reflects the conflicts and aspirations of the peoples of the country. These are a tortured and betrayed people. Yet overcome with confusion, faced with repression and even catastrophe, Pakistani literature stands out with remarkable vigour and hope. Even when it mirrors the contradictions among its people, its dominant theme is not "alienation". Pakistani writer, in the words of Plekhanov, "is not out of harmony with his social environment".

The third Martial Law in Pakistan, so brutally snuffing out a nascent democracy, has, pardoxically, gone to unite the peoples of Pakistan if only in unswerving opposition to it. The arsenal of the Martial Law against writers, the brutal reprisals and the omniscient censorship have not succeeded in immobilising them. On the contrary, Pakistani writers have risen to the challenge of censorship with such courage and ingenuity that we shall long be proud of this feat — and with good reason. Martial Law has only succeeded in pushing the written word underground, not in the form of underground literature, but in the shape of "underground" meaning in seemingly quite harmless literature. The art of writing (and reading) between the lines

has achieved perfection. How Pakistani writers have met this great challenge, how they have devised, invented and used ever fresher and newer symbols to express the thoughts of the people, is so vast and fascinating a subject that it deserves a whole treatise by a social scientist. This literature of symbols and hidden meanings, the literature of the resistance of a people against injustice and coercion, is a deeply committed literature, a literature *engage* in the true sense of the word. The very scale of resistance is startling, because one notices that even the most popular writings have become the writings of resistance.

To give the reader an indication of a "popular" writer's degree of involvement and his ingenious means of communicating with his readers, it should suffice to give just one instance. Here is the summary of a story which appeared in one of the popular "digests" soon after Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto was hanged. The story is captioned, *The Telephone Call*":

In a busy shopping centre, is a new shop owned by two persons, Amhad and Mahmood. These two, although equal partners, are of very different temperaments. Ahmad is reserved, rather stiff of manner and not very attractive. Mahmood is an extrovert with a very charming personality. The shop, which had a modest beginning, becomes increasingly profitable mainly due to Mahmood's hard work and his rapport with buyers. Ahmad is plagued with jealousy and greed. Mahmood notices his suspicious behaviour, and mentions this to his wife. She is alarmed and requests him to be careful, but Mahmood just laughs if off. One night, when they are both working late in the shop, Ahmad kills Mahmood. He is even able to prove in the court, not only that Mahmood was killed in an accident, but also that he (Mahmood) owed Ahmad a lot of money and had surrendered his share in the shop to Ahmad.

Ahmad is now the sole owner of the shop. He is quite thrilled with his success and cannot cease to admire his own cleverness in befooling everybody. One late night, he hears the telephone ringing in his bedroom. As he picks up the receiver, he is stunned, because he can hear, strong and clear, the voice of Mahmood himself.

"Ahmad, you are a murderer", the voice of Mahmood tells

him. "You have murdered me, and the place for an ungrateful rascal like you is in prison. The shop belongs to my wife and daughter. They are the rightful owners of this shop, because whatever it is worth today is due to my hard work and sweat".

Ahmad cannot bear to hear any more. His eyes bulge out in dread, and he nearly dies with fright. As the receiver drops to the floor from his lifeless hand, far away in a small flat a woman switches off a taperecorder, and, weeping, falls over her sleeping daughter.

What are the circumstances which would make writers of crime-thrillers speak in the language of symbols? Without much knowledge of the intricacies of democracy, human rights, of all those serious ideas which are usually expressed in sophisticated writings, the barely literature writer of crime fiction feels compelled to express his own unpolished, earthy sense of justice. His genius helps him invent suitable symbols and a credible plot. He speaks for the vast masses, for the uneducated, and the unsophisticated when he creates the voice of Mahmood.

"This shop belongs to my wife and daughter. They are its rightful owners and the place for an ungrateful man like you is in prison".

Pakistani literature continues to be the literature of resistance. Perhaps one day it will become the literature of struggle. However, one should remember that literature is a mirror of struggle more than it is its instrument. Many a word remains unsaid, many a thought unspoken, because the concrete realisation of their meaning and significance may yet not be there. But who knows, one day it may suddenly materialize.

We shall end this brief survey with lines from the great poet of our time, Faiz Ahmad Faiz.

"Some day perhaps —
A poem may proudly unfurl.
That lies like a rolled-up flag
Waiting for the words to rise.
The murdered poem
Blood-staining every fresh page
May yet be resurrected
Revealing itself to your eyes.
Perhaps, some day. . . ."

FAHMIDA RIAZ

FAHMIDA RIAZ (b. 1945) is a well-known Pakistani Urdu poet. She was born in Meerut (India) and was brought up and educated in Hyderabad Sind (now in Pakistan). She worked for BBC, London, where she stayed during 1967-72. On her return she settled in Karachi, where she edited a monthly Urdu journal, *Awaz*.

Several volumes of her poems in Urdu have been published in Pakistan, which include *Patthar ki Zaban*, *Badan Dareedah*, *Dhoop* and *Pakistan-'81*. Her another work of Urdu poetry *Hamrakab* is now under print. Some of her works have also been published in India in Devnagari Script. She has also adapted *Social Psychology of Fascism* by Eric Fromme, in Urdu under the title: *Adhura Admi*.

Presently she is living in Delhi in self exile with her husband and two children.

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