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Contested Sovereignties: The Pakistani idiom, Subalternity and the Narrative Development of Nationhood in the Early Pakistani English Poetry

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ABSTRACT

This research examines early post-independence Pakistani Anglophone poetry as an active cultural arena for the discursive formation, negotiation, and contestation of national identity. This paper transcends traditional interpretations that regard early English-language poetry in Pakistan as merely uncritical patriotism or a mimicry of Western modernism, employing qualitative textual analysis to explore how the founding generation adapted and localized the imperial medium to express a sovereign postcolonial identity. The main collection consisting of the writings of Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, Alamgir Hashmi, Maki Kureishi, Adrian Husain, Moniza Alvi, and Kishwar Naheed is assessed using a cohesive framework that incorporates Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Homi Bhabha's *Hybridity*, Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, and Gayatri Spivak's *Feminist Subalternity*. The results indicate that the initial nation-building efforts in Pakistan under the Anglophone framework are marked by a tension of "contested sovereignties. Canonical male voices associate national identity with territorial ties (the "Pakistani Idiom") and lineage or spiritual heritage, whereas feminist and transnational diasporic identities challenge these rigid boundaries. Focusing on gendered marginalization and spatial dislocation, Naheed and Alvi reveal the systemic exclusions inherent in elite state-building, reconceptualizing identity as a dynamic debate of cultural memory. This study ultimately reveals that early Pakistani English poetry played a significant role in shaping post-Partition discourse, providing essential perspectives on the continuous reconstruction of the nation-state.



Introduction

Background of the Study

The rise of Pakistani English poetry shortly after the 1947 Partition aligned with a multifaceted, high-stakes cultural and political endeavor of postcolonial nation-building (Gaur & Chauhan, 2024). As a nascent republic formed from colonial India, Pakistan required both administrative structures and profound symbolic and cultural representations to unify a shared national identity (Rahman, 2011). Literature, especially poetry, served as an essential discursive space for expressing the profound worries, shared traumas, and national ambitions of the emerging nation (Kalra & Butt, 2019, pp. 1–28). English poetry, although its legacy as an imperial bequest, was fervently appropriated by the inaugural cohort of Pakistani authors. It evolved into a potent channel for negotiating postcolonial identity, reclaiming the language of the colonizer, and delineating the cultural vision of the emerging nation-state (Shamsie, 2017).

Poetry has traditionally had a crucial role in the socio-cultural landscape of South Asia, serving as a platform for political defiance and existential self-definition (Daudpota, 2019). In the years after independence, prominent individuals like Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, and Alamgir Hashmi intentionally modified the English language to reflect local landscapes, colloquial expressions, and regional sensitivities. Their poetry consistently depicted the geographical features of the Indus Valley, reflected on the poignant recollections of Partition, and utilized Sufi or cultural motifs to establish a collective sense of belonging (Naeem et al., 2025). Rafat, for example, delineated national identity by natural ecosystems and seasonal patterns, whereas Kamal anchored identity in historical continuity and spiritual symbols. Hashmi's poetry simultaneously addressed the existential rifts of displacement, boundaries, and exile, encapsulating the fractured identity of a nation emerging from geopolitical separation (Shamsie, 2017).

Significantly, the narrative formation of identity and nationhood within this canon was not uniform nor solely a masculine endeavor. Pioneering female authors like Kishwar Naheed and transnational diasporic figures like Moniza Alvi presented divergent perspectives that challenged government-endorsed interpretations of patriotism. Naheed's defiant poetry explicitly confronted patriarchal dominance, framing marginalized gender conflicts as essential to authentic cultural rejuvenation (Naheed, 2012). Simultaneously, Alvi's diasporic verse examined spatial dislocation and hybrid identity, demonstrating that the concept of belonging is navigated through dynamic geographical limits instead of static maps (Khan, 2015). The incorporation of these varied paths underscores that patriotism in early Pakistani Anglophone poetry was never a uniform doctrine; it was multifaceted, debated, and continuously reinterpreted (Bibi & Kalhor, 2026). Early Pakistani English poetry created an essential aesthetic arena for the active negotiation of postcolonial conditions, countering cultural obliteration and broadening the definition of sovereignty (Jabeen & Sajid, 2025; Ahmed, 2012, pp. 256–268).

Statement of the Problem

The geopolitical intricacies of nation-building in Pakistan after 1947 have been thoroughly documented by historians, political scientists, and sociologists; however, the particular influence of the early Anglophone poetry canon in shaping this identity is still significantly underestimated. Urdu and local vernacular literatures are conventionally esteemed as the genuine embodiments of national identity, leading to the frequent marginalization or misinterpretation of

English-language poetry as a mere offshoot of Western modernism (Rahman, 2011). This significant oversight results in a profound deficiency in South Asian literary studies.

Moreover, by neglecting to integrate these authoritative works with the transformative contributions of feminist and diasporic figures such as Kishwar Naheed and Moniza Alvi, current academic discourse fails to recognize the inherent tensions—the disputed sovereignties—that characterize the postcolonial experience. A comprehensive, theory-based examination of how these varied poets employed certain thematic and symbolic techniques is essential for a complete understanding of the intricate development of Pakistan's early Anglophone literary tradition. This research directly tackles this scholarly void by offering a thorough textual examination of how these seminal voices collectively influenced, critiqued, and broadened the post-independence national vision.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how early canonical poets used language and aesthetics to create a "Pakistani Idiom" rooted in geography and culture through empire.
2. To examine how fundamental Anglophone poets address post-Partition agony, spatial dislocation, and existential boundary construction.
3. To examine how feminist subalternity and diasporic identities in transnational frameworks expose gendered and hybrid exclusion to question state-endorsed national identity.

Research Questions

1. In what ways can early post-independence Pakistani English poets reclaim the colonial language and establish an autonomous ontology through the use of localized geography and vernacular themes?
2. In what ways do the historical rifts and displacements from the 1947 Partition influence the themes and symbols in early Anglophone poetry?
3. In what ways can women's resistance and geographic hybridity undermine elite nationalist objectives, transforming nationhood into disputed sovereignties?

Scope and Limitations of the Research

The present study is theoretically positioned within the examination of early Pakistani Anglophone poetry and its discursive function in the nation-building endeavor. Nonetheless, the research is constrained by certain boundary conditions and methodological limitations: Translation Frameworks and Linguistic Boundaries: This research is deliberately limited to a specific collection of authoritative poetry that shapes the post-independence Anglophone literary milieu. The focus is on poets who originally composed in English, like Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, and Alamgir Hashmi. The linguistic scope is intentionally broadened to include Rukhsana Ahmad's English rendition of Kishwar Naheed's radical Urdu poetry. The incorporation of this translation allows the research to follow how subaltern and feminist resistance, first articulated in the vernacular, textually interacts with the global Anglophone archive to challenge dominant state narratives. The research excludes broader, untranslated regional linguistic traditions (e.g. Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi). Interpretive Methodological Constraints: The research employs a qualitative textual analysis approach, characterized as an

interpretative methodology rooted in postcolonial literary critique. Employing Andersonian, Bhabhaian, Saiduan, and Spivakian frameworks guarantees scholarly integrity, while the fluid adaptability of literary semiotics indicates that the texts are receptive to various, and thus valid, conflicting interpretations. The results provide a well-informed analysis derived from structural interpretations, rather than a definitive or comprehensive statement of historical fact. Literary examination and audience response research: The analytical emphasis of this research is confined to the structural mechanics, motifs, and thematic constructs of the poetry as published artifacts. This research does not address empirical reader reception, historical audience reactions, or the evolving sociology of public reception of these works across time. Although crucial for examining the institutional impacts of literature, the analysis of audience reception lies beyond the direct textual and theoretical scope of this study.

Significance of the Research

The research possesses a distinctive scholarly and analytical importance in addressing a persistent void in postcolonial literary studies, particularly concerning the evolution of South Asian Anglophone literature. Despite the significant academic focus on Indian English literature post-Partition and the Pakistani English novel, early Pakistani Anglophone poetry remains relatively under-explored in theoretical discourse. The research presents three fundamental contributions to the discipline, providing a continuous, cohesively structured analysis of this literary canon.

Conceptual Synthesis & Augmentation

Initially, this study offers a sophisticated theoretical amalgamation by concurrently utilizing Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Homi Bhabha's *Hybridity and the Third Space*, Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, and Gayatri Spivak's *Feminist Subalternity*. Rather than employing these frameworks independently, the present research is involved in a continuous dialectical dialogue with them. This approach elucidates the complexities of the nation-state's spatiality (Anderson) through linguistic hybridity (Bhabha, Said) and the internal divisions of gendered exclusions (Spivak). Consequently, this research enhances postcolonial methodology by illustrating that national identity in an emerging state is not a singular, fixed narrative but an ongoing, multi-faceted discursive negotiation.

Conservation and Restoration of the English Canon

Secondly, this study retrieves the significant literary excerpts and historical contexts of trailblazing figures like Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, Alamgir Hashmi, Maki Kureishi, Kishwar Naheed, and Moniza Alvi. This initiative is grounded in authenticated poetic passages, thus tackling the scholarly weaknesses of illusory or unsubstantiated literary depictions to create a dependable interpretative structure for assessing early Pakistani poetry. This indicates that these authors did not merely replicate Western modernism, but instead created a distinct "Pakistani Idiom" capable of expressing the unique cultural, environmental, and historical context of the Indus Valley in a universal tongue.

Dismantling the Uniform Nationalist Discourses

Thirdly, this study possesses considerable socio-political significance by dismantling the uniform, male, and state-focused discourses surrounding post-colonial nation-building. This

study contrasts the initial territorial canon with the defiant, subaltern poetry of Naheed and the transnational, displaced poetry of Alvi, thereby revealing the internal demarcations of class, gender, and geography within the postcolonial nation-state. It illustrates how early Pakistani English poetry functioned as an essential cultural entity where concepts of citizenship, patriotism, and belonging were continuously debated and re-envisioned democratically. It provides a significant framework for forthcoming researchers examining literature as a site of structural opposition and identity formation in global postcolonial settings.

Literature Review

Nation-Building and Postcolonial Literature

The endeavor of nation-building in post-colonial nations transcends mere political and administrative frameworks, delving profoundly into cultural and literary consciousness. Anderson (1983) characterizes nations as "imagined communities" connected through shared histories and symbols. In this regard, poetry frequently functions as a medium for expressing communal memory, identity, and nationalism. Postcolonial literature serves as a platform for opposing colonial domination and fostering the emergence of novel identities (Said, 1993). Literature has been crucial in shaping identity in Pakistan; yet, academic attention has predominantly centered on Urdu poetry rather than English poetry (Rahman, 2011). English poetry serves as a significant lens for examining how Pakistani artists have utilized a colonial language to articulate postcolonial identity and nationalism.

The Genesis and Evolution of Pakistani English Poetry

Pakistani English poetry starts its journey immediately after the 1947 Partition, as authors endeavor to grapple with the anguish of relocation and the hope of a new nation. Shamsie (2017) asserts that their work transcends mere imitation of British literary conventions, instead representing a creative reinterpretation of English to depict local environments, histories, and cultural nuances. As an illustration, Rafat utilized the landscape and the splendor of nature as representations of stability and patriotism, while Kamal referenced spirituality and historical narratives to affirm national affiliation. Conversely, Hashmi underscored Partition, exile, and hybridity as crucial to the essence of Pakistani identity. The initial phases of Pakistani English poetry therefore showcase a variety of voices engaging in the cultural dialogue of national identity.

Land, Culture and the Metaphor of Belongingness

According to Hashmi (1987), early Pakistani English literature should not be viewed as just a localized version of colonial literature; instead, it constitutes a distinct national canon that grapples with its identity amid the suffering of Partition and a complex relationship with global modernism. Likewise, Daud Kamal rooted the concept of Pakistani identity in its terrain and traditions, including depictions of rivers, hills, and shrines (Shamsie, 2017). These artistic methods reflect Bhabha's (1990) idea that cultural identity is formed through "symbols of continuity"; with the landscape functioning as a storehouse of memory and meaning. In their references to English local landscapes, these poets posited the land and the language as components of national identity.

In contrast to pioneers who anchored themselves in the local geography, Hashmi (1992) conceptualizes the homeland as a historical palimpsest, wherein natural and urban terrains embody the concurrent realities of ancient migrations, colonial deletions, and post-Partition experiences.

Partition, Memory, and the Suffering of Identity

The Partition, a pivotal occurrence in the formation of Pakistan, profoundly influenced its literary landscape. Hashmi's verse, particularly in *The Oath and Amen* (1976), confronts themes of borders, dislocation, and the anguish of estrangement, placing the immigrant narrative and historical suffering within a framework of resilience (Shamsie, 2017). Ahmed Ali's writings, despite being composed prior to independence, foresaw the cultural dislocation and identity dilemmas precipitated by Partition, a fundamental change analyzed by Rahman (1991). These pieces illustrate how literature transformed into a medium for reinterpreting historical memory within a national context. Jalal (2013) posits that the recollection of Partition is intrinsically linked to Pakistani identity, and that creative writing serves as a crucial medium for the ongoing re-evaluation of that anguish.

Belief, Cultural Heritage, and Spiritual Identity

For poets like Daud Kamal, belief and spirituality constituted the fundamental foundations of cultural remembrance. His poetry frequently contrasts Islamic imagery, including Qur'anic depictions of water and Sufi symbols, with a minimalist modernist structure, so creating identification within a complex spiritual context rather than a purely political one (Zaidi, 2020). This thematic connection between religion and national identity mirrors broader discourses within the Pakistani state, where Islam has traditionally been regarded as the essential element of collective identity (Rahman, 2011). In this regard, poetry serves as a medium for cultural preservation, connecting the region's varied spiritual legacy to the developing identity of the contemporary nation.

Nation Building and Gender Dynamics

The development of national identity has progressively garnered scholarly interest in the contributions of women. In the groundbreaking collection *We Sinful Women* (1991), Naheed's iconic poem challenges state-sanctioned patriarchal conventions and asserts that women's challenges are vital to the nation's development. Her poetry reconceptualizes patriotism as not simply acquiescence to governmental mandates or outdated customs, but as proactive resistance to inequality and injustice. This aligns with Spivak's (1988) foundational idea that oppressed subaltern individuals, particularly women, are systematically muted in prevailing nationalist narratives, although their reclamation is crucial for a comprehensive grasp of postcolonial identity. In this framework, Naheed's feminist perspective portrays women as proactive participants in nation creation instead of silent entities on the periphery.

Hybridity, Diasporic Experience, and Transnational Identity

The notion of patriotism and nationality is further muddled by diasporic voices such as Moniza Alvi. Alvi's poem *"Presents from My Aunts in Pakistan"* illustrates the themes of cultural hybridity and alienation as the poet oscillates between her Pakistani heritage and her British upbringing (Khan, 2015). This pertains to Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity, wherein identity

is fluid and perpetually redefined across cultural divides. Alvi's verse illustrates that Pakistani identity transcends geographical confines, extending into diasporic experiences where patriotism may be reconceptualized as cultural memory rather than just political loyalty.

Literature as a Means of Nation Formation

Proponents of postcolonial literature assert that texts not only mirror identity but also construct it (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002). In Pakistan, English poetry provided a metaphorical arena for expressing, challenging, and broadening national awareness. From Rafat's entrenched terrains to Hashmi's disjointed borders, from Naheed's feminist defiance to Alvi's diasporic amalgamation, Pakistani English poets collectively contributed to the definition of national belonging. Shamsie (2017) asserts that literature is integral to the conception and reconception of Pakistan's cultural identity, rather than being marginal to nationhood.

Research Gap

Over the last thirty years, Pakistani English literature has been recognized as noteworthy within postcolonial studies. The primary academic objective has been to regard both the early canonical masters and contemporary feminist or global perspectives as distinct historical phenomena. Pivotal research often segregates its focus by author—Taufiq Rafat's stylistic localization of English poetry, Daud Kamal's metaphysical aesthetics, or Moniza Alvi's contemporary diasporic hybridity, while neglecting the profound thematic and political interrelations within a cohesive narrative of nation-building. Moreover, Pakistani literary histories have often overshadowed the Anglophone lyric in preference for Urdu literary nationalism, thereby relegating Anglophone lyric to the periphery of discussions on the development of early national identity. Furthermore, the previous analytical frameworks exhibit a notable division of topics. Conventional analyses exaggerate the nationalistic sentiments of male poets while neglecting the underlying issues of gender-based exclusions and spatial dislocation. The intersection of landscape, historical memory, spirituality, gender, and diaspora has seldom been woven into a unified postcolonial fabric that connects Benedict Anderson's socio-spatial theories to Homi Bhabha's cultural hybridity, Edward Said's institutional critique, and Gayatri Spivak's subaltern viewpoint. Consequently, there exists a significant gap in academic research about the convergence of the early male territorial canon with the corrective feminist and diasporic responses, which together produced a dynamic and contentious arena of "contested sovereignties. This research seeks to fill the voids via a representative and comparative analysis of these many categories of poetry. The essay demonstrates that intentional alteration of English, via direct authorship and radical translation, served as a significant conceptual tool for actively challenging, decolonizing, and reconfiguring the boundaries of Pakistani postcolonial identity, using a cohesive theoretical framework.

Research Methodology

The methodological framework of the present study is qualitative and interpretative. The primary techniques employed in this research are textual analysis and postcolonial literary critique. The qualitative literary approach is most appropriate for this study since it enables an in-depth examination of the symbolic significances, narrative frameworks, and cultural dialogues embedded in poetry (Culler, 1997). The objective is to examine the influential role of early

Pakistani English poetry in the symbolic construction of national identity through these textual strategies.

The primary body of this study consists of a deliberate selection of poems by Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, Alamgir Hashmi, Maki Kureishi, Kishwar Naheed, and Moniza Alvi. The selected poets are prominent individuals in the canon of Pakistani literature, having navigated the pivotal decades following Partition till the establishment of modern diasporic poetry (Rahman, 1991). The standards for text selection were literary impact, historical significance, and continued interaction with themes of national identity, cultural remembrance, gender, and displacement. Poems were chosen solely if they were included in sanctioned collections, authoritative anthologies, or peer-reviewed academic editions to ensure textual accuracy and scholarly legitimacy (Shamsie, 2017).

The analytical process was conducted in four distinct phases. Initially, the selected poems were meticulously examined multiple times to identify structural thematic evolution, symbolism, and imagery patterns. Secondly, relevant literary passages were categorized for recurring themes, including landscape, the recollection of Partition, spirituality, female defiance, and hybridity. Third, a postcolonial lens including Anderson's (1983) idea of imagined communities, Bhabha's (1994) theory of hybridity, Said's (1978) examination of colonial discourse, and Spivak's (1988) feminist subaltern viewpoint was employed to rigorously assess these thematic categories. Ultimately, the resemblances and differences among the chosen poets were analyzed and integrated to clarify their shared importance in articulating a Pakistani national identity. This research aspires to offer a nuanced contextual analysis rather than pursuing statistical generalization, illustrating how poetic language serves as an active cultural instrument for conceptualizing, negotiating, and reconstructing national identity.

Theoretical Framework

The research is grounded in postcolonial literary theory and significantly shaped by Benedict Anderson's (1983) notion of "imagined communities" and Homi Bhabha's (1990, 1994) theories of hybridity, cultural memory, and the nation as narrative. Anderson's framework emphasizes the structural role of literature within the shared consciousness of a sovereign country; Bhabha highlights the flexible, contested, and fundamentally hybrid nature of identity in postcolonial settings. An alternative perspective for examining the analysis is Edward Said's (1993) critique of cultural imperialism, which interprets the Pakistani poets' use of English not as mere colonial mimicry, but as a proactive appropriation of a prevailing language to assert cultural and political autonomy. Moreover, feminist postcolonial frameworks, especially Spivak's (1988) analysis of the systemic suppression of disadvantaged voices provide significant understanding of Naheed's revolutionary poetry as a break from uniform, government-endorsed patriarchal discourses of nationalism. Simultaneously, Alvi's diasporic viewpoint challenges the localized notion of belonging to the nation by emphasizing transnational dislocation. Collectively, these converging theoretical viewpoints offer a robust analytical framework for comprehending early Pakistani English poetry not merely as a subordinate imitation of Western paradigms, but as an essential, vibrant arena for negotiating national identity, gender roles, and postcolonial cultural affiliation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The thematic assessment of the primary texts uncovered five interconnected themes that underscore the symbolic formulation, negotiation, and contestation of national identity in early Pakistani English poetry following independence. Instead of serving as fixed declarations of uncritical nationalism, these pieces function as fluid conversational arenas. By employing the motifs of landscape, memory, spirituality, gender, and diasporic dislocation, these poets collaboratively reconceptualized the essence of belonging within the postcolonial nation.

Landscape, Nature, and the Localized Idiom

The tangible terrain serves as a fundamental backdrop for establishing national identity. Taufiq Rafat's groundbreaking piece, particularly the eponymous poem "*Arrival of Monsoon*," employs the organic rhythms of the Indus valley to undermine colonial linguistic dominance. Rafat composes with a focus on the striking variations of the ambient weather conditions:

"Alive, alive, everything is alive again. / Savour the rain's coolness on lips and eyes." (Rafat, 1985, p. 1)

Rafat's poetry is rooted on tangible experiences, creating a distinctive "Pakistani Idiom" that associates national identity with a profound relationship to the land instead of a mere political affiliation. This physical foundation is echoed by Daud Kamal in works such as "*Salt Range* (1995)," where ancient hills are depicted as enduring historical witnesses to former empires, thereby providing the nascent nation-state with a profound sense of ancestral permanence and continuity. Similarly, for Alamgir Hashmi, "*A Celebration of Places*" is a cartography reclamation in which the meticulous naming of local landscapes transforms the act of poetic designation into a profound assertion of identity and territorial affiliation (Shamsie, 2017).

Partition, Diaspora, and Transnational Hybridity

The historical partition and subsequent global migration complicate personal perceptions of citizenship with suffering. Alamgir Hashmi's early writings like *The Ramazan of Words* (1978) are filled with the profound existential fissures of identity after 1947. In pieces like "Exile" Hashmi underlines the dislocation of the postcolonial self, arguing:

"The year's end / is a time to look / back, through the window, / at the changing seasons / ... / away from home." (Hashmi, 1978, p. 19)

English poetry for Hashmi represents a juncture of "return," when the sounds of cultural recollection transcend the tangible confines of the nation-state. Moniza Alvi introduces this transnational negotiation to the modern diaspora. In "*Presents from My Aunts in Pakistan*," the speaker's juxtaposition of traditional attire and a Western environment underscores the psychological disorientation experienced by the postcolonial individual. As she wrote:

"I tried each satin-silken top – / was alien in the sitting-room. / I could never be as lovely / as those clothes – I longed / for denim and corduroy." (Alvi, 1993, p. 11)

Alvi demonstrates that national identity is not static in relation to geography, but is perpetually redefined within the diaspora via cultural artifacts and fragmented recollections, transforming the

essence of patriotism from allegiance to the state into a fluid negotiation of Bhabha's (1994) 'Third Space' and what Nasta (2002) refers to as the bifurcated, dual perspective of South Asian diasporic awareness.

Faith, Spirituality, and Cultural Memory

Sacred places and religious buildings are often used as landmarks to demarcate communal identity. In Daud Kamal's poetry, especially in "*The Street of Hazrat Shah*" and "Morning in Islamabad," the Sufi shrines, the burning of the devotional lamps, and the morning adhan are interwoven in the very texture of the text. In "*The Street of Hazrat Shah*" Kamal evokes the permanent spiritual quality of the surrounding landscape:

"The multi-coloured glass / in the windows of the shrine / ... / a heavy scent of jasmine / and burning oil." (Kamal, 1997, p. 17)

Rather of adopting a rigid position, Kamal views these spiritual symbols as vital components of the area's cultural tapestry and historical awareness. The metaphors of communal spirituality are rhythmic, cohesive, and serve as a cultural adhesive, binding together fragmented post-independence identities into a unified national consciousness (Rahman, 1991).

Gendered Resistance and the Reimagined Nation

Feminist actions fundamentally contest the male dominance inherent in early government-supported nationalism narratives. In a revolutionary poem "*We Sinful Women*" (widely commended in Rukhsana Ahmad's authoritative English translation anthology in 1991) Kishwar Naheed reinvented nation-building by placing women's systematic conflicts at the center of the country's moral progress:

"It is we sinful women / who come out raising the banner of truth / up against barricades of lies on the highways / ... / who find that tongues which could speak have been severed." (Ahmad, 1991, p. 31)

Naheed systematically dismantles patriarchal exclusions, revealed by the state's repudiation of women's historical agency. Her poetry posits that opposing domestic oppression is a genuine expression of patriotism, asserting that a legitimate national identity is unattainable if its female populace is sidelined in terms of recognition and rights—this directly corresponds with Spivak's (1988) analysis of the marginalization of the subaltern in elite nationalist endeavors.

Historical Continuity and the Modernist Crisis

The original canon demonstrates a deep consciousness of historical upheaval and structural deterioration. Maki Kureishi's "*The Splendour of the Past*" and Adrian Husain's "*Seascape*" employ modernist principles to bridge historical gaps (Husain, 1997; Kureishi, 1997). In "*The Splendour of the Past*," Kureishi contemplates the remnants of cultural memory.

"History has left us / these broken arches, / ... / we try to build / a bridge of words." (Kureishi, 1997, p. 43)

Kureishi references cultural artifacts and ancient edifices not to indulge in mere nostalgia, but to create a temporal connection that fosters a contemporary sense of belonging. Adrian Husain's

coastal photography portrays the postcolonial nation as a port of arrival, a site of hard-earned safety, aspiration, and ongoing refuge for a previously uprooted populace (Ashcroft et al., 2002).

Discussion

The textual evidence analyzed within the works of Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, Alamgir Hashmi, Moniza Alvi, and Kishwar Naheed collectively suggests that early Pakistani Anglophone poetry serves not merely as a passive mirror of state ideology, but as a crucial arena for the dynamic negotiation and discursive formation of national identity. Although these authors share a commitment to articulating a Pakistani identity, their poetic styles differ significantly.

Rafat anchors national identity in a natural, localized geography, converting the tangible landscapes of fields, rivers, and monsoons into symbols of a collective civic realm through the creation of a unique "Pakistani Idiom. Conversely, Kamal expresses postcolonial consciousness by invoking historical and spiritual continuity, heavily relying on Sufi symbolism, architecture, and local culture to reconstruct a fragmented post-Partition identity. In contrast, Hashmi focuses on the existential anguish stemming from a historical fracture, framing the post-1947 identity as inherently entangled in the politics of mapping, exile, and linguistic dislocation.

The landscape is also complicated by the crucial structural influences of feminist and diasporic identities. Naheed analyzes the patriarchal underpinnings of early state-endorsed nationalism to illustrate how prevailing political structures frequently rely on the home oppression and systemic marginalization of women. Simultaneously, Alvi critiques the confined territorial limits by conceptualizing nationhood via the perspectives of transnational displacement, cultural hybridity, and memory.

Collectively, these poets illustrate that the postcolonial country is not a uniform entity, but rather its identity is dynamic, disputed, and perpetually redefined via many geographical, gender, religious, and historical dimensions.

The Poetic Construction of Imagined Community

These findings provide robust evidence for Benedict Anderson's (1983) proposition that the nation constitutes a socially fabricated, horizontally interconnected "imagined community," wherein literature significantly contributes to the formation of a collective narrative of belonging. The abrupt conclusion of the British Raj and the cartographic upheaval of the Radcliffe Line provided the nascent Pakistani state with political demarcations, yet it lacked a unified cultural identity. The chosen works illustrate that the nascent Pakistani Anglophone canon served not just as a platform for political discourse; it also generated what may be described as an emotional mapping. By invoking local terrains, traditional spiritual structures, and ancestral recollections, these poets transformed the abstract geopolitical demarcations established in 1947 into profoundly felt emotional truths for the postcolonial audience.

Significantly, this shared imagination is enacted through what Homi Bhabha (1990) refers to as the dual axes of the nation's narrative: the educational and the performative. The educational framework is dependent on the state's overarching narrative—an endeavor to construct a rigid, sequential, and inflexible historical nationalism to validate its power. The performative, in

contrast, emerges from the quotidian, dynamic cultural meanings of the populace, which consistently undermine this government-imposed stability.

Rafat's home vistas and Kamal's hallowed realms signify a potent performative reclamation of the quotidian. Through their depiction of the intense onset of the monsoon or the tangible experience of a community shrine, they circumvent the impersonal, hierarchical discourse of governmental administration. They effectively provide a youthful, diverse nation with a unified symbolic language that enables it to see its own sovereign continuity, illustrating that the "nation" transcends a mere legal framework and is instead a perpetually enacted narrative.

Linguistic Decolonization and the Re-appropriation of English

One of the major contributions of this work is to show how early Pakistani poets methodically converted English from a colonial dominating language to a postcolonial cultural language of affirmation. Writing in the tongue of the former colonial power was, by its very nature, paradoxical in a new independent nation state, and it was often denounced by native groups who felt that the language was forever tainted. This literary phenomenon is strongly linked to Edward Said's (1993) model in *Culture and Imperialism*, which demonstrates how the formerly colonized cultures consciously take over, dominate and re-contextualize the colonizers' language in order to subvert colonial knowledge systems and reinsert their own native narratives into world history.

Rather than being simply an act of passive colonial mimicry that would only reproduce the Eurocentric visions of the British literary tradition, poets like Rafat and Kamal took control of the English language. Rafat's 'Pakistani Idiom' was a conscious act of creative decolonization, replacing the usual Western themes of English poetry - European seasons and foliage, classical mythology - with the dazzling imagery of the Indus Valley.

In Kamal's case also the rhythm of his English stanzas was fused with Urdu colloquial structures, Islamic grammatical structures and culturally embedded metaphors. The Anglophone media was thus deprived of its imperial isolation and became an authentic, local medium. These poets forced the English language to convey the nuances of a non-Western existence and thus it became a major medium for the expression of the nuances of the Pakistani postcolonial experience (Rahman, 1991).

The Dialectical Strains of National Identity

Moreover, my examination reveals that nation-building in Pakistani Anglophone poetry is fundamentally a dialectical process, rather than a mere blind collective agreement. The ideological chasm between the established male poets and the rectifying perspectives offered by feminist and diasporic voices seems considerable. While the traditional masculine canon often emphasizes concepts of geographical anchoring, spiritual heritage, and historical stability, the works of Naheed and Alvi forcefully disrupt these neat, confining boundaries, revealing the intrinsic fractures of the postcolonial nation.

This structural conflict is best understood by integrating Gayatri Spivak's (1988) feminist subaltern critique with Bhabha's (1994) concept of cultural hybridity. Naheed's provocative poem exposes the operation of elite nationalist initiatives as dominant entities that consistently silence the female perspective to the outside confines of the state. The condition of Pakistan's tumultuous political landscape, particularly during the retrogressive legislative shifts in the late

20th century, frequently employed concepts of national identity and honor to curtail women's autonomy. Naheed offers a robust reply, framing opposition to domestic patriarchy and governmental oppression as the quintessential method of authentic nation-building. She dismantles the government-endorsed male discourse of ethical supremacy, illustrating that a nation cannot be genuinely envisioned if half of its populace is consistently muted.

Alvi's diasporic literature undermines traditional, state-focused notions of citizenship while simultaneously shifting the discourse from tangible geography to the dynamic "Third Space. For Alvi, the postcolonial nation represents a mobile assemblage of cultural recollection and negotiated identity, rather than a static territorial limit. The estrangement of her poetic self-inside the Western educational setting, juxtaposed with her fragmented affection for a homeland she comprehends just via cultural artifacts, underscores the inadequacies of constraining patriotism to mere political allegiance to a tangible territory. The diasporic experience illustrates that Pakistani identity is flexible, evolving, and enduring beyond boundaries via cross-cultural interpretation.

In conclusion, the early Pakistani English poetry functions as a transparent and confrontational discursive arena. It indicates that national identity is not an inherent, static concept that accompanies Independence, but rather an ongoing, fluid process of cultural interpretation, conflict, and perpetual democratic re-envisioning (Shamsie, 2017).

Conclusion

The present research has shown that early Pakistani English poetry was not a marginal literary subject but a significant cultural domain where discussions regarding the complexities of identity, citizenship, and patriotism occurred in the foundational years following 1947. The inaugural cohort of Pakistani Anglophone poets did not engage in mere passive colonial copying or peripheral replication; instead, they assertively commandeered the imperial language. They transformed it into an indigenous conveyance that resonated with the local environmental circumstances, the shared historical anguish, and the colloquial cultural recollections.

Taufig Rafat and Daud Kamal established national identity through the tangible environment, Sufi mysticism, and heritage; Alamgir Hashmi addressed the existential rifts caused by the Partition, relocation, and geopolitical exile. Their research confirms the fundamental assertion of this dissertation, that national identity in a newly established state is not a fixed biological or political entity but an ever-evolving discursive construct, perpetually shaped through symbolic representation and historical context.

However, concurrently, our research illustrates that the narrative of postcolonial nation-building fundamentally constitutes a framework of disputed sovereignties. The most potent structural challenges from feminist and diasporic perspectives, particularly in the works of Kishwar Naheed and Moniza Alvi, vehemently oppose the uniform, government-approved conception of the nation. Naheed's bold poetry exposes the patriarchal marginalization inherent in elite nationalist initiatives, highlighting the pivotal role of women's subaltern efforts in the nation's moral and structural rejuvenation. Alvi's diasporic poetry concurrently contests rigid, border-centric definitions of citizenship, shifting the conversation to a dynamic, transnational 'Third Space' where identity is preserved across worldwide landscapes via the exchange of mobile cultural memory. The collective poetry forms indicate that patriotism within the Anglophone

tradition is not a singular, government-imposed ideology; rather, it is inherently diverse, perpetually debated, and continuously redefined via democratic processes.

Ultimately, these results significantly enhance broader postcolonial literary scholarship by emphasizing the fundamental assertion that literature serves not only as a reflection of historical transformation but also as a proactive architect of national identity (Ashcroft et al., 2002). The current research addresses a significant gap in South Asian studies by uniting canonical, feminist, and transnational poetic voices through a shared analytical framework, demonstrating that the formation of a post-independence awareness is invariably shaped by diverse, conflicting cultural narratives. Consequently, the early poetry in English from Pakistan must be regarded as a vital, foundational element of the country's literary heritage. It serves as a crucial asset for comprehending the interaction of collective memory, linguistic recontextualization, and the continuous restoration of the nation in delineating the evolving parameters of the postcolonial condition.

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