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The Gendered and Sexual Politics of Excess in Nationalist Narrations of Pakistan

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Author
Minai, Naveen Zehra

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The Gendered and Sexual Politics of Excess
In Nationalist Narrations of Pakistan

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Gender Studies

by

Naveen Zehra Minai

2014
Since 2001, Pakistan has become a highly visible location for the US-led War on Terror. This visibility is based on, and has produced, a transnational circuit of representations of Pakistan. Pakistan is either condemned as an exceptional failure of the nation-state, or redeemed through exceptional nationalist figures of courage and resistance. Such representations have material consequences for Pakistanis, including elisions between anti-state struggles due to injustice and inequality, sectarian violence, and transnational war machines based in Pakistan.

This dissertation explores the transnational politics of class, gender, and sexuality of these representations. The tropes deployed by these narrations attempt to manage an epistemological, emotional, and material excess of lives that cannot be contained by the categorical structure of the Pakistani nation-state.

Through a methodological combination of literary and cultural studies, I situate the texts in the historical context of each moment of crisis, and examine their international circulation amongst wider representations of Pakistan. My theoretical framework is based in transnational, postcolonial, feminist of color, and queer of color scholarship. I use this scholarship to locate excess in genealogies, bodies, emotions, practices, and communities which contest nationalist narrations of Pakistan.

This dissertation is part of transnational Pakistani scholarship which tries to imagine Pakistan differently, through neither condemnation nor redemption. Such scholarship elucidates transnational politics of gender, sexuality, and class that undergird nationalist claims on the idea and space of Pakistan. Excess is a moment in the stakes and consequences of these representations are illuminated, at which one can choose to turn towards transnational, postcolonial, feminist, antiracist, and queer of color practices of responsible and responsive solidarity between communities.
The dissertation of Naveen Zehra Minai is approved.

Aamir R. Mufti
Sondra Hale

Purnima Mankekar, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles
2014
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VITA
Naveen Minai

House 106, 10th Street, Khayaban-e-Muhafiz, Phase VI, D.H.A, Karachi 75500

naveenminai@gmail.com

Education

University of California Los Angeles—Los Angeles, CA
Department of Gender Studies, September 2014
Advisers: Purnima Mankekar (Chair), Mishuana Goeman, Sondra Hale, Aamir R. Mufti

Loughborough University—Loughborough, UK
Bachelor of Arts (Honors), December 2006
Major: Politics
Minor: Communication and Media Studies
Advisers: Helen Drake (Chair), Ruth Kinna, Moya Lloyd

Fellowships and Awards
2009-2014 Pakistan Foreign Fulbright Scholarship

Research Experience

Winter 2011-2012 UCLA South Asia Working Group—University of California, Los Angeles
- Organized reading schedule quarter by quarter
- Coordinated readings and presentations between members
- Organized meeting locations and times

Spring 2011 UCLA Gender Studies Colloquium on Pedagogy—University of California, Los Angeles

Teaching Experience

University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
Guest Lecture for TA Jessica Martinez
- Gender Studies 10: Feminist Perspectives of Women and Society (Spring 2011)
Guest Lecture for TA Jacob Lau
- Gender Studies 10: Feminist Perspectives of Women and Society (Spring 2011)
Major Research Papers Completed

- “Carefully Choreographed Contempt”: Sovereignty and Masculinity at the Wagah Border
- The Mystic and the Rebel: Lalla Zaynab, Isabelle Eberhardt, and the Gendered and Racial Politics of Rebellion
- Indigenous Interstices: A Different Economy of Bodies and Pleasures in the Poetry of Qwo-Li Driskill
- Muhammed the Man: Politics of Islam and Modernity in the Autobiography of Muhammed Asad
- “We’re God’s unwanted children, so be it!”: The Gendered Politics of Shame and Anger in David Fincher’s “Fight Club”

Conferences

February 2010 Thinking Gender: Annual Graduate Student Conference
University of California, Los Angeles
Making the Sexual Political: Women’s Transnational Collective Actions

April 2012 Fifth Annual DC Queer Studies Symposium
University of Maryland, College Park
Indigenous Interstices: A Different Economy of Bodies and Pleasures in the poetry of Qwo-Li Driskill

November 2012 National Women’s Studies Association Conference
Oakland Marriott City Center
“What was left behind?”: Colonial Temporalities and Indigenous Embodiments of Time and Space in the poetry of Qwo-Li Driskill

Professional Experience

2011 - 2012 Department of Gender Studies—University of California, Los Angeles
Graduate Representative to the Faculty

March 2008 - June 2009 Berlitz Language Center—Karachi, Pakistan
Part-time English Language Instructor

July 2007 - January 2008 Friends of Literacy and Mass Education—Karachi, Pakistan
Resource Manager

November 2006 - June 2007 Concern for Children Trust—Karachi, Pakistan
Project Manager, Machar Colony
Introduction

Zero Dark Thirty

Pakistan was ranked the third most dangerous country for women in 2011.1 The Economist declared Pakistan the world’s most dangerous place in 2008.2 Newsweek proclaimed Pakistan the most dangerous country in the world in 2007,3 and reiterated this in 2010. “The World’s Most Dangerous Nation Holds An Election” was a headline in Forbes in 2013.4 Former British Defense Secretary Liam Fox named Pakistan the most dangerous country in the world in 2013.5 The United Nations named Pakistan the most dangerous country in the world for journalists in 2014.6 These are the stories produced and circulated about Pakistan. These stories have made impressions on me as a Pakistani.7 It is the epistemological and material stakes and consequences embedded in these impressions that have motivated me to write this dissertation.

In the preface to the twenty-fifth anniversary edition of Orientalism, Edward Said writes, “I have long felt that a special intellectual and moral responsibility attaches to what we do as

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Said insists that speaking about injustice and suffering must always be done “within a context that is amply situated in history, culture, and socioeconomic reality.” I am a Pakistani woman who has the privilege of class and education. This privilege affords me not only access to transnational academic spaces, it also enables me to speak English as the language of so much transnational circulation. My class privilege affords me safety and opportunity in Pakistan not available to the majority of the population. It also enables me to inhabit a class-based respectability that is crucial to my ability to move in transnational spaces in safety and comfort. It is through my class privilege that I can embody a respectable transnational subjectivity. In other words, I am not forced by circumstance to be a refugee or an asylum seeker or an impoverished immigrant. I am not strip-searched by airport security. My English is perfect and my clothes are clean, pressed, and just colorful enough. I have a passport, and the money to apply for visas.

My decision and ability to become a scholar is enabled by this social, political, and economic privilege. Said’s statement, therefore, holds a powerful meaning for me. I felt this meaning before I read Orientalism, during my undergraduate degree in England. I studied political science, and in class after class, there was no mention of a worthwhile world outside of the Occident. There were also no people of value or note outside of those who can be identified as Europeans—a definition which excluded people of color, Jewish-identified people, and Romani-identified communities.

This was a transformative experience, an awakening to the concreteness of the legacies of British colonialism in India. I felt alienated from Britain because even though I had a BBC

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9 Ibid.
English accent. I knew the histories of the Tudor dynasty. I knew the work of William Shakespeare, John Donne, Samuel Beckett, William Wordsworth, I was nowhere to be found, because I was Pakistani, because I was brown. I resented myself because there seemed to be nothing of cultural, political, historical, or intellectual value in where I came from—and yet I had no other home. I felt lonely because I speak English better than any language of the subcontinent—and yet there seemed to be no words with which to answer my English peers who insisted that British colonialism in India had brought modernity, progress, democracy, and human rights to the subcontinent.

I know now that what I experienced was a structure of feeling, the affective consequences of colonialism. I know now that these feelings are dismissed as personal, as contained within my skin. I know now that this dismissal is a discursive strategy deployed to silence communities of color, poor and working-class peoples, indigenous communities, queer and trans peoples of color, immigrant and undocumented communities. I know now that this dismissal is a discursive component of the erasure of structural inequality and injustice.

I learned these lessons during my graduate education at the University of California in Los Angeles. I arrived in Los Angeles in September 2009 to pursue a doctoral degree in Gender Studies. It was amongst women of color, queers of color, and transnational feminists that I read the work of Edward Said for the first time, alongside the seminal postcolonial works of Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesare, Anne McClinton, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. I was introduced to Black feminism through the writings of Audre Lorde, Kimberle Crenshaw, Angela Davis, and Patricia Williams. I read the work of queer feminists such as Judith Butler, Cathy Cohen, and

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Adrienne Rich. I was introduced to the work of Native Studies’ scholars such as Qwo-Li Driskill, Andrea Smith, and Deborah Miranda. I read the work of queer of color scholars such as Jose Esteban Munoz, Jasbir Puar, Rod Ferguson, Gayatri Gopinath, and Sara Ahmed. I was introduced to the work of transnational scholars of South Asia such as Dipesh Chakrabarty, Veena Das, and Aamir Mufti.

These scholars gave me a vocabulary through which to understand, acknowledge, articulate, and challenge what I had experienced. Their scholarship also provided an illustration of the ethics of academic work which Said insists on in *Orientalism*. These scholars have “unmade and rewritten” histories of their different, connected, and specific contexts to expose, resist, challenge, and change narratives that elide and erase “peoples, languages, experiences, and cultures.” It is these elisions and erasures that enable the continuation of unjust structures, processes, and narratives of power.

This dissertation is part of my commitment to a project given shape and purpose by the work of the aforementioned scholars. It is on Pakistan not because Pakistan is an exception in the histories and communities of the world, but because Pakistan is a somewhere I call home, and because it is connected to those histories and communities. It is a project about resisting and challenging narratives that justify injustice in Pakistan, and about exploring the national and transnational forms and operations of such narratives. It is a project about using the privilege and

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14 Ibid.
power I hold to make space for those who do not, not as a moral triumph of a righteous self but as a responsibility of empathy and justice between one person and another.

Burger-e-Karachi

As a transnational Pakistani feminist scholar, it is imperative that I disclose the politics of identity involved in the authorship of this dissertation. Who I am as a Pakistani affects how I have written this dissertation, what I argue in it, and whom it concerns. Each of these components and their politics in Pakistan is contained within English as the language in which this dissertation is written, through the politics of English in Pakistan. English, as the language of power during British colonialism, has been transformed into the language of economic privilege, social capital, and transnational mobility in post-independence Pakistan. This is important to note precisely because the location of English as a language of identity and expression in modern South Asia is being constantly negotiated. It is the ground for contestations over belonging, right of representation, history, diaspora and homeland, and intersections of class and ethnic categories articulated through languages such Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashto, Balochi, and Siraiki.

Therefore, this dissertation and the texts analyzed therein speak to and speak of a particular demographic of Pakistanis. These are Pakistanis who speak English, which signifies their class privilege, generational social capital, and transnational mobility. Dual citizenship, tourism, and/or education abroad are all modes of the transnational class privilege of this demographic. Their ability to inhabit transnational spaces through a politics of respectability is based on their class privilege in Pakistan. These texts and this dissertation are not representative

of the lives of poor and working-class Pakistani laborers in the UAE; poor and working-class British-Pakistani and Pakistani-American families in Britain and the USA respectively; nor the 0.9 million internally displaced Pakistanis from the northwestern regions currently being denied entry into other provinces of Pakistan.

Conspiracy Theories

In *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture*, Aamir Mufti explores the lyric poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz to argue that there is an excess of identity, experience, and genealogy in South Asia that cannot be managed or locked by the epistemological structures of the nation-state. It is this excess which creates a “selfhood at odds with the geometry of selves put into place by partition.” My project pivots on this idea: of the “excess that cannot be contained by the categorical structure of the nation-state.” As such, this dissertation is part of the conversation begun in the anthology *Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan* by scholars such as Naveeda Khan, Sadia Abbas, Asad Ahmed, Kamran Asdar Ali, and Yasmin Saikia. Thematically, *Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan* consists of scholarship on aspects of this excess as it is located in specific histories, geographies, and communities. For example, Sadia Abbas explores the philic Orientalism of a narrative of class-privileged Pakistani nationalism through the figures of Imran Khan, Muhammed Asad, and Maryam Jameel.

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22 Ibid, 272.
Abbas looks at the judicial decision to mark the Ahmadi community as non-Muslims within the political and social context of Pakistan from 1974 to 1993.\textsuperscript{24} This decision was pivotal for the beginning of the judicial and political processes that have affected a national script of genocidal violence towards Ahmadi, Shia, Christian, and Hindu populations in Pakistan today. Kamran Asdar Ali details the labor protests by textile workers in Karachi in 1972 and the violent response by the Bhutto government.\textsuperscript{25} The memory of this labor movement, which began in the late 1960s, is “an unwritten history of such struggles connected to their unremembered status in the national psyche.”\textsuperscript{26} This lack of acknowledgement erases the presence of class struggles, Leftist organizing that was not solely led by economically privileged intellectuals and activists, and the nonviolent protests by workers that have constantly been answered by state violence.

For me, the work of these scholars is an example of how to do the work denoted by the seemingly simple statement with which Avery Gordon begins \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination}: “That life is complicated.”\textsuperscript{27} Gordon explains this statement as an ethical and political commitment made by scholars to understand their work as a limit, as a fragment, as a representation, and as a part of wider conversations.\textsuperscript{28} Each of the scholars in \textit{Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan} is concerned with exploring and contextualizing different aspects of Pakistan precisely to challenge prevailing narratives about Pakistan, and the deployment of these narratives to manage the fragments and limits that resist the nation-state. I use Avery Gordon’s work not only as a vocabulary to articulate an ethics of feminist scholarship;
I also use her notion of haunting to trace the unwritten histories elided by Pakistani nationalism in its various alignments. Gordon’s work is productive for asking where such histories may be located, how they may be accessed, and how they might be dealt with responsibly.

These stories are often located as feelings, as memories, as impressions left on architecture, on bodies, on ruins, on deleted lines in documents. I use Gordon’s work in conversation with Sara Ahmed’s to locate and explore these impressions, left on surfaces of skin and stone. The Cultural Politics of Emotion and Queer Phenomenology have been formative to my project in providing a vocabulary for exploring the emotions of these epistemologies as powerful tools that produce and reproduce communities through alignments against each other. This vocabulary has been crucial to my project as a project on South Asia, where, as Ashish Nandy puts it, “the new national boundaries are built not on the earlier distinctions, but on their ruins.”

A powerful way in which these ruins remain is through feeling, through what Ahmed calls impressions felt upon bodies and places. These are where the cracks in the facade of the modern South Asian nation-state are located, where memory is too much for the “categorical structure of the nation-state” and the narratives of identity and community required. Excess is often felt more than thought or articulated precisely because of the power it holds to undo the form of the nation-state.

My understanding of the definitions of the modern nation-state has been informed by the scholarship of feminists of color, postcolonial scholars, transnational feminists, and queer of color critique. Their work exposes and explains the colonial and settler colonial histories of the formation of the modern nation-state. Their scholarship also refuses the assumption that the

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“nation is the autonomous historical subject par excellence, and the state is the telos of its march towards self-fulfillment.” These scholars challenge the epistemologies that anchor this assumption. They analyze the deployments of power used to reinforce these epistemologies of time and place, including the categories of gender, sexuality, race, class, and religion. Feminist, Native, postcolonial, and queer of color scholars provide models for understanding those practices and communities that are the excess that the nation-state cannot restrain, incorporate, and control. From Crenshaw’s seminal theory of intersectionality and Munoz’s notion of disidentification, to Coulthard’s centering of place rather than time in the construction of meta-narratives, this scholarship is about those lives and those undoings that exceed the modern nation-state.

It is important to make a note here about the meaning of excess as it is explored and referenced in this dissertation. In the introduction to her book, Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan, Naveeda Khan declares her commitment to approaching Pakistan “from a perspective of plenitude rather than lack.” However, I am firmly committed to the word ‘excess’ to describe what is “too much” for the nation-state precisely because of the force the word ‘excess’ contains. I am concerned with those communities, genealogies, geographies, and practices that the nation-state cannot manage. It is because of this unmanageability that the nation-state often responds with violence and erasure. It is also to keep the material realities of violence (economic, physical, psychic, social, legal) in mind that I use the word “excess.”

There is a tonal difference between “excess” and “plenitude,” which I think is important. This is not to say it makes either word accurate or correct autonomously—but they are different.

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For me, plenitude contains an excitement, a positivity that is perhaps too close to being shaded by liberal multiculturalism’s celebration of diversity. Excess connotes something that is too much, which means it cannot be celebrated because it includes a threat that cannot be managed enough to turn it into a celebration. By definition, excess cannot be used to reaffirm the nation-state, while plenitude contains the possibility of just such a reaffirmation.

Aalu Andey

In the introduction to *Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan*, Naveeda Khan notes that, “Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has faced numerous crises, from one-off catastrophic events, to the slow and steady intensification of debilitating conditions.” Recent examples of these crises include devastating floods in 2010, an increase in drone attacks by the United States military in the northwestern regions in 2010, ongoing massacres of Ahmadi, Christian, Baloch, and Shia populations, and a militant attack on Jinnah International Airport in Karachi in 2014. These crises have produced a discourse of Pakistan as a failed state, encompassing what Khan notes as the failure of the state, the failure of nationalism, and the failure of sovereignty. Pakistan has been described “as a place insufficiently imagined.” The purpose of the essays in *Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan* is to detail, explore, and transform each of these failures into moments of imagination:

the failure of the state becomes a moment to ruminate on the artificiality of this most modern construct, the failure of nationalism, an opportunity to dream of alternative modes of association, and the failure of sovereignty to consider the

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34 This is Urdu for “Potatoes and Eggs,” which is a food in Pakistan. It references “Aalu Anday by Beygairat Brigade” YouTube video, 3:18. Posted by “The Media 180,” October 16, 2011 [http://youtu.be/ZEpnwCPgH7g](http://youtu.be/ZEpnwCPgH7g)

35 Naveeda Khan, introduction to *Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan* (New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2010), 1.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid, 4.
threats and possibilities of the realm of foreignness within
the nation-state as within the self\textsuperscript{38}

The excess I explore in this dissertation is what marks these moments as moments of imagination rather than failure at all.

I deploy transnational feminist, feminist of color, and queer of color optics to explore the transnational politics of masculinity and heterosexuality of both the excess and the strategies used to contain this excess in nationalist narrations of Pakistan. I use this analytical framework as part of my explicit commitment to a transnational feminist and queer of color praxis. This praxis is evident in the work of scholars such as Sara Ahmed,\textsuperscript{39} Veena Das,\textsuperscript{40} Audre Lorde,\textsuperscript{41} Qwo-Li Driskill,\textsuperscript{42} Ann Laura Stoler,\textsuperscript{43} and Jose Esteban Munoz.\textsuperscript{44} I follow these scholars to explicate technologies of power that produce and manage identity and community, and the ways in which Pakistani nationalist narrations use gender, sexuality, race, and class to elide, erase, and deny the intersectional formation of communities within and across national boundaries.

As I have explained earlier, this scholarship has been formative and transformative for my understanding of the intersectional positions of identity I occupy in transnational circuits. These scholars have informed how I have turned towards—and turned away from—different communities, and the contours of my particular membership within them.\textsuperscript{45} Such scholarship has deepened my understanding of the complex ways in which power operates through structures of

\textsuperscript{38} Naveeda Khan, introduction to \textit{Beyond Crisis: Re-evaluating Pakistan}, edited by Naveeda Khan (New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2010), 1-3.
\textsuperscript{40} Veena Das, \textit{Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into Ordinary} (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2007).
\textsuperscript{41} Audre Lorde, \textit{Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde} (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007).
\textsuperscript{44} Jose Esteban Munoz, \textit{Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics} (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
feeling, through transnational institutions, and through the most intimate details of our lives. This project is my attempt to contribute towards the conversations these scholars have crafted. These conversations are a challenge to the cartographies of identity produced by the discursive and material violences of colonialism and settler colonialism.

Rules of Engagement

This dissertation consists of three chapters. Each chapter focuses on a cinematic or literary work that depicts a nationalist narration of Pakistan. I analyze these narrations as articulated through the story of fathers and sons. The three texts I examine are Jamil Dehlavi’s 1998 film, “Jinnah,” Mohammed Hanif’s 2008 novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, and Mira Nair’s 2012 film, “The Reluctant Fundamentalist,” based on Mohsin Hamid’s 2007 eponymous novel. Each text is temporally anchored within a moment of crisis for Pakistan. “Jinnah” is about the creation of Pakistan through the partition of India in 1947, while *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* is set in 1988, near the end of the USA’s first proxy war in Afghanistan against the USSR, which Pakistan was involved in under the eleven-year military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq. “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” pivots on the drama of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001.

My analyses of these texts and their contexts of production and circulation are based on a methodological combination of literary studies and cultural studies. Literary studies enable me to understand the politics of narrative located in each text. Fiction is a mode of telling stories about the world through the creation of a world. Literary studies, therefore, is about the exploration of the politics which that fictional world has condensed. I use literary studies to anchor my analyses in the specificities of the text as a way of focusing my argument, and of constructing a literary
archive to formulate that argument. The boundaries of my argument are constructed according to the spatiotemporal context of the story. These boundaries are a sign of respect for context, and attentiveness to the specificities of context of what the story is about. I deploy literary studies as a method to read the text as a creation of a world, to pay attention to the politics of that world as a representation, and to insist on the honesty of the politics of that representation.

I use cultural studies to locate the stories told in fiction within wider narratives of the nation-state. Cultural studies explicates how particular stories are told differently in different modes of storytelling—how novelist Mohammed Hanif’s narration of General Zia’s military regime is different to the story told in Pakistani history text books, and how the film “Jinnah” portrays Mohammed Ali Jinnah next to historian Ayesha Jalal’s depiction of Jinnah in an academic text. Using cultural studies frameworks enables me to situate the wider socio-historical contexts within which texts are located; the references they make to historical, political, and social events; and what the differences between each representation says about the story they are telling. I aim to explore the cultural and historical discourses that underpin the production and circulation of specific narratives across transnational boundaries, and track the political economies of these discourses. Moreover, cultural studies enables me to analyze who is represented by which story, who is not, and modes of inclusion and exclusion that create access to telling stories about themselves, or having stories told about them. This methodological framework allows me to engage with the stories people tell and how they tell them, the political economies that underpin who gets to tell which stories, and who is represented by whom. If, as Homi Bhabha explains, the nation must be constantly narrated, it is important to explore the politics of identity and community that anchor these narrations.
The chapters are not arranged chronologically as a deliberate parallel to, and an illustration of, the ways in which Pakistan’s past, present, and future cannot be disciplined by heteronormative time as national time. The first chapter is an exploration of nationalist narrations of contemporary Pakistan post-September 11, 2001. The second and third chapters provide historical context for the production of these narratives, and their undoing. In the epilogue, I explore how each text contains historical residues, remnants, and reprises of the moments of crisis narrated in the other texts. These memories of each moment of crisis undo the linear temporality of the Pakistani nation-state. For example, the historical contradictions and artifices of the idea of Pakistan in 1947 are evident in the deletion of the names of Allah during General Zia-ul-Haq’s regime, which Mohammed Hanif describes in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. The war machines created by the US, Saudi, and Pakistani governments during the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan in the 1980s were operationalized in the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, which is depicted in “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.”

These remnants and reprises of moments of crisis in other moments of crisis are the historical and social excesses that challenge and resist the sealing off of history a linear national temporality attempts. I argue that the vocabulary of crisis is deployed by nationalist historiography to contain these excesses. This vocabulary reproduces inequality, injustice, and violence through elision and denial because it obstructs the possibility of honesty and accountability. National temporality as linear temporality refuses the impressions that remain on the skin of communities, but this resistance is undone as these impressions become heavier and heavier.

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Fathers, Sons, and Holy Ghosts

In Chapter 1, I focus on Mira Nair’s 2012 film, “The Reluctant Fundamentalist,” which centers on the political awakening of a young Pakistani man named Changez Khan in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001. Disillusioned by the American Dream after facing the tide of post-9/11 racial discrimination, Changez returns home to Lahore where he becomes a professor of political economy at Lahore University. He inspires his students to create “a Pakistani Dream,” which resists both American aggression and Islamic militancy. My main theoretical engagement in this chapter is with Sadia Abbas’ article, “Itineraries of Conversation: Judaic Paths to a Muslim Pakistan.” I push forward Abbas’ work to explore how the film narrates Pakistan through a philic Orientalism. This Orientalism is underpinned by problematic politics of class, gender, and sexuality, which the film ignores to reaffirm Pakistani nationalism.

I argue that the film is Orientalist because it constructs a binary of the East and the West. The East signifies art, culture, and morality, while the West signifies commercialism, individualism, and capital. The East is represented by Pakistan and Turkey, while the West is symbolized by the United States. The protagonist of the film, Changez Khan, rediscovers the value of his identity as a Pakistani and as a Muslim while in the West. His return home to Pakistan as the East is a return to his identity as a good Pakistani which is always already a return to his identity as a good Muslim. This Orientalism is philic because the protagonist-narrator is a Pakistani man who actively engages in the binaries of the East and the West to

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49 Ibid.
construct his story. Plot A is the telling of this story by the protagonist, Changez Khan, while
Plot B is the story he tells.

It is also philic because the film as a cultural object has been produced and directed by
Indian-American filmmaker Mira Nair. It is based on the bestselling book of the same title by
Pakistani-American author, Mohsin Hamid. Hamid also co-wrote the screenplay with Iranian-
American screenwriter Amir Boghani. Nair and Hamid are both part of communities that have
historically been imagined in and as the Orient, and they reproduce those discourses to tell a
story of the East. In other words, the film’s Orientalism is philic because it is a reproduction of
the Orient by those who have been historically located within that Orient. To paraphrase Sadia
Abbas, the flattery of Orientalism can be insidious, but philic Orientalism is still Orientalism.

This philic Orientalist framework is anchored in problematic politics of class, gender, and
sexuality. The binaries of the East and the West are imbued with the aforementioned qualities
and politics through three father figures as embodiments of this binary opposition. Ajmal Khan
as the poet in Lahore is aligned with Nazmi Kemal as the book publisher in Istanbul through the
East as the place of culture, refinement, and political activism. Both of them are opposed to Jim
Cross as the managing director of a boutique finance firm on Wall Street. Jim Cross is the
American embodiment of the consumerism, capitalism, and ruthless individualism of the West.
Changez Khan is the son of the East who is triangulated between what each of these father
figures represent; his choice is which way to turn: to the East or to the West.

The film’s narration of the story of Pakistani nationalism through the story of fathers and
sons reaffirms Pakistan as a heterosexual and heteropaternal nation-state. For example,
Changez’s mother is never named other than the title of “Ammi,” which is the Urdu word for

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mother. She is therefore defined by no more than her relation to Changez Khan as the Pakistani protagonist. This is emphasized when her desire to have a lavish wedding celebrations for Bina does not match the budget set by Ajmal Khan. Her expression of this desire motivates Changez to contribute towards these celebrations in secret—and it is the revelation of this secret at Bina’s mehndi that causes a rift between father and son. The Pakistani mother’s desires exceed the Pakistani father’s values as a poet, as a father figure of the ethics the East represents in this film. It is this excess which motivates Changez as the Pakistani son to defy those values in pursuit of the American Dream. Finally, it is his father’s words that make Changez realize the moral cost of the American Dream.

The philic Orientalist framework of the film is anchored in these politics of heterosexual masculinity. The values the film locates in the East are embodied by Ajmal Khan and Nazmi Kemal as father figures. Changez is the son of the East who must return home to become his authentic self. This is the self the audience sees when the film begins in Plot A: Changez as a confident, courageous, smart, well-spoken, and committed public intellectual. In other words, the son of the East must return home to become a good Pakistani, a good Muslim — and a good man.

The reaffirmation of Changez’s masculinity as heterosexual through philic Orientalism is emphasized by the politics of sexuality the film codes as part of the West. This is through the representation of Jim Cross as homosexual, and the failure of Changez and Erica’s relationship as the foreclosure of heterosexual futurity for Changez in the US. This is the philic Orientalist version of the binary Puar discusses as “the homosexual other is white, the racial other is
straight.” Since the film imbues the Orient with positive qualities and the Occident with negative, this binary is inverted—but not challenged—and heterosexuality becomes a part of the ways in which the Orient is morally superior to the Occident.

Chapter 2 focuses on Jamil Dehlavi’s 1998 film, “Jinnah.” It is the only film about the founding father of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah. This film was popularly perceived as an answer to Sir Richard Attenborough’s 1982 film, “Gandhi,” in which Jinnah is portrayed as a stubborn and malicious politician. The film begins on September 11, 1948, at the moment of Jinnah’s death. Jinnah is resurrected as a ghost, and he meets the Angel of Death, who asks him to justify the partition of India for the creation of Pakistan in August 1947. The film then moves back in time and place to detail how Jinnah came to lead the Muslim League in their demand for the creation of Pakistan as a homeland for “the Muslims of India,” where they would be free from persecution. The responsibility for the violence of partition is placed squarely on the British Raj for failing to protect the different religious communities from harm during the process of division. Dehlavi also constructs Nehru and Gandhi as manipulative and stubborn politicians who betray Jinnah’s nationalist inclinations by bringing “religion into politics” and discriminating against “the Muslims of India.”

My analysis of the film is anchored in Avery Gordon’s notion of haunting.\textsuperscript{57} Gordon argues that ghosts are signs of trauma from violence which has not been acknowledged, of histories that remain open-ended because of injustice, of lives erased to celebrate and reinforce the nation-state. They are the remnants of a past that will not stay in the past, according to the linear temporality of the nation-state. Ghosts are what the categorical structure of the nation-state cannot contain within the linear temporality of national history. I argue that Jinnah as a ghost is the sign of excess in the origin story of Pakistan. This excess is the failure of a genealogical affixation of the categories of Muslim and Pakistani through the exclusion of Indian. This genealogy is underpinned by the dislocation of identity and genealogy from place.\textsuperscript{58}

Although Pakistani nationalism\textsuperscript{59} is haunted by many ghosts, I focus on Jinnah as an especially powerful specter precisely because he is configured as the Father of the Nation. Since the genesis of the nation-state is anchored in a sexual and gendered epistemology, nationalism cannot abide father figures of insecurity and doubt. The existential crisis that Jinnah embodies as a ghost, as a sign of excess in the origin story, as a sign of elision and denial, is an existential crisis at the moment of origin. Jinnah as a ghost is a sign of lingering trouble\textsuperscript{60} for Pakistan because he embodies doubt for the existence of Pakistan.

I put the film “Jinnah” in conversation with \textit{Jinnah of Pakistan} by Stanley Wolpert, and \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} by Ayesha Jalal. Wolpert and Jalal are historians renowned for their expertise in South Asia. Wolpert’s account is


\textsuperscript{60} Avery Gordon, introduction to \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination} (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xix.
a personal and political biography of Jinnah, while Jalal focuses on the political and legal negotiations and intrigues between the Muslim League, the Congress, and the British government that resulted in the demand and creation of Pakistan. I explore the epistemological and political differences between these three representations of Jinnah, and through him, of the creation of Pakistan. The existential insecurity and doubt of Pakistani nationalism as embodied by Jinnah is located precisely in the possibility of these differences. This possibility is the excess that the film “Jinnah,” as a nationalist narration of Pakistan, cannot contain.

Chapter 3 analyzes Mohammed Hanif’s 2008 novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. The novel is a fictional explanation for the murder of President General Zia-ul-Haq, United States Ambassador Arnold Raphel, and Pakistan’s top military brass when the president’s plane crashed and exploded in the Bahawalpur Desert August 17, 1988. Amongst the imagined causes of death the novel provides is VX gas pumped into the air-conditioning vents on the orders of General Zia’s second-in-command, General Akhtar; a curse put on General Zia for his cruelty and injustice by a blind rape survivor named Zainab; poison from the tip of a sword wielded by protagonist Ali Shigri as vengeance for the murder of his father on General Zia’s orders; and explosives hidden in a crate of mangoes, gifted to General Zia by secret communists in the All-Pakistan Mango Farmers’ Cooperative.

I deploy Achilles Mbembe’s notion of necropolitics to frame the political context of General Zia-ul-Haq’s military government from 1977 to 1989. Mbembe argues that there are multiple definitions of sovereignty, a crucial one of which is “sovereignty expressed as the right to kill.” National sovereignty as necropolitical sovereignty is manifested most visibly in national militaries. I argue, therefore, that a military government such as General Zia-ul-Haq’s,

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62 Ibid, 16.
enacts a necropolitical sovereignty within the boundaries of the nation-state. General Zia’s regime as a necropolitical regime was anchored in the transnational circuit of weaponry, fighters, and monies between the American, Saudi, and Pakistani governments for the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. Subhabrata Banerjee describes such circuits as necrocapitalist, or the operation of capital through the politics of death and dispossession.\textsuperscript{63}

Within this context, I read the novel’s central motif as that of excess, denoted in the aforementioned convergence of assassins and causes of General Zia’s death. This excess is of those lives that “exceed the categorical structure of the nation-state.”\textsuperscript{64} Using the work of Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai in “Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots,” I explore the dynamics of gender and sexuality in the production of this excess. Following Puar and Rai’s argument about the figure of the monster and the figure of the terrorist as always already defined by a deviant sexuality,\textsuperscript{65} I analyze the figure of the traitor as a figure of excess, manifested in the characters of Obaid-ul-Allah and Captain Quli Shigri. Obaid is protagonist Ali Shigri’s lover, who represents sexual excess as a challenge to the necropolitically produced heterosexual masculinity of the Pakistan military. Colonel Quli Shigri is Ali’s father, and he represents emotional excess as a challenge to the necrocapitalism of the United States’ proxy war in Afghanistan against the USSR.


At Night, The Lost Memory of You Returned


These are all titles of books that appear on screen when you search ‘Pakistan’ in Amazon.com’s Books. Each title represents an attempt to narrate Pakistan, as do the films I analyze in this dissertation, “Jinnah,” and “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.” The notion of excess explored in this dissertation is precisely about the impossibility of an ease with which Pakistan can be narrated. This lack of ease manifests as existential doubt, as something out of focus, as an uneasy sense of something erased and something left incomplete. It is this excess, and the ways in which it cannot be contained or managed, which enable Pakistan to be imagined differently.

Sometimes these imaginings are feelings, impressions left on surfaces where one least expects them, and which one cannot forget. It is the feeling I get when my father points out that engraved in the colonial architecture of Karachi’s business district is a star of David—hidden unless you know where to find it—a symbol of the presence of Jewish communities in a country where an existential paranoia results in routine genocidal violence against Ahmadis, Shias, Christians, and Hindus. It is the feeling I get when I hear a rendition “Mori Araj Suno,” by Faiz Ahmed Faiz on the soundtrack of “The Reluctant Fundamentalist,” but I know that that poem was written to oppose the British Raj by Faiz as an Indian poet. The Jewish peoples of Karachi all left by the early 1950s—but the star of David remains in stone. Faiz is dead—but legacies of

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partition remain in his poems as legacies of lost love.⁶⁸ Both these feelings exceed the ways in which Pakistan has been narrated. They challenge the notion of Pakistan as a “geographic tabula rasa”⁶⁹ upon which a nation narrated⁷⁰ as “the Muslims of India” have exclusive claim, and they challenge the production of such narrations at all. ⁷¹ These feelings are signs of the excess of lives that the epistemologies of Pakistan cannot contain. Without an acknowledgement of this excess, without respect for those who represent this excess, Pakistan cannot be imagined differently, let alone imagined better.⁷²

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Chapter 1: The Road to Pakistan

The Philic Orientalism of “The Reluctant Fundamentalist”

Introduction

“The Reluctant Fundamentalist” is a 2012 film by internationally recognized filmmaker Mira Nair. The film traces the political awakening and homecoming of a young Pakistani man named Changez Khan. In summer 2001, Changez is a high achieving Princeton graduate at a powerful boutique firm on Wall Street, with a beautiful, wealthy girlfriend named Erica Underwood, and access to the “highest echelons of Western society.” However, Changez’s American Dream is transformed into a nightmare after the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. The attacks result in a paranoid, violent racist aftermath for Changez as a Pakistani Muslim man in the USA, and ultimately lead to his realization that he can only truly be at home and be himself in Pakistan. Changez returns to Lahore to become a professor at Lahore University who inspires his students to resist militant Islam and American aggression through nonviolence and build a Pakistani Dream.

In this chapter, I argue that, “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” is a reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism through philic Orientalism. This reaffirmation is narrated through the story of fathers and sons, which constructs Pakistani nationalism as heterosexual and masculine.

My understanding of philic Orientalism draws on Edward Said’s seminal work, Orientalism, and its deployment by Sadia Abbas in her essay, “Itineraries of Conversion: Judaic

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73 Mira Nair is an internationally renowned director based in New York City, USA. Her films include “Mississippi Masala,” “The Namesake,” “Monsoon Wedding,” and “Vanity Fair.”
75 The Reluctant Fundamentalist, DVD, directed by Mira Nair (2013; Mpi Home Video), Film.
Paths to a Muslim Pakistan.” I define philic Orientalism as the use of an Orientalist epistemological framework by peoples who have historically been located in the material and imagined place called the Orient or the East as the diametric opposite of a place called the Occident or the West. “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” is a philic Orientalist narrative in that it features a Pakistani protagonist-narrator who operationalizes these categories to portray Pakistan as the East and the US as the West. It is also philic Orientalist because has been produced by Mira Nair based on a book, and co-written screenplay, by Mohsin Hamid. Nair is Indian-American and Hamid is Pakistani-American. Both of them narrate Pakistani nationalism through a binary in which Pakistan is the site of art, political resistance, and morality in opposition to the US as the site of individual ambition, ruthless capitalism, and commercialism.

The gendered and sexual philic Orientalism of the film is manifested in three ways. First, three father figures in the film are identified with the East and the West as binary categories. Jim Cross is identified with the West (the US) while Ajmal Khan and Nazmi Kemal are identified with the East (Pakistan and Turkey, respectively). Second, the film represents Islam through the categories of “good” and “bad” Muslims, produced through transnational circuits of gender, sexuality, and class. The film erases the multiple, lived, and contested versions of Islam present in Pakistan. Third, the film deploys the notion of return to Pakistan as pivotal for the protagonist, Changez Khan, to become a good Pakistani, which is axiomatically coded as a good Muslim. This affixes the categories of Muslim and Pakistani according to the artificial genealogy constructed by Pakistani nationalists. Moreover, Pakistan becomes a place outside the time of the West such that identities such as Pakistani and Muslim exist without contact with this time. This

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77 Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
erases the transnational circuits of identity, community, and capital in which the Pakistani characters in the film, and the cast and crew of the film, are situated.

Summary

“The Reluctant Fundamentalist” is Mira Nair’s adaptation of Mohsin Hamid’s eponymous novel, published in 2007. It stars Riz Ahmed, Om Puri, Shabana Azmi, Liev Schreiber, Kiefer Sutherland, Haluk Bilginer, Nelsan Ellis, and Kate Hudson. Plot A spans two days in 2011 and is located in the city of Lahore, Pakistan. It revolves around an interview between Pakistani professor, Changez Khan, and American journalist, Bobby Lincoln. Bobby is writing about what he calls “Pakistan’s new militant academia,” and Changez is at the forefront of these public intellectuals.

Nothing, however, is what it seems. The night before the interview, an American professor Anse Rainier is kidnapped by militants in Lahore. The interview between Changez and Bobby is part of a CIA operation to rescue him. Bobby and Rainier are both undercover CIA agents in Pakistan. Changez is the suspected mastermind behind the kidnapping because of his participation in what the CIA views as anti-American lectures and protests. Halfway through the interview, Changez reveals that he is aware of Bobby’s deception and informs him that the CIA has the wrong suspect. As the students protest against American profiling and police brutality outside the teahouse, Changez pleads with Bobby to call off the CIA operation before someone gets hurt. Unfortunately, it is too late — due to a miscommunication between himself and CIA commander Ludlow Cooper, Bobby receives news that Anse Rainier has been killed and thinks that Changez ordered his death. Out of grief for his friend and panic at the angry students

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Mohsin Hamid is a Pakistani-American writer currently based in Lahore, Pakistan, whose debut novel is *Moth Smoke*. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is his second novel, followed by *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*.
surrounding him, Bobby takes Changez hostage at gunpoint so he can threaten his way out of the teahouse. Despite Changez’s calls for the protest to remain peaceful, his students attempt to rescue him and in the ensuing melee between students, police, and CIA agents, Bobby accidentally shoots a young student named Sameer. As Bobby is whisked away by Agent Cooper, Sameer dies in Changez’s arms. Agent Cooper informs Bobby that before communication was cut off between them, he had been trying to tell Bobby that Rainier had been killed in Karachi by armed militants with whom Changez had no affiliation or contact. Changez had been innocent all along. The last scenes of the film focus on Sameer’s funeral at sunrise. Changez’s eulogy for Sameer is a poetic call for peace and fortitude in the face of death, rather than vengeance and violence.

Plot B is the interview itself in which Changez tells Bobby the story of how he became a professor of political economy at Lahore University. This story is set in Lahore, New York City, Manila, Atlanta, and Istanbul. It spans the events of September 11, 2001, and the immediate aftermath of the attacks on the Twin Towers in 2002 and 2003. The story revolves around Changez’s pursuit of the American Dream. As a hardworking and competitive Princeton graduate, Changez is hired by a boutique firm on Wall Street. He quickly impresses his boss, Jim Cross, who takes Changez under his wing as a mentor. Changez also meets and falls in love with Erica Underwood, a beautiful photographer and visual artist whose family comes from the upper echelons of New York society. However, even as he gains wealth and prestige in New York City, Changez’s relationship with his father, Ajmal Khan, becomes tense and strained. This is because of Ajmal Khan’s disapproval of the nature of Changez’s chosen profession as ruthless, myopic, and greedy.
The American Dream turns into a nightmare for Changez after the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. As a Pakistani Muslim man, Changez experiences racial and religious profiling, police arrests and interrogations, strip searches at John F. Kennedy International Airport, and interpersonal micro-aggressions. These experiences make Changez realize that he does not belong in the USA. While he is on a business trip in Istanbul, he meets book publisher Nazmi Kemal. Kemal reminds Changez of his father, Ajmal Khan, and his home in Lahore. Lahore is configured as the site of the authenticity of Changez’s identity. Changez then makes the decision to quit his job on Wall Street and return to Pakistan, where he begins teaching political economy at Lahore University. He inspires his students towards “a Pakistani Dream, one that doesn’t involve immigrating,” stressing hard work, self-reliance, and peaceful resistance to both American aggression and militant Islam.

Orientalism

In his seminal work, Orientalism, Edward Said coined the term as “a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience.” Said argued that the geopolitical spaces of the Orient and the Occident were narrative inventions constructed as opposites. Power worked to produce and reproduce these narrations as material realities, which reinforced what the Occident and the Orient signified. According to Said, the Orient was “the place of Europe’s greatest and richest and oldest colonies,” which would include the Indian subcontinent, Egypt, Morocco, Haiti, Nigeria, Angola, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Syria, Vietnam, the Philippines, and others. The major colonial powers included

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81 Ibid, 1.
England, France, Spain, Germany, and Portugal (Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Sweden also had colonies but not as many). For Europe, these geopolitical spaces constitute “the source of its civilizations and languages, it’s cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other.” It is this Other that has “helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience.” This contrast, as “an integral part of European material civilization” involves Orientalism as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.” This authority is the power of producing and managing “the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively.” Power is the key word here: “The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony.” This power, domination, and complex hegemony takes various forms and processes in different places and communities. Postcolonial and transnational scholars such as Anne McClintock, Robert J.C. Young, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have explored the politics of gender, sexuality, race, and class that simultaneously produce and are produced by Orientalist narratives in different contexts. I follow their work to explore the politics of gender, sexuality, and class that underpin the philic Orientalism in “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.”

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82 Ibid.
83 Ibid, 1-2.
84 Ibid, 2.
85 Ibid, 3.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid, 5.
In her essay, “Itineraries of Conversion: Judaic Paths to a Muslim Pakistan,” Sadia Abbas discusses Muhammed Asad and Imran Khan as Pakistani Muslims who come to Islam through a journey of self-discovery, rather than mere birth. Abbas points out that, “Islam seems to provide a historical narrative that is cast, romantically, as outside European time” which signals that these are “orientalist movements.” Abbas notes that while an “invocation of orientalism may seem tired at this point, a trite iteration of the hermeneutic of suspicion,” it is necessary “precisely because it is so easy to forget the flattery that can lie so insidiously at orientalism’s core.” Abbas cautions, “Orientalism can be philic as well as phobic.” Self-orientalising does not detract from the reality that it is still orientalism and carries with it technologies of producing Others in time and space.

Abbas notes that the “value of Islam becomes apparent” to Asad and Khan “whilst they are in the West” precisely because of their perception of Islam as a geopolitically monolithic entity “somehow still suspended in its own past.” Pakistan, then, becomes a blank canvas upon which this time “out of Western modernity” can be written into a space. Abbas’s analysis points to “the shape of religion in modernity, and its relationship with political power” in which the figures such as Asad and Khan narrate “a story of diasporic self-discovery, a

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92 Ibid, 344-347.
93 Ibid, 344-347.
94 Ibid, 345.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid, 346.
99 Ibid, 345.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid, 347.
conversion narrative with an international itinerary.”¹⁰³ This is story, however, is thoroughly modern: the centering of a universal philosophy, the possibility of a universal individual, international mobility, and notions of home, self and other forged in diaspora. In particular, the discourse of a blank time and space outside of modernity solely defined by and through European notions and practices¹⁰⁴ is exceedingly familiar.¹⁰⁵

From Father to Son

There are three father figures triangulated around the protagonist, Changez Khan. These are Ajmal Khan, Jim Cross, and Nazmi Kemal. Khan and Kemal are politically and ideologically aligned¹⁰⁶ through the philic Orientalist narrative of Pakistan and Turkey as the East or the Orient, while Cross is configured as the West or the Occident in opposition. Changez’s narrative journey is the journey of a son away from Pakistan, which is a journey away from the ideals of the Pakistani father, to the USA and the values represented by the American father figure. Changez’s return to Pakistan is a political and ideological return to the Pakistani father. It is through this return that he becomes a good and authentic Pakistani.

¹⁰³ Ibid 344.
¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 366.
Ajmal Khan

Ajmal Khan is Changez’s father. The audience is introduced to him during the opening scene of the film. This scene is of a qavvali by renowned South Asian qavvals,\(^\text{107}\) Fareed Ayaz and Abu Mohammed, in the garden of the Khan family home. The backdrop is of golden light coming from the open windows and doors of the house, and glowing fairy lights strung across the lawn. At one end is a slightly raised platform upon which the qavvals are sitting. The camera pans across to the soft, thick rugs laid out on the grass upon which the audience is seated. As the qavvali begins, the camera focuses on Changez walking across the lawn with a bottle of alcohol in his hand. An older man with grey hair, seated next to a beautifully dressed woman, gives him the thumbs-up and says, “Shabaash, beta!” ‘Shabaash’ is an Urdu word which means ‘Well done,’ while ‘beta’ is an Urdu word used to refer to a child by an adult. ‘Beta’ can mean ‘child’ when referring to a boy or a girl, but when it is referring to a boy, it also means ‘son’ (while the word ‘beti’ means ‘daughter’). The use of this word by an older man for a younger one marks the former as the father and the latter as the son.

The first scene of Plot B confirms this relationship. It is set in the summer of 2001 in the city of Lahore. Changez is struggling to push an old Honda Civic into the driveway of the house seen in the opening scene of the film, which marks it as the Khan family home. The man in driver’s seat is the same grey haired gentleman the audience has seen in the aforementioned scene. As the older gentleman revs the engine and the car moves slowly into the driveway, a shiny new car pulls up outside the gate. The three boys in it call out to

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\(^{107}\) Qavvali is a form of devotional music popular in South Asia, originating from devotional forms of poetry and music in what are today Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Central Asia in the eleventh century. It was popularized especially through the work of the thirteenth century scholar, Amir Khusro.
Changez tauntingly, “Oi Changez! It’s time to trade in for a new car! Which village did you get this cart from?” As they drive off laughing, an exhausted and embarrassed Changez turns to the older gentleman now standing in the driveway, and says, “Abbu, we need to get a new car.” It is the word ‘Abbu’ which marks the older man as Changez’s father since it is an Urdu word which means ‘father.’

Ajmal Khan is a poet. There are three major references to his profession in Plot B by Changez. The first reference is set in 2001 in New York City, during Changez’s first date with Erica in a dimly lit bar. Erica asks in wonderment, “Your father is a poet?” The structure and punctuation of her sentence indicates this question as a confirmation of information Changez has already told her. “You father is a poet” with a question mark is a confirmation because it is also a sentence that can be completed as a statement with a period, versus the sentence, “Is your father a poet” which would only function as a question and require a question mark. Changez does confirm this information: “His laser-sharp words and inadequate salary are well known throughout the Punjab.”

The second reference is set in 2002 in Istanbul, where Changez and Jim Cross have arrived to evaluate a publishing house for the company which owns it. Basak Yaymici Publishing is run by Nazmi Kemal, a worldly and refined gentleman who has a passion for translating books in different languages to facilitate the sharing of great literature across the world. Kemal is understandably antagonistic towards Cross and Khan. When they arrive in his office, he tells them, “For forty-two years, I have made books. And through this press, the greatest Middle Eastern writers have given their stories to the world. Now you’ve come here to render me obsolete.” In an attempt to mollify Kemal, Changez tells him, “Well, no
one can put a value on what you’ve accomplished here. My father is a poet. He is well known in the Punjab. His greatest friend is his publisher.”

The third reference is also in Istanbul. As Changez walks across the courtyard of Basak Yaymici Publishing, Kemal calls out to him from his office, “Changez! Look what I found.” Kemal holds out a book, which has a picture of Ajmal Khan on the back cover. Kemal tells Changez, that it is “Part of an anthology of contemporary poets from the Punjab. Your father is Ajmal Khan, correct?” Changez is rendered speechless for a moment, and then he nods and says, “I didn’t realize he had been translated into Turkish.” The audience of course already knows that Ajmal Khan is Changez’s father through earlier scenes.

The relationship between Changez and his father is strained at the beginning of Plot B. This is because of what Changez sees as his father’s inability to provide financially for the family because of his profession as a poet. For example, at the beginning of his voiceover narration of Plot B, Changez tells Bobby Lincoln that, “Our bank account was empty.” Later, when his sister Bina tries to persuade him not to behave rudely towards their father, Changez retorts, “Poems don’t buy generators. Someone has to be where the money is.”

A third example is when Changez describes his father as a poet to Erica: “His laser-sharp words and inadequate salary is well known throughout the Punjab.” Changez’s tone is sarcastic; the word "inadequate" makes the point of a lack of finances; and that this lack is “well known throughout the Punjab” signals how Changez is socially embarrassed by his father’s profession which results in an “inadequate salary.”
A fourth reference is during a scene set in New York City in 2002. Changez is on the phone with his mother. The scene alternates between frames of Changez in Erica’s apartment, and his mother in their house in Lahore, stressed amidst a flurry of activity because of Bina’s upcoming wedding celebrations. Trying to alleviate her stress, Changez insists to his mother that he will take care of the costs of catering the celebrations. This insistence coupled with his mother’s request, “Don’t tell Abbu,” implies that Changez’s mother doesn’t have enough money to host the wedding celebrations on the budget set by Ajmal Khan. Changez’s contributions must be kept a secret between him and his mother because of the strain between father and son because of the finances of the family.

The film makes it clear that Changez and Ajmal Khan reconcile through a political alignment, which reaffirms Pakistani nationalism. Sara Ahmed defines alignment as the process by which a community is produced through the epistemological direction a set of people turns in. This turning involves a turning away from or turning towards a definition, a structure, an idea, or an object. In the film, such an alignment is manifested through Changez’s resignation from Underwood-Samson, his subsequent return to Pakistan, and his decision to become a public intellectual at Lahore University. As a professor of political economy who advocates nonviolent resistance (Changez’s refusal to join the Asal Mujahideen), speaking truth to power (Changez’s defiance of Jim Cross), and national loyalty (“Is there a Pakistani Dream, one that doesn’t involve immigrating?” he asks his students on the first day of class), Changez has aligned his political values with those of Ajmal Khan as his father and as a poet.

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109 Ibid.
This is represented in two major instances in Plot A. The first is during a scene set in 2011 at Lahore University, the day after Anse Rainier is kidnapped. This kidnapping has triggered police presence at the university at the behest of the US government to find and rescue Professor Rainier. Consequently, the atmosphere at the university is tense, and students are organizing a protest. The camera focuses on a conversation between two of these students, one of whom is Sameer, a sweet, humorous, earnest, and lively young man who is Changez’s teaching assistant. In this scene, he is carrying a book of poetry; in the conversation about organizing the protest, Sameer’s friend teases him, “Are you going to resist the police with a poem?” Sameer replies, “Why not? As Professor Khan says, the most transcendent poetry is by definition political,” thumping his fist to his heart and then pumping it in the air as a gesture of protest.

Sameer’s quotation of Professor Khan—that is, Changez—illustrates that Changez has come to view poetry differently as compared to his perspective at the start of Plot B. In the summer of 2001 in Lahore, Changez was disdainful of poetry (and therefore of his father) as something which did not have economic value. As Professor Khan in 2011, Changez values poetry as a tool of political expression and change.

The second instance is the final scene of the film: Sameer’s burial at sunrise, in a quiet, beautifully landscaped graveyard in Lahore. As described earlier in the summary of the film, Sameer is accidentally shot in the heart by a panicked Bobby Lincoln during the clash between the CIA extraction team, the student protestors, and the Pakistani police. At his burial, Changez gives a eulogy against vengeance and violence, advocating hope and courage. The language he uses is poetic: “Too many tears have flowed into this river. Too much blood has flowed into this river. Tell the sun to keep the light of its rays. For I am
lighting the lamps of hope myself.” The use of poetic language to make a political statement signifies the value Changez has now attached to poetry; instead of being scornful at how it does not provide economic stability, he has recognized the power of poetry in political causes and is using it as a tool for the advocacy of nonviolence, hope, and forbearance. This aligns\(^\text{110}\) Changez with Ajmal Khan the poet, which the visuals of this scene make clear as well: against the backdrop of a brightening sky and the rising sun, Changez stands next to his father as he makes this eulogy. Father and son stand next to one another in an ideological alignment through “the most transcendent poetry” which is “by definition political.”

If “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” is the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism told through the story of fathers and sons, then Ajmal Khan represents Pakistan. This representation is constructed in several ways. In the *Making Of* feature on the DVD, director Mira Nair explains that the film represents a side of Pakistan not seen in the media in the West:

> You’d never think that Pakistan, the land of drones and beheadings and assassinations, could ever be a place where there’s great bonhomie, great family ties, extraordinary music, extraordinary painting\(^\text{111}\)

In other words, if the Western media only portray Pakistan as “the land of drones and beheadings and assassinations,” then Nair is determined to represent it as “a place where there’s great bonhomie, great family ties, extraordinary music, extraordinary painting.” To this end, Nair locates her story in Lahore, the capital city of the province of Punjab, a city

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renowned in the subcontinent for intellectual, cultural, and artistic vibrancy and refinement. In the film, Lahore serves as a microcosm of the kind of Pakistan Nair aims to represent.

Ajmal Khan is consistently identified as a poet of Punjab. For example, Changez tells Erica, “His laser-sharp words and inadequate salary is well known through the Punjab.” The book of Khan’s poetry which Nazmi Kemal gives to Changez in Istanbul is “Part of an anthology of contemporary poets from the Punjab.” Ajmal Khan is also identified with the kind of Lahore Nair has represented in the film. For example, the opening scene of the film includes frames of a mehfil at the Khan family home. The word ‘mehfil’ is Urdu for an exclusive social gathering of cultural and artistic entertainment in South Asia, usually the performance of poetry or classical music. That it is a mehfil is confirmed not only by the intimate setting of a family home but also by the performance of a qavvali by famous South Asian qavvals, Fareed Ayaz and Abu Mohammed. Ajmal Khan as the host of this mehfil is marked as a member of the social and cultural milieu in which such gatherings are organized and attended.

This identification is also constructed in the narrative arc of protagonist Changez Khan. Plot B begins with Changez disdainful and at odds with Ajmal Khan in political and ideological terms. He leaves Ajmal Khan, and through him, Pakistan, for the US to pursue his ambitions of economic wealth and social affluence on Wall Street. This pursuit is under the tutelage of Jim Cross as a father figure who replaces Ajmal Khan ideologically. The critical illustration of the difference between what Ajmal Khan represents, and what Jim Cross represents for Changez as the Pakistani son, is set in Lahore as well. It is Ajmal Khan who points out to Changez the selfish and cruel nature of what director Mira Nair terms
“economic fundamentalism” of the US: “With one line of your pen, thousands of people lose their livelihood.”

The end of Plot B is Changez’s return to Pakistan and to the political and ideological values of his father the poet. He resigns from Underwood-Samson on principle, telling Jim Cross that, “I have a commitment to myself. I have to live in truth.” This truth is the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism as symbolized by the Ajmal Khan the Pakistani father-poet. This truth lies in the return of Changez to Pakistan as a return to his father and his ideological commitments.

For South Asian-identified audiences in particular, Ajmal Khan as the Pakistani father-poet is configured most emphatically through the invocation of Faiz Ahmed Faiz for the figure of Ajmal Khan. This invocation is evident in a number of ways in the film. Two of Faiz’s poems are performed at key moments in the film. “Mori Araj Suno” plays when Changez defies Jim Cross, resigns from Underwood-Samson, and returns to Pakistan; “Bol” plays at the end of the film, immediately after Changez’s eulogy at Sameer’s burial, in which he advocates courage, hope, and nonviolent change in Pakistan by Pakistanis, as a confirmation of Pakistani nationalism. In the Making Of feature of the DVD, director Mira Nair states that, “Most of Faiz Sahib’s work is the anthem for this film,” while lead actor Riz Ahmed reveals that the book of Ajmal Khan’s poetry which Nazmi Kemal gives Changez is a book of Faiz’s poetry.

Lahore is known as the city of Faiz because it was where he chose to live after the partition of India in 1947. His home there remains under the care of his daughters and is named Faiz Ghar or the House of Faiz. Moreover, the setting of most of the action of Plot

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A is a tea house on the grounds of Lahore University, called the Pak Tea House. While Lahore University is fictional, the Pak Tea House is not — the name references the original Pak Tea House. This was a tea house in Lahore frequented by writers, intellectuals, artists, poets, and Leftists, including Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Saadat Hussain Manto, Ahmed Faraz, and Intizar Hussain. It was originally owned by a Sikh family and is believed to have been in business since 1932, before the partition of India in 1947. This reference imbues the Pak Tea House—and therefore Lahore—portrayed in the film with historical inflections of intellectual and cultural creativity, and political defiance.

These are the ways in which Ajmal Khan as the father-poet is identified with Pakistan. This identification imbues Pakistani nationalism with the qualities and emotions of hope, courage, intellectual creativity, cultural sophistication, nonviolence, and political resistance. While such a portrayal of Pakistan is admirable as a political sentiment, it is problematic because it is constructed through the binary of Orientalism—and, to paraphrase Sadia Abbas, just because it is philic does not mean it is not still Orientalist. Moreover, this narrative is anchored in problematic dynamics of class, gender, and sexuality. Therefore, the qualities and emotions the film imbues Pakistani nationalism with are located in specific social, economic, and political demographics in Pakistan. The film’s construction of Pakistani nationalism is problematic precisely because it ignores that specificity. This erasure is part of the philic Orientalism of this nationalist narrative.

For a film that aims to reaffirm Pakistani nationalism, it is an ironic insight into the impossibility of such an affirmation that none of the filming locations for “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” include Pakistan. Moreover, it is Delhi in India that doubles for Lahore in Pakistan. Director Mira Nair states on the Making Of feature on the DVD: “We are on my
favorite street in New Delhi, and we are in the family home of the movie. You could be in Lahore right now.” It is the fact that Delhi can double for Lahore, signaled in the “could be,” which encapsulates this impossibility. This is because Pakistani nationalism is based on an entity called “the Muslims of India,” as an “autonomous historical subject par excellence.” Pakistan is the territorialization of this nation according to the notion that the “state is the telos of its march towards self-fulfillment.” The autonomy of this historical subject is produced through the separation of "Muslim" from "Indian" so that the category of "Muslim" can form the start of a genealogical straight line to the category of "Pakistani." That a representation of Delhi can double as a representation of Lahore signals the undoing of this separation because it signals an Indian past still present in both Delhi and Lahore.

This past is only referred to once in the film. In Plot B, Changez’s sister Bina is getting married, and Changez arrives back in Lahore for the celebrations. The scene is of the drive from Lahore airport to the Khan family home. Outside the car, the camera pans across in a wide shot to show tanks and soldiers lining the streets. Bina remarks in a half-indignant, half-humorous tone, “The world couldn’t wait one more week until exploding?” The scene changes to an aerial view of a busy, colorful bazaar lit up at night, moves to a wide shot of an outdoor biryani stall, and then morphs into the bright colors, golden light, and lively music of Bina’s mehndi. Changez narrates in a voiceover during these shots: “Pakistan was born into violence over fifty years ago. We knew how to cope. As the

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tensions became worse, the biryanis became more delicious, the bootleggers more frequent, and the celebrations more raucous.”

The reason for the soldiers’ presence, the worsening tensions, and the possibility of the world exploding, is the political crisis between India and Pakistan occurring at the time. This provides the timeframe of Changez’s visit: between December 2001 and January 2002. The crisis was an attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001 by militant organizations that India accused Pakistan of harboring, training, and arming.116 This crisis was not the first time India and Pakistan had been at war or on the brink of war since the partition in 1947. The two countries fought in 1965, 1971, and 1999. There has been constant conflict between the two over Kashmir, which both countries claimed at the moment of partition in 1947. Pakistan has accused India of occupying Kashmir while India has accused Pakistan of training and arming militants who operate in Kashmir and target India. India alleged that these militants were behind the attack in Mumbai in 2008; Pakistan denied these allegations. This attack resulted in movement by both national armies to the border between them.

However, the context in which Changez jokes, “We knew how to cope,” is precisely what disproves this sentiment. For example, the war of 1971 was the cessation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan due to official and popular injustices enacted in social, political, and economic terms by West Pakistan against East Pakistan. India recognized the new nation-state of Bangladesh when East Pakistan declared independence. West Pakistan reacted by deploying the Pakistan Army to Bangladesh. What happened as a result is still

part of a collective trauma of murder, rape, and arson for Bangladesh, which Pakistan still refuses to acknowledge.\textsuperscript{117}

While it is accurate that India also deployed troops to Bangladesh during this time, the point is that the creation of Bangladesh had nothing to do with conspiracies hatched by India as alleged by Pakistani nationalists. India configured into the reason for the cessation of East Pakistan insofar as a thousand miles of Indian territory separated West Pakistan and East Pakistan at the time of partition in 1947. These thousand miles also disprove Changez’s casual comment that, “Pakistan was born into violence fifty years ago. We knew how to cope!” This is because the postcolonial geography of South Asia before 1971 embodied not only the chaotic legacies of British colonialism, but also the epistemological and ontological instability of the demand for Pakistan and the identity categories on which it was based. The war of 1971 was the first (of many) violently irrevocable signs of these instabilities and artifices.

Changez uses the past tense: “Pakistan was born into violence fifty years ago. We knew how to cope!” This past tense indicates the desire of Pakistani nationalism (of which Changez is an affirmative representation) to construct the violence of both 1947 and 1971 as finished, as temporally sealed episodes in the history of Pakistan, rather than acknowledge these violences as existential to Pakistan. In other words, the violence Pakistan was born into fifty years ago (1947) is precisely why it is not able to cope, of which the war of 1971 and the cessation of East Pakistan are proof. Changez, as a figure of the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism, attempts to seal these histories by using the past

tense in his narration of them—but the histories inescapably and existentially encapsulated by that one line, “Pakistan was born into violence fifty years ago” make this impossible.

This impossibility is also located in the invocation of Faiz Ahmed Faiz in the film. For example, “Bol,” was first included in the collection Naqsh-e-Faryadi, which was published in 1943. It is a call to resist and challenge the British Raj by Faiz as an Indian, not Faiz as a Pakistani. Contrary to the theme of return in the film, Faiz was forced into exile twice, first to London in 1960 and then in 1979 to Beruit. He had to return to Lahore in 1982 due to the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Faiz was forced to go into exile abroad was persecution, arrest, imprisonment, and surveillance by the governments of Liaquat Ali Khan, Iskander Mirza, and General Zia-ul-Haq. This was because Faiz was a member of the Progressive Writers’ Movement, and a founding member of the Communist Party of Pakistan. He was also frequently accused of atheism because of his commitment to Marxism and his fame in the Soviet Union (he was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in 1962).\footnote{Aamir Mufti, 	extit{Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture} (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 210-243.} The invocation of Faiz in “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” is based on a highly selective collection of poems: “Bol” and “Mori Araj Suno.” This selection ignores the aforementioned political contexts of each poem and the poet. Moreover, it ignores the lyric poems of Faiz, which are a direct challenge to the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism.

In the 	extit{Making Of} feature of the DVD, actor Riz Ahmed reveals that the book of Ajmal Khan’s poetry which Nazmi Kemal gives to Changez is a book of Faiz’s poetry. Ahmed states, “It’s a book of poems by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, one of the greatest poets in Urdu, probably of the twentieth century. It’s about social justice, it’s about freedom, also about timeless themes like love.” Yet it precisely those poems about love which challenge
Mufti argues that the “political element in Faiz’s work cannot be read without the mediation of the social.”

Exploring Faiz’s lyric poetry in a literary-historical register, Mufti explains that the central theme of Faiz’s poetry is the “meaning and legacy of partition.” Consequently, if Faiz’s lyric poetry is centered on “the indefinitely extended separation from the beloved,” then the beloved here is India. For example, in his analysis of the poem “Marsia,” (which means ‘Elegy’) Mufti argues that the word hijr meaning separation, is a deliberate invocation by Faiz to “the historical density of the stories of Exodus and hijrat. These stories constitute the central “narrative-mythological constellation” of the creation of Pakistan, centered on the figure of the mahajir or “partition immigrant,” the official and popular political category of identity for those North Indian Muslims who came to Pakistan from India during the partition.

Faiz’s evocation of hijr undo the ways in which those narratives are deployed to affirm Pakistani nationalism: if Partition is the central theme of Faiz’s poetry, then this separation from the beloved is about being separated from India, since Faiz is geopolitically and historically located in Pakistan. By “re-inscribing the self’s leave-taking

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124 Ibid, 223.
126 Ibid.
of the (antagonistic) other as separation from the beloved.” Faiz refuses the idea of Pakistan as “the site for the elaboration of narrative that is strictly national” because he refuses the idea of a nation called the Muslims of India with a teleological “sense of collective destiny, whose contours, furthermore, are already visible” through an epistemological and ontological category of “Muslim” that is not “Indian.”

Faiz’s poetry undoes the purpose for which the film evokes him. If Faiz is the reference for the character of Ajmal Khan as the father figure who embodies Pakistani nationalism, then this nationalism is challenged and resisted by that very reference. Faiz cannot be invoked for the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism because his poetry refuses the basis of this nationalism. If Changez Khan insists that, “I have to live in truth,” this truth, according to Faiz, is not that of “purportedly autonomous national selves that emerged from Partition” nor the genealogies constructed for these selves. Instead, Faiz’s lyric poetry “makes it possible to think about identity in post-Partition South Asia in terms other than those normalized within the shared vocabulary of the postcolonial states.” The truth of self, of the “I” which Faiz is committed to is “The truth of the self is its contradictory, tense, and antagonistic reality.”

It is through the figure of Ajmal Khan as the Pakistani father poet that the film locates truth, poetry as a metonym for art which is, as Sameer quotes Changez Khan, “by definition political,” in Pakistan as the East. This is made clear in the framing of Plot B as a

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130 Ibid.
133 Ibid, 247.
story about a son (Changez Khan) with three father figures (Ajmal Khan, Nazmi Kemal, and Jim Cross) whom the son must choose between. This choice is tantamount to choosing a figure to politically align his self with. This alignment\textsuperscript{134} is based on what each of those figures represent, and Ajmal Khan is shown to be the figure of political conscience for Changez.

There is a pivotal scene between Ajmal Khan and Changez in Plot B. The setting is Changez’s visit to Lahore for his sister Bina’s wedding. The scene is of a quiet moment at the end of the mehndi celebrations at the Khan family home. Fairy lights sparkle against the night sky, strung across the dark green lawns. Guests in colorful chiffon and silk and shining jewelry are leaving the enormous canopy in the middle of the lawns, which is lit up with golden light from a chandelier in the center, and bright rugs covering the grass. Bina and her girlfriends are laughing and talking in the corner, and Changez’s mother is saying a smiling goodbye to the guests. A little girl tries to wake up her younger sister who has fallen asleep on the cushions under the canopy. Changez Khan is standing off to the side, watching these scenes with a wistful, affectionate smile. For a moment, the camera focuses on one of Bina’s friends, an attractive young woman with long dark curls dressed in an elaborately embroidered dark red outfit. Then the frame widens, and we see Ajmal Khan walk up to stand next to his son, their line of sight focused together now on Bina and her friends under the canopy. Ajmal Khan smiles at Changez and teases, “Lovely girl, and from a good family. But you can’t consider her because you are an ocean away.”

Changez gives a half smile back and says, “Luckily, Abbu, we have women in New York too!” Although it is a lighthearted comment, the background of discord between

father and son and Changez’s half smile, imbue this exchange with an undercurrent of tension.

It does not take long for this undercurrent becomes a full-fledged conflict. Ajmal Khan asks Changez, “Tell me, what do you do at the Underwood?” His question as well as the phrasing, for example, “the Underwood,” reveals the disconnect between him and Changez because although he is his father, Ajmal Khan does not know the correct name of the firm where his son works nor what Changez does.

Changez tries to gently inform him, “It’s Underwood-Samson. We help companies figure out what they’re worth and then we make suggestions so that they can increase their value.” Ajmal Khan appears confused, but his confusion is what leads to the truth. He asks, “Hmm. I’m a fruit seller. You don’t buy my guavas. You don’t sell me guavas. I pay you to tell me the price of guavas is eight rupees.” Changez is clearly unimpressed by his father’s simple explanation of what the job of a financial analyst entails, but he half smiles again, and adds, “Yes, but I can also help you increase the value of your whole fruit stand.”

“With redundancies,” Ajmal Khan rejoins. He continues, “So two fruit sellers become one, and the money is saved. I don’t see the point?”

Before Changez can answer, there is a crash from near the minibar, and Ajmal Khan and Changez turn to look at what is happening: a young waiter, who is part of the company catering the event, has dropped the glass of alcohol Changez’s paternal uncle asked. Changez’s uncle yells at him angrily, “I’ll send you back to your village!” The waiter apologizes in a voice muffled by fear and humiliation, "Sorry, sir!" and hurries away.
Ajmal Khan remarks to his son, “In the tent, the supervisor will fire him. That young man drops one plate, and his livelihood is gone.” Changez is clearly annoyed but he is also sympathetic, and says, “I should talk to the supervisor,” and starts to walk towards the catering tent.

Ajmal Khan stops him, “No, no, no. Come here.” Now he makes his point, “Your empathy is aroused because of this one man whose face you can see. But with one line of your pen, thousands of people lose their livelihoods.”

This is the moral truth about what Mira Nair has termed American “economic fundamentalism,” which Changez refuses as a good Pakistani the end of Plot B. This is what Changez references when he tells Jim Cross in Istanbul, “I have to live in truth,” that is, Changez resigns from Underwood-Samson because he has realized the moral cost of American capital.

This moral cost has already been depicted earlier, at the start of Plot B. The scene is set in Manila in the Philippines in 2001. Changez is on assignment with Jim Cross and Wainwright to maximize the profits of a manufacturing company by restructuring their factory. During a discussion at their hotel conference room, Changez suggests deleting an entire section of factory workers to make the assembly line more efficient. Since this group of workers focuses on fixing mistakes made in the manufacturing process by workers in a previous section, Changez states, “I say, lets get a team in from Japan and fix the line.”

Wainwright is the one who articulates what this means: “You’re saying they can effectively lose a quarter of their workforce?”

As these lines of dialogue are being spoken, the scene changes from the hotel conference room to a bird’s eye view of the factory floor—and as the dialogue between the
two financial analysts ends, one by one the workers on the factory floor disappear until the room is empty except for harsh white light and silent machinery.

It is this scene which the audience recalls later on in Plot B, in the aforementioned scene between Changez and Ajmal Khan. Changez himself also recalls this scene in Plot A when he explains to Bobby Lincoln the reason he refused to join Mustafa Fazil and the Asal Mujahideen:

Moving human beings in and out of binary columns. Worker, liability. American, Pakistani. Martyr, infidel. Alive, dead. I was tired of the reduction. I was tired of deciding from a distant perch the fate of people I did not know.\(^{135}\)

This is the equation that the political message of the film pivots on: the equation between financial fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism. Ajmal Khan, therefore, is the figure of conscience who is the catalyst for Changez’s realization of this truth. As the Pakistani father-poet, he stands against both Jim Cross as a representation of the former, and Mustafa Fazil as a representation of the latter.

The problem is that while Changez’s position as a financial analyst at Underwood-Samson contributes to thousands of workers losing their livelihood in Manila, his resignation and return to Pakistan does not undo the social and economic privilege the Khan family already possess. This is marked in Changez’s opening dialogue for Plot B through some tellingly contradictory sentence, as well as the visuals which accompany this voiceover:

After all, the blood of princes runs in my veins. Perhaps that is an exaggeration. Let’s say the princes and I moved in the same circles. We attended the same schools, lived in the same neighborhoods. But all of a sudden, there were new princes in town. Yes, we still

\(^{135}\) The Reluctant Fundamentalist. DVD, directed by Mira Nair (2013; Mpi Home Video), Film.
had the prestige of a Punjab Club membership but our bank account was empty.

As Changez is saying these words in Plot A, the visuals that comprise Plot B are a medium-wide shot of straight, wide, tree-lined streets along which are set palatial houses. Timed with the words, “But all of a sudden, there were new princes in town,” the camera focuses on Changez pushing an old Honda Civic through the tall steel gates of one of these houses. His father, Ajmal Khan, is trying to rev the engine in the driver’s seat.

As the car inches along into the curved driveway, another car—shiny with paint and obviously new—with four young men pulls up alongside, and they call out to Changez: “Hey Chingu! Buy a new car! Time to junk your oxcart!” Laughing, the young men drive off, and the camera focuses on Changez looking after them, his hands on his hips, a look of shame and frustration on his face. He turns to go inside the gate and tells his father determinedly, “Abbu, we need to get a new car!”

Standing next to the Honda Civic, Ajmal Khan hikes up his trousers and replies indignantly, “And retire this magnificent chariot? Nonsense. These new money scoundrels are ruining the place!”

As Changez’s voiceover narrations ends on, “But our bank account was empty,” the scene changes to the library of the Khan family home. This is a spacious room, with glass French doors which lead to the garden (already described above). There are numerous and full bookshelves along three walls, made of polished dark wood gleaming in the daylight. A beautifully carved rectangular coffee table, piled high with glossy books, sits in the center of a large, brightly colored carpet. Behind the coffee table is a long and comfortable-

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136 The Reluctant Fundamentalist. DVD, directed by Mira Nair (2013; Mpi Home Video), Film.
looking grey three-person sofa, with a single-person cushioned chair to the side. Opposite the sofa is a large TV, set in a dark wood cabinet that matches the shine of the bookshelves.

These interior and exterior visuals of the Khan family home denote social affluence and economic stability, if not affluence. In other words, the Khan family is solidly upper middle-class. This economic and social status is denoted by the word "princes," and manifested through Changez’s location at “the same schools” and “the same neighborhoods.” For Pakistanis, these words and visuals will signal that Changez attended either Aitchison College or Lahore Grammar School, two of the most expensive and prestigious private English medium schools in Lahore. The shot of the street Changez lives on is of an area in Lahore (as in Karachi) known as D.H.A or Defense Housing Authority. Within the social and economic geography of Lahore (and Karachi), this is an area marked as upper middle-class, upperclass, and wealthy. It is an area which houses the cultural and social elite of the city as well, who are economically stable if not wealthy.

South Asian audiences will also recognize the economic affluence and social capital signified by the Khan family’s Punjab Club membership. The Punjab Club is one of the many economic and social legacies of the British Raj in South Asia: sprawling, beautifully maintained grounds which house restaurants, cafes, tennis courts, squash courts, libraries, pools, reception, golf facilities, reception halls, and/or hotel-style suites. Such clubs have exclusive memberships, which come at extremely expensive admittance fees and monthly payments. The “prestige of a Punjab Club membership” is precisely what marks the Khan family as socially and economically affluent.

I am not arguing that poets and artists and intellectuals cannot come from upper middle-class communities; I am arguing that this class privilege is a part of the production
of the kind of art such people produce. It is his social and and economic affluence that has enabled Ajmal Khan to be a poet. There is always a political economy to art, whether it is poetry or music or painting, in the very politics of who has access to time, space, and materials (which require money) to engage in artistic activities. Similarly, Changez Khan is able become a professor at Lahore University, a job which pays much less than that of a financial analyst on Wall Street, because his family has economic security. Changez Khan is able to apply for the position of a professor of political economy at Lahore University because he has an Ivy League education. In other words, the politics of class are part of who has access to academia and art.137

“The Reluctant Fundamentalist” does not acknowledge or understand these political economies; it narrates art and academia as opposite to economics, in moral and political terms. Moreover, these terms are produced through a philic Orientalism because artistic and intellectual expression as the site of resistance to financial fundamentalism is located in the East, while financial fundamentalism is located in the West. There are no true artists or intellectuals to be found in the film’s portrayal of New York City—just as there appear to be no bankers or financial analysts in Lahore. The film ignores not only the political economies of artistic and intellectual production, but also industries of all kinds in Pakistan. Lahoris like Changez Khan work at multinational companies such Standard Chartered Bank, Emirates Airlines, Coca Cola, FedEx, LG Pakistan, and Nestle Pakistan.

The production and circulation of the film as a cultural and artistic object is not free from the transnational politics of economic and social capital. Mira Nair is a Harvard-educated filmmaker with her own production company, Mirabai Films. She is based in

New York City, one of the most expensive cities in the world, and teaches at Columbia University’s School of Arts. She has both social and economic capital which enables her to produce and promote films. For example, in an interview with David Poland about “The Reluctant Fundamentalist,” in April 2013, Mira Nair stated that lead actor Riz Ahmed was refused a visa to the USA during the making of the film. Nair explained that this issue was resolved through her contacts at the White House, where she had spoken a few months earlier. This is Mira Nair’s social capital deployed in the making of “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.” That social capital denotes not only Nair’s class privilege, but also how that class privilege has enabled her to occupy a position of social respectability. This position is anchored in a transnational circulation of class privilege. It is this social and economic capital that enables Nair to be invited to speak at the White House.

Indeed, Nair is part of the same transnationally visible social and economic demographic as Changez Khan. Both are English-speaking South Asians, educated in Ivy League universities in the US. Both enact and embody a politics of middle-class respectability that is a product of their social and economic privilege. This enables them to be legible as the proper kind of transnational subjects who can claim to be citizens of the world, as Nair declares in the Making Of feature of the DVD. It enables them to have access to “the highest echelons of Western society,” which, for Changez, is Wall Street and New York high society, and which for Nair is the White House, to ensure a visa for the lead actor in her film—Riz Ahmed, who plays Changez Khan. As Nair says in the interview with David Poland, “Art imitated life at every step of this film.”

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Again, the point is not that Nair’s talent and ability as a filmmaker, as an artist, is diminished by her social and economic affluence. However, this privilege is precisely what enables her to make films, to make and circulate films on a transnational scale. Her art, therefore, is not free from the politics of class embodied by Nair herself, nor is the production of that art free of transnational political economies. For example, in the aforementioned interview, Nair discusses the technical excellence of film production houses in Mumbai, where she edited the “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.” She states that her company saved approximately a million US dollars by doing post-production work on the film in India rather than the USA. This is part of the transnational political economy of the production of cinema between the USA and India—which is not part of the transnational dialogues between worlds which Nair explicitly states her films are for and about. In other words, this political economy anchors the production of Nair’s films but it is not configured in her cinematic representations of the worlds these productions are located in.

Nair’s lack of acknowledgement of her social, political, and economic privilege is mirrored by the Ajmal Khan’s lack of acknowledgement of his social, political, and economic privilege. These privileges are inherited by Changez as his son, and these are what enable Changez to return to Pakistan. However, this context of privilege is erased in both the narrative of the film by Ajmal Khan and Changez Khan, and by Mira Nair in the narrative of the production of the film. It is these privileges that enable South Asians like Ajmal Khan, like Changez Khan, like Mira Nair, to represent South Asia within transnational circuits of cultural production.
Jim Cross

Jim Cross is the managing director at the Wall Street firm, Underwood-Samson. On the “Making Of” feature of the DVD, actor Kiefer Sutherland, who plays the character, describes Underwood-Samson as, “A very high-end boutique hedge fund.” Jim Cross is a pivotal character in Plot B. He recruits Changez as a financial analyst at Underwood-Samson from Princeton in 2001.

This is the setting in which the audience is introduced to him. As Changez enters the room for the interview, another young man is leaving; his head is down in a sign of defeat and the look he gives Changez for a fleeting moment is one of being near tears. Through the camera’s position over Changez’s shoulder, the audience also experiences the trepidation on Changez’s face as he takes another step forward and swallows hard to contain his nerves.

This indicates what Jim Cross will be like—someone who can make the smartly dressed and self-assured young men of Princeton nervous. This indication is confirmed when the interview begins: Jim Cross tells Changez to take a seat, then takes his own with a clipboard in hand, from which he hardly looks up as he speaks. His demeanor dismisses Changez from being an equal participant, while the clipboard signals that it contains information about Changez (a previously submitted resume or perhaps an application or a transcript).

This is confirmed later on by Cross’ deployment of this knowledge, when he tells Changez:

The accent’s great, it makes you sound like royalty. But it’s more difficult for an international student to get into an Ivy League school if they apply for aid. You must have really
needed the money. Your friends here don’t know that, do they?\textsuperscript{139}

These lines convey several things. For example, Jim Cross has access to intimate knowledge of Changez’s financial situation because he is a managing director at a powerful Wall Street firm who, therefore, recruits new hires from Ivy League schools. These lines also convey that Jim Cross is sharp and perceptive enough to know how to use this knowledge to establish a position of superiority with Changez—Cross not only knows something about Changez which Changez’s friends do not, he also knows how to shame Changez with this knowledge of how his class background translates amongst his wealthy American peers. If his accent makes him sound like royalty, that identity is betrayed by the fact that Changez is on financial aid at an Ivy League institution where he is surrounded by Americans (“friends here”) who are wealthy and privileged. Changez is able to move in the same circles as these Americans only through the enactment of that persona.

This moment marks Jim Cross as occupying the position of social and economic power. Not only because he has seen through Changez’s performance, but also because Cross has the ability to hire or refuse Changez social and economic upward mobility through “one of the most sought after jobs in the entire world,” as Cross puts it. The scale present in the phrase ‘the entire world’ indicates the economic and therefore social power of Wall Street, symbolized in this scene and in the film as a whole by Underwood-Samson. Wall Street itself is a symbol and shorthand for the economic power of the USA.

Recognizing Changez’s ambition and talent, Cross takes him under his wing and quickly becomes a mentor to him. He uses his influence as managing director to fast-track Changez’s promotion to the position of an associate. He also delegates Changez as a leader

\textsuperscript{139} The Reluctant Fundamentalist. DVD, directed by Mira Nair (2013; Mpi Home Video), Film.
on out-of-state assignments (Atlanta), and chooses Changez to accompany him on an international trip to Istanbul. It is in Istanbul that the relationship between Jim Cross and Changez Khan breaks down. This is through Changez’s encounter with Turkish publisher Nazmi Kemal, and the ghost of Ajmal Khan through a book of his poetry which Kemal gives to Changez. This crystallizes the feelings of alienation and anger Changez has experienced in the USA due to racial discrimination against Pakistani Muslim men in the aftermath of the attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. Changez realizes in Istanbul that he cannot pursue the American Dream any longer. He decides that he must return to Pakistan to pursue a path that is true to his principles.

Changez resigns from his position in Istanbul through a voicemail he leaves for Jim Cross, in which he refuses to shut down Nazmi Kemal’s publishing house. There is an ugly scene between Jim Cross and Changez about his resignation in the lobby of the hotel. The lobby is dimly lit with harsh white light, which casts long shadows along the empty corridor. Changez, dressed all in black, is standing at the elevator with two black duffel bags, his despondent face and slumped shoulders reflected hazily in the shining soft gold of the elevator doors. When these doors open, Changez is face to face with Jim Cross. Cross’ face is tight with anger and his voice is low as if he is speaking through a clenched jaw. Actor Kiefer Sutherland’s distinct harsh rasp imbues the dialogue with a cold and ominous rage. Jim first demands an explanation: “Interesting message you left me. You’re not letting him go—what the hell does that mean?” The inclusion of the phrase "what the hell" conveys the anger Cross is directing at Changez for his defiance. However, the tightness of Cross’ jaw and fact that he has begun with a question implies that Cross has not fully expressed this anger.
Through a close-up shot, the audience can see the beginning of tears in Changez’s eyes. There is no soundtrack playing so the audience can hear his nervous intake of breath before he replies in a slightly shaky but determined voice, “It means that I’m not going to fire Nazmi Kemal. In fact, I’m not going to do any more evaluations. I’m quitting the firm, Jim.”

The dim white light of the lobby casts a sharp shadow on Jim Cross’ face as he steps into Changez’s personal space. The ominous and intrusive nature of this interaction is conveyed through the medium close-up of Jim. Both the framing of the shot and the shadow are atmospheric manifestations of the ominous tone Jim now speaks in: “You accepted the position of an associate less than three months ago. You leave now, you’ll be giving up all hope of ever doing this kind of work again anywhere”—and here, Jim’s voice begins to rise in volume, emphasizing the word "anywhere"—“you’ll be committing professional suicide.”

This last sentence contributes to the threat conveyed in Jim’s tone because it is a warning to Changez that the consequences of his resignation will be the figurative death of his career. The scale of this warning is encapsulated not only in the word "suicide," but also through the word "anywhere," because the latter signals the power of Jim Cross as a symbol of the power of Wall Street around the world. Changez’s eyes are now red from holding back tears and his voice is still soft, and it still trembles, but he is determined. He replies, “I know I’ve let you down, Jim, and I’m deeply sorry for that. But I have to tell you that I’m through.” The harsh white light is now directly above Jim Cross so that his face appears in sharp contrasts of light and dark, and the camera moves to a close-up as his face
contorts in rage. This rage is present in the force of his voice as he speaks through gritted teeth, and in the words themselves:

You’re telling me? You don’t tell me! You think you’re the only person who’s experienced injustice firsthand? Throw a rock out there anywhere in this city, and it’ll land on the grave of someone who has seen worse than you. Now maybe you’re having some kind of breakdown. I will see to it that you will get some rest after this is done. But you will treat my commitment to you with the respect that it deserves.140

The first two sentences are a harsh reminder to Changez that Jim Cross has power over him. This retroactively connotes Cross’ intentions in their previous interactions as instrumental rather than sincere. This interpretation is supported by actor Kiefer Sutherland himself; in an interview with India Independent Film in April 2013, Sutherland explained his character as “an opportunist, and he’ll nurture you and he’ll take care of you as long as you feed him. And when you don’t feed him, he’ll cut you lose and you’re dead.” This opportunism and single-mindedness is part of the financial fundamentalism which Jim Cross represents as located in the USA or the West. This scene is the film’s portrayal of the emotional contours of these politics.141

The third and fourth sentences are examples of these emotional contours: “You think you’re the only person who’s experienced injustice firsthand? Throw a rock out there anywhere in this city and it’ll land on the grave of someone who has seen worse than you.” These sentences encapsulate Jim Cross’ trivialization of the racial discrimination Changez has experienced in New York City in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. While the word "grave" produces the scale of Cross’ mechanics of trivialization, the words "worse than you" make this comparison explicit.

140 The Reluctant Fundamentalist. DVD, directed by Mira Nair (2013; Mpi Home Video), Film.
Moreover, Cross is scornful of Changez’s reaction to his experiences of discrimination. This is conveyed through Cross’ accusation of Changez engaging in self-pity through the words, "you think you’re the only one," and "worse than you."

The fifth and sixth sentences complete this trivialization because they reduce Changez’s experiences of racial discrimination to personal and internal ones, rather than as products of institutionalized racism, which includes sexualized humiliation (Changez is forced to strip and is subjected to a body cavity search at JFK airport) and racial profiling by police officers (Changez is arrested through a racist misidentification of another South Asian man shouting anti-American slogans on Wall Street). The words, "some kind of breakdown" implies a mental illness contained within Changez. This dislocates the emotions of fear, anger, and shame Changez has experienced because of racial discrimination from the social and political environment in which they are produced. In other words, Changez’s feelings are depoliticized and dislocated of his experiences of racial discrimination in post-9/11 New York City.

Jim Cross’ dismissal of Changez’s experiences through a rhetorical accusation of self-pity by comparison also works by equalizing different kinds of discrimination. This rhetoric of equivalency is a discursive refusal of the intersectionality of oppression and discrimination. Earlier in the film, Jim Cross is revealed to come from a working-class background and to be gay. The former is narrated to Changez by Cross himself in a scene in Manila in 2001. Jim Cross and a team of new financial analysts, including Changez, are on assignment to evaluate a manufacturing business. Their headquarters is the vast conference room of the luxury hotel they are staying at.
The scene between Changez and Jim is set immediately after Changez has suggested the deletion of an entire section of the factory floor as a way for the company to minimize costs and maximize profit. This has impressed Jim Cross—and as the other two analysts sit down to dinner across the room, Jim approaches Changez standing by their work station. He smiles at him and says, “You have a gift for this. A very lucrative gift.” Cross takes a seat and, gesturing for Changez to sit across from him, he continues:

I have a theory about those who have the gift. They’re outsiders. You and I have a lot more in common than you think. I was the first in my family to go to college. My father was a car salesman. He would come visit me at Harvard with his cheap haircut and his Pay-less shoes, and it would make me hungry—hungry to be the best. You’re hungry like that too

Here, Jim Cross is constructing a similarity between himself and Changez. "You and I have more in common than you think" is the explicit statement of this similarity; the hunger for upward social and economic mobility configured through the lack thereof in the figure of Cross’ father as “car salesman” with “his cheap haircut and his Pay-less shoes” is what this similarity is. Jim Cross’ hunger comes from his working-class background, confirmed through the information that he was the first in his family to go to college.

However, "you’re hungry like that too" is Jim Cross’ misreading of Changez’s economic and social background precisely because, as I have already argued, Changez does not come from a working-class background. In some ways, Cross’ misreading mirrors the misreadings of the film because of the philic Orientalist designation of the morals, emotions, and operations of capital in the West, and art symbolizing hope, courage, and nationalist loyalty in the East. This designation is exactly why the film fails to acknowledge the position of economic and social privilege Changez occupies not only in Pakistan but also as a transnational subject, which is what enables him to go to Princeton and work at
Underwood-Samson at all. This lack of acknowledgement in the film is what feels jarring about Cross’ evaluation of the similarity between himself and Changez in this context.

Jim Cross is also marked as being gay. In the aforementioned scene, Jim Cross promises Changez a fast-tracked promotion through the ranks of financial analysts at Underwood-Samson. There is a later scene in which Changez visits Jim at his lavish Manhattan apartment for a dinner celebrating his promotion as “the youngest associate in the history of Underwood-Samson.” As Jim Cross and Changez stroll along the shining marble floor to the dining area, the camera pans out in a wide shot, and the audience sees an Asian and/or Asian-American man preparing sushi at the gleaming marble-top kitchen counter.

In the next medium wide shot, the camera focuses on Changez looking in awe at the art on the wall; in the lefthand corner of the background, Jim Cross and this man are visible, though slightly blurry. They come into clear view as the camera focuses on them when Changez turns to look at them. The camera and Changez see the two men standing very close together, Jim Cross whispering something to the other man with his hand on his back. The man smiles, nods, and then leaves. As he does so, Cross lets his hand linger in a familiar caress on his back. The man returns with a bottle of wine, which he pours for Changez and Jim—then he disappears from the view of the camera. He does not join them for dinner and he is not seen again. It is the presence of this man in the intimate setting of Jim Cross’ apartment, the physical contact embodied in the caress and the closeness with which he and Cross stand, which suggests that they are a couple.
In the confrontation in the hotel lobby in Istanbul, Jim Cross states, “You think you’re the only person who’s experienced injustice firsthand?” This is a dismissal and discursive containment of Changez’s experiences of racial discrimination which pivots on the evocation of the possibility of Jim’s experience of discrimination based on class and sexuality. However, this evocation denies the intersectional nature of discrimination precisely because through this evocation, Jim is equating his experiences with those of Changez. Jim Cross is compartmentalizing the politics of class, nationality, race, religion, and sexuality to make each of them equivalent but separate identity positions.

This discursive refusal of intersectionality is integral to what Jasbir Puar explains as homonationalism in the USA. Using Lisa Duggan’s notion of homonormativity, Puar defines homonationalism as homonormativity which affirms the project of American nationalism. She argues that it marks “the utility of gay rights discourses to US/Western imperial projects in legislative and consumption realms that coincides with the production of various visible subjects.” Homonationalism is about the incorporation of certain gay and lesbian subject-citizens within American nationalism. This incorporation is anchored in the politics of whiteness, middle-class respectability, liberal multiculturalism. In other words, American nationalism is affirmed by white, cisgendered, middle class to upper middle class, monogamous gay and lesbian subject-citizens for their incorporation into the US nation-state. Their incorporation comes at the expense of intersected communities of Native peoples, people of color, poor communities, trans people of color, immigrants, and

queer of color peoples. This incorporation upholds the notion of American exceptionalism through constructing the US as the site of sexual liberation and inclusion in contrast to the homophobic other according to a transformation of Orientalist tropes of race and sexuality in the post-Civil Rights era into the following binary: “the homosexual other is white, the racial other is straight.”

Jim Cross enacts homonationalism through his homonormativity, whiteness, liberal multiculturalism, and economic wealth. For example, the myth of American liberal multiculturalism is enacted through the appearance of Jim Cross’ Asian and/or Asian American partner. This myth constructs the USA as the space of equality and freedom through the notion of specifically American love which is monogamous and transcendent of identity.

However, the systematic discriminations which underpin this mythology are revealed in the depiction of that nonwhite partner. For example, the only hint about his racial identity is the quick background shot of him preparing sushi. This marks him as Japanese and/or Japanese-American—but it is precisely his physical appearance coupled with Japanese cuisine as the only present term of legibility for his racial identification which reveals the erasures of peoples of color in the USA. Sushi as a marker of identity does not reveal this man’s name, whether he is Japanese-American or Japanese, or whether

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he is a recent immigrant or was he born in the USA.\textsuperscript{151} All of these are specificities of his life as a person of color in the USA which are erased down to sushi as a symbol of the racialized commodification and consumption of communities of color in the USA.\textsuperscript{152}

Moreover, that this man appears only when preparing dinner and serving wine for Jim Cross as his white partner signals the exploitation of people of color, poor communities, immigrant communities, and queer and trans peoples of color which undergirds homonationalist systems and institutions.\textsuperscript{153} The depiction of an Asian and/or Asian American man serving a white American man signifies several intersectional ways in which this exploitation occurs. For example, it encapsulates the racial politics of gender in the operation of homonormativity because it is the gay man of color who is positioned as the feminine counterpart to the white gay man, especially because the audience already knows the economic and social power Jim Cross possesses as a managing director at Underwood-Samson. These racial politics of gender are particular to stereotypes about Asian American men as unable to embody proper masculinity, which is the province of white American men. Asian American men are stereotyped as docile and submissive and therefore feminized within the racial and gender politics of white masculine supremacy in the USA.\textsuperscript{154}

The film also adheres to the racialized terms of legibility for queer people of color, that they only become legible in relation to whiteness. The film does not name the Asian

and/or Asian American man, and depicts him in a position of service to a white American man. This white American man is not only named but he has already been imbued with social and economic power as the managing director of Underwood-Samson. He is also given a backstory and agency within the narrative of the film. By contrast, the Asian and/or Asian American man serves only to illustrate Jim Cross’ homosexuality, and how this relationship positions him as an embodiment of American liberal multiculturalism. This in turn reaffirms the USA as a space of equality and freedom, where love is transcendent of race.\footnote{Mark Rifkin, \textit{When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty}, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).}

It is, therefore, ironic that the film reaffirms Changez’s subjectivity and agency through his refusal of the American Dream, that is, his refusal of incorporation into American nationalism. This is what happens in the final moments of the confrontation between Changez and Jim Cross in Istanbul. When Jim Cross demands, “You will treat my commitment to you with the respect that it deserves,” Changez refuses, saying, “And to myself. I have a commitment to myself.” The self Changez is affirming here, the self he is committing to here, is his Pakistani self which can only be affirmed through a refusal to pursue the American Dream any longer.

The camera focuses on Jim Cross now in a medium close up, his hands on his hips ad his head cocked in anger and frustration. This is conveyed also in his repetition of the threat of the social and economic consequences of Changez’s decision: “Do you want to be an insurance salesman, Changez? With a mortgage and a migraine? Is that the life you envision for yourself?”
This is again a misreading by Jim Cross of Changez’s social and economic background in Pakistan, which does not equate with Cross’ own working-class background in the USA. Moreover, as I have discussed earlier, this misreading represents Cross’ willful attempt to construct Changez as his protege by appropriating Changez’s story into Cross’ own. This misreading by Jim Cross is an ironic mirror to the ways in which the film misconstructs what the character of Changez represents, precisely because the film ignores the social and economic privilege Changez has in Pakistan. It is this privilege which enables Changez not only to pursue the American Dream but to refuse it in this scene. For example, Changez is not a poor or working class immigrant taxi driver; he is not LGBTQ-identified; he is not a member of the Ahmadi or Shia communities. He can leave Pakistan with social and economic security and privilege, and he can return to Pakistan with that security and privilege.

Standing in the elevator now, Changez answers Jim Cross determinedly, “As opposed to what? I have to live in truth.” As discussed earlier, this truth is the opposition of the artistic and moral East to the financial fundamentalism of the West. Changez has realized that he must return to Pakistan as the East in an affirmation of this truth. The camera focuses on Jim Cross’ face in a close-up as it contorts in an ugly rage. His words are forceful and venomous, his voice raised and menacing, filling the screen through the enclosed visual space created by the close-up: “You put your fucking shoes on, you go down to that office, and you do the job you were hired to do!” This portrayal of Jim Cross is the film’s ultimate representation of the emotions which the financial fundamentalism of the West is charged with. The West as an object which circulates in this film is sticky.\(^{156}\)

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with these emotions and, therefore, with meanings. Jim Cross as the embodiment of the West performs these emotions and meanings: anger, ruthlessness, opportunism, cruelty, callousness, hatred. Each of these inflects the West as represented in this film in opposition to the East. The East as an object is imbued with positive emotions and meanings such as warmth, love, courage, and hope, through the Khan family, through Ajmal Khan, through Sameer, and through protagonist Changez Khan as a son of the East.

It is this identity, a son of the East, which has asserted itself in this confrontation with Jim Cross. The final frame of this scene is of Changez in the elevator, Jim Cross framed on the other side. There is a beat of silence after Cross’ vitriolic outburst—then Changez looks him in the eye and states, “It’s not my job anymore.”

The camera is now angled over Changez’s shoulder so that the audience sees what Changez sees: Jim Cross standing there with stunned look in the shadows cast by the harsh white light. The elevator doors close, Changez and the audience looking at his own reflection visible in the soft gold of the doors—and the flute and drum of Atif Aslam’s rendition of Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s poem, “Mori Araj Suno,” begins.

**Nazmi Kemal**

Nazmi Kemal, played by Turkish actor Haluk Bilginer, is a book publisher. He runs Basak Yaymici Publishing in Istanbul. He is portrayed as a sophisticated and worldly man with a lilting drawl. He is well-dressed and stylish, cigarette in one hand and a glass of good wine in the other. Kemal is a crucial character in Plot B. He narrates the story of the Janissaries to Changez Khan, framing it explicitly as a metaphor for the position Changez occupies as

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a soldier in the USA’s economic army—a metaphor Changez repeats in Plot A in his own narration of the memories evoked in the conversation between Changez and Bobby Lincoln (which is, for the viewing audience, Plot B itself). Kemal is the catalyst for the realization Changez comes to in Istanbul, that of his identity as a son of the artistic East signified by Kemal, in opposition to the commercial West signified by Jim Cross.

Jim Cross and Changez Khan arrive in Istanbul in 2002 to evaluate the finances of Basak Yaymici Publishing. As Cross explains upon their arrival, they have been hired by the holding company which “acquired Basak Yaymici Publishing nine years ago.” According to Cross, the press is “hemorrhaging money, and we need to stop the bleeding.” The audience is introduced to Kemal in these tense circumstances. Jim Cross’ words are heard in a voiceover, “Nazmi Kemal will not be happy to see us,” as the camera pans out from a close-up shot of Jim Cross and Changez Khan striding into Kemal’s office in sharply tailored dark suits, to a wide framing shot. Positioned behind Cross and Khan, the central focus of the camera is Nazmi Kemal. His silver-grey hair is neatly combed, dark red cravat perfectly tied, cigarette in hand, and legs crossed elegantly at the knees behind an ornately carved wooden desk. There is a glass of mint tea on the desk, next to an incense burner from which pale smoke curls upwards, creating a delicate filter for the sunlight coming into the room.

The elegance of the crossed legs, the cravat, and the languid ease of the fingers that hold the cigarette belie the anger and resentment that Kemal is not afraid to express. As the next frame becomes a close-up of Kemal, he takes a puff of his cigarette and says, “For forty-two years, I have made books. Through this press, the greatest Middle Eastern writers have given their stories to the world—and you’ve come here to render me obsolete.”
The camera moves to Jim Cross sitting on the other side of the desk. Cross states smoothly, “I have great respect for the work of publishers. I’ve valued half a dozen or so myself over the last ten years.”

The camera moves back to Kemal in a close-up, which emphasizes how Kemal twists his face in a theatrical mockery of awe and drawls, “Are you qualified to value me?”

Jim Cross’ face tightens, and Changez hesitatingly tries to step in to mollify Kemal: “Well, no one can put a value on what you have accomplished here. My father is a poet; he is well-known in the Punjab. His greatest friend is his publisher.”

Kemal turns his head now to Changez and asks, “Your father is a poet?” When Changez nods in confirmation, Kemal tells him, “I think you should be ashamed of yourself, doing what you are doing here”—the camera moves to Changez’s face during the last six words, and the audience sees the shame in his eyes, which are magnified by the close-up.

This scene encapsulates the ways in which Kemal represents the East as a place of art, culture, and resistance to the “economic fundamentalism” of the West, which is represented by Jim Cross. For example, Basak Yaymici Publishing is firmly located in the East in Kemal’s words: “Through this press, the greatest Middle Eastern writers have given their stories to the world.” This marks the press’ specialty as Middle Eastern writing.158

It is also through how Kemal and Cross each narrate Basak Yaymici Publishing that the film constructs them as representations of the Orient and the Occident. Kemal’s focus is on what the publishing house contributes to the world, to literature, to a global community produced through the sharing of literature: “Through this press, the greatest Middle Eastern writing...

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writers have given their stories to the world,” like gifts from one community to another as a sharing of ideas.

Cross’ focus is on the economic value, the commercial role, of the publishing house. This is evident through his introduction to Changez when they arrive in Istanbul: “It's hemorrhaging money and we need to stop the bleeding.” Cross does not speak of the social or cultural value of the publishing house. This contrast is highlighted in the tension between Kemal and Cross. Cross speaks of the monetary value of publishing in business terms: “I’ve valued a dozen or so myself over the last ten years.” Kemal challenges this singular focus on commercial success when he retorts, “Are you qualified to value me?” The ‘me’ is Kemal as publisher in the role of giving the world the stories of the greatest Middle Eastern writers. Cross is concerned with profit and loss, while Kemal is concerned with literature and intellect, and Kemal’s question is rhetorical challenge to Cross precisely because it is an accusation that Cross is not qualified to value Kemal because he does not understand the social and cultural value of what Basak Yaymici Publishing does.

This scene also sets up the political alignment\(^{159}\) of Nazmi Kemal and Ajmal Khan as father figures of the East, and what the East represents in the film through them. Changez, in attempt to relieve the tension between Nazmi Kemal and Jim Cross, says, “Well, no one can put a value on what you’ve accomplished here. My father is a poet, he is well known in the Punjab. His greatest friend is his publisher.” This is Changez’s attempt to connect with Kemal as a publisher by reassuring him that Changez understands the importance of what Kemal does as the son of a poet whose “greatest friend is his publisher.”

Here, Ajmal Khan and Nazmi Kemal are aligned through the friendship between poet and publisher as figures of the world of literature. I use the word ‘world’ here deliberately to emphasize the film’s transnational narration of Pakistan and Turkey, through Ajmal Khan and Nazmi Kemal respectively, as the East where art, literature, and culture are located—as opposed to the USA as the West, represented by Jim Cross, which is the site of commercialism and economic fundamentalism.

As detailed above, Nazmi Kemal’s response aligns Kemal and Ajmal Khan through a recall of the earlier scene between Ajmal Khan and Changez at Bina’s mehndi. Kemal’s rebuke of Changez’s pursuit of the American Dream is a more direct and harshly worded version of what Ajmal Khan tells him at Bina’s mehndi.

Changez is ashamed in the first scene with Ajmal Khan, which is why he reacts with resentment and spite. Changez is also ashamed in this second scene with Nazmi Kemal, evident in the way his face falls with heartbreak at Kemal’s words. This is not just because Kemal is directly referencing Ajmal Khan but because by now, Changez has become disillusioned with his pursuit of the American Dream after experiencing racial violence in New York City in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Kemal shames Changez precisely through the identity that he has disavowed, that is, the son of a poet and a son of the East, which in the film represents art as the site of resistance to economic and religious fundamentalisms, and the violences of both. Ajmal Khan and Nazmi Kemal are aligned here through the meanings that the East as an object is made sticky with by the film. They are the fathers of and in the East, representing the

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global community of the East as a community of artists, publishers, intellectuals, poets, and writers. They oppose both the commercialism and militarism of the West, and the religious fundamentalism of those in the East, who are marked as inauthentic members of the East because they have betrayed what the film portrays as the real values of the East. This is how Nazmi Kemal and Ajmal Khan (and through them, Changez Khan) are also opposed to Mustafa Fazil, who is inauthentic, a "bad" Muslim and a "bad" Pakistani because he has betrayed the values Ajmal Khan and Changez Khan uphold. It is they who are the "good" Muslims and therefore "good" Pakistanis.

This lesson in authenticity also connects Ajmal Khan and Nazmi Kemal as representations of the East. In the second scene of this sequence in Istanbul, the camera is angled from above to focus on the courtyard of Basak Yaymici Publishing. As Changez walks past pale red stone pillars and arched doorways in his dark suit and tie, he hears Nazmi Kemal’s voice, “Changez—look what I found!” He turns to see Kemal standing in one of the arches, which leads into his library, holding out a book towards him.

As Changez walks into the room and takes the book, Kemal tells him, “Part of an anthology of contemporary poets from the Punjab. Your father is Ajmal Khan, correct?” The camera follows Changez’s gaze down to the book in a close-up: a black and white photograph of Ajmal Khan smiling on the back cover of this book of poetry. Changez is left speechless for a moment, and his voice is soft and unsure when he looks back up at Kemal and says, “I didn’t realize he had been translated into Turkish.” He moves to return the book, but Kemal insists, “That’s for you.” Ajmal Khan is now a vivid

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162 Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
163 Ibid.
presence in the room, channeled through Nazmi Kemal in their transnational relationship of poet and publisher who are the greatest of friends. What he represents as a father-poet is contained within this book of poetry held in Changez’s hands. This presence of Ajmal Khan as the father-poet is crucial for the scene which follows, in which Kemal teaches Changez the lesson of authenticity in his identity as a son of the East.

Kemal invites Changez to join him for lunch, and Changez agrees. The restaurant is located in a beautifully tiled open-air courtyard, full of arches and ornately carved steel screens to mark the boundaries. There is a bouquet of white roses on each table. Dressed in a neatly pressed purple shirt with a collar, and a sombre tie, Changez is eating tidily with a knife and fork. Across the table is Nazmi Kemal, cigarette in one hand, a mustard colored scarf draped across his shoulders, and a glass of white wine next to his plate.

The camera moves from Changez concentrating silently on his food to a close-up of Nazmi Kemal, who tilts his head lightly to the left, his thumb at his temple. He glances at Changez, then down at the table, and smiles a private smile. He taps his cigarette at the edge of his plate, looks back up—and begins.

“Have you ever heard of the Janissaries?”

Changez seems surprised at this conversation, perhaps indicating that it has not been the most loquacious of lunches. He shakes his head and answers, “No.”

Nazmi Kemal’s expressive face is that of a master storyteller, his question as innocent as the raise of his eyebrows at Changez’s answer as if to say, “Ah, well, I see.” The camera focuses on Kemal in a medium close-up, his face, shoulders, and upheld cigarette in sharp, clear view against a hazy background. Kemal is the storyteller here, for both Changez and the audience.
There is a beat of silence, which feels finely crafted by Kemal, before he explains: “They were Christian boys, captured by the Ottomans. To be soldiers in the mighty Muslim army”—another deliberate pause, a puff on his cigarette, then the story continues in that deep, lilting, melancholic voice—“When they came of age, they were sent to kill their former families and destroy their former homes.”

The azaan, the Muslim call to prayer, begins in the distance. Changez gives a polite half-smile, and turns back to his food. The camera moves back to Kemal. “How old were you when you went to America?” He asks, drinking his clear, white wine with a slow elegance.

Changez’s eyebrows knit together in confusion—he is suspicious but he has not realized the metaphor. He answers, “I was eighteen.”

Kemal’s head is tilted to the left again. “Ah. Much older.” Now Changez knows—in a close-up shot, the audience can see the flash of realization in his eyes, which is why he quickly looks down. Kemal has noticed this as well; he nods as if to himself as he inhales again. However, he has not finished the story yet.

“The Janissaries were always taken in childhood. And when they became men”—he looks directly at Changez now—“they were devoted to their new caretakers, to serve their adopted empire.”

Changez is looking back at him with the same resentment borne of shame with which he reacted to Ajmal Khan’s words at Bina’s wedding. His retort is defensive, “I’m not devoted to the empire,” his voice forceful at the words "devoted" and "empire."

There is silence. Kemal nods softly again, as Changez takes a sip of water. He puts down his goblet; the camera is angled towards Changez over Kemal’s shoulder so that the
audience sees his regret of using such a tone with an elder. He clears his throat and says, “I am sorry for my demeanor; I’m working through some personal matters at the moment.” His voice rough with emotion he is trying to contain.

The story of the Janissaries constructs the metaphor which Changez repeats in his own narration to Bobby Lincoln in Plot A: “I was a soldier in your economic army.” In other words, the story of the Janissaries is the overarching metaphor for Plot B. For example, the scenes in Manila in 2001 are directly recalled in the final words of this story Kemal tells: “And when they became men, they were devoted to their new caretakers, to serve their adopted empire.” The scene in Manila in 2001, now recalled for both Changez and the audience through this story in Istanbul in 2002, has clear parallels: Changez as the Janissary in the mighty army of American capital, serving Jim Cross as his new caretaker devotedly, in the name of his adopted empire of Wall Street.

Nazmi Kemal and Ajmal Khan are again evoked together as father figures of the East through this recall of Manila as the site of a lesson, articulated through the story of the Janissaries. This recall occurred first in Lahore in 2002 when Ajmal Khan told Changez, “With one line of your pen, thousands of people lose their livelihoods,” through a visual evocation of the disappearance of the Filipino workers on the factory floor as Changez looks down on them from above and suggests the deletion of their section of the assembly line. It occurs now in Istanbul when Kemal says, “They were devoted to their new caretakers, to serve their adopted empire,” through an evocation of the assignment in Manila as the site of Jim Cross marking Changez as his protege because Changez impressed him with his singular focus on profit through the deletion of those workers. This was the sign of Changez’s devotion to his adopted empire of American capital.
The evocation of Manila in 2001 in Istanbul in 2002 also illustrates the line, “When they came of age, they were sent to kill their former families and destroy their former homes.” Changez is a son of the East but he has gone to the East, signified by Manila and Istanbul, to destroy it through his devotion to the West’s financial fundamentalism. This evocation is also present in the scene between Ajmal Khan and Changez at Bina’s mehndi. Reacting to feeling ashamed because of Ajmal Khan’s words, Changez breaks his promise to his mother and retorts, “This job of mine that you don’t see the point of actually helped to create this celebration, alright!”

As discussed previously, Changez had insisted to his mother that he would pay for the catering for Bina’s wedding celebrations since the budget Ajmal Khan had set would not suffice for the wedding Changez’s mother envisioned. Changez’s mother had asked him not to tell his father because it would humiliate and hurt him. It would mean not only that his wife had lied by omission to him, but it would also be an implication that Ajmal Khan could not provide adequately for his family.

Changez’s angry retort, therefore, causes just this humiliation and hurt to Ajmal Khan. It is a metaphoric illustration of Nazmi Kemal’s story that the Janissaries “were sent to kill their former families and destroy their former homes.” By hurting and humiliating ajmal Khan, Changez disrupted the love in the Khan family. In Plot A, Changez himself acknowledges his actions towards his father in the terms of a soldier, a Janissary, sent back to destroy his former home: “My wisest ally, and I had wounded him to the quick.”

At the end of story of the Janissaries, Kemal has a final piece of advice for Changez: “When you determine where you stand, the color will return to your world.” Changez makes this determination in Istanbul. The third scene in this sequence of the film
in Turkey is the camera following Changez as he walks around Istanbul in the pale gold sunlight of the day which becomes a profusion of gold, red, pink, orange as the sunsets. The panoramic views include shots of seagulls over the port at Golden Horn and slatted rooftops framed by the Blue Mosque in the distance. Changez visits this mosque just to sit on the soft blue and pink embroidered prayer mats and observe quietly, the camera moving with his gaze in wide shots to see what he sees: golden lights strung overhead, painted walls of deep blue and green and yellow, blue and white tiles, and the beautiful, ornate domed ceiling. Tall windows let in the sunlight, and there are people praying all around Changez as he sits on the prayer mat looking around. He sees a father and son, and a memory of his own father flickers in his eyes: the father is dressed in a dark suit, his son in a bright yellow sweater, and he is trying to follow his father’s movements of prayer.

It is after this scene that Changez makes his decision to resign from Underwood-Samson and leave the USA to go home to Pakistan. This decision as a defiance and refusal of the West and a recommitment to the truth of Changez as a son of the East plays out in the scene between Changez and Jim Cross described in a previous section. Changez tells Jim that he is quitting the firm because he has to live in the truth of his identity as a son of the East. The scene which follows the confrontation between him and Jim Cross opens with a shot of the churning white-grey waters of the Bosporus as Changez rides the ferry away from his former adopted empire embodied by Jim Cross. The soundtrack to this scene is Atif Aslam’s rendition of Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s poem, “Mori Araj Suno,” which plays as the camera pans from the waters of the Bosporus to a profile of Changez, framed across the pink and orange sky in profile, looking back at Istanbul—and then forward to his next destination. Changez has determined where he stands.
It is at this moment that the film narrates Istanbul through Orientalist tropes. For example, Turkey has long been represented as a place between East and West. This status of in between, and the two sides of East and West in which this between is anchored, is Orientalist because it constructs a binary and because that binary is of the Orient and the Occident. Turkey has been constantly been depicted in those terms, from analyses of the ban on the hijab at Turkish universities, to Turkey’s applications over the years to join the EU—and the reactions by EU member states to those applications.

The film’s depiction of Turkey as a crossroads from where Changez Khan must choose to go East or go West adheres to these stereotypes. This is implied earlier as well, Nazmi Kemal’s statement that it is was through Basak Yaymici Publishing that, “the greatest Middle Eastern writers gave their stories to the world.” Basak Yaymici Publishing as a specifically Turkish press becomes a node of translation and circulation between two worlds, that is, between the Middle East and the world.

The film’s confirmation of this Orientalist status of Turkey as in between therefore reproduces Turkey only as an in between, a place legible only as that from which you turn towards one world or another. Such a depiction erases the presence of communities which live in Turkey and claim belonging in a myriad of ways and modes.

These erasures are present in the film’s narration Turkey as part of the East. This is portrayed in several ways. For example, this is depicted through the opposition Nazmi Kemal represents to Jim Cross, who the film has already marked as a symbol of the West and the economic fundamentalism the West represents. Nazmi Kemal’s opposition to it as a book publisher configures the East versus the West, as Kemal versus Cross, as literature versus commerce, as culture versus capital. This is affirmed through the alignment of
Kemal with Ajmal Khan as publisher and poet, and therefore as figures of literature, intellect, and art, who oppose the ruthless capitalism of the West, represented by Jim Cross. This portrayal is Orientalist through the very production of binaries, which is a key function of Orientalism, and through the construction of the East and West as objects.165 This objectification erases the profusion and intersection of peoples, histories, places, languages, cultures, and communities because it is a binary.166

Another example is that the film’s most prolonged visual sequence in Istanbul is of the Blue Mosque. As described above, the Blue Mosque is visible in the panoramic views of Istanbul in the film and in the scene in which Changez sits on the prayer mat inside the mosque. This visual emphasis on the Blue Mosque emphasizes the histories of Ottoman rule in Turkey, histories that have often been depicted as Muslim histories. For example, the Khilafat Movement in India167 was launched as a pan-Islamic movement to ensure that the British government protected the Ottoman Empire after World War I.

Not only does the film’s visual emphasis on the Blue Mosque mark Turkey as part of the East, but this signification occurs through the metonymic construction of Islam and the East. In other words, the film’s narration of Turkey as part of the East is anchored in the film’s visual emphasis on the Blue Mosque; the Blue Mosque as a sign of the Ottoman histories in Turkey mark Turkey as part the Orient through Islam as a sign of the Orient.

This narration of Islam as a sign of the Orient is one of the core features of Orientalism deployed at first most notably by the British and French empires, and then resurrected and reanimated by the US and Europe in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This signification is dense with the politics of race, sexuality, and gender—from the veiled woman who must be rescued to the violent hyper-sexuality of the lascivious Moor, from Muhammed Asad’s *The Road to Mecca* to Jean Sasson’s *Princess: A True Story of Life Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia*, from Islam as a metonym for Arab to mistranslations of the histories of the word "jihad," from the erasure of black Muslims such as Malcolm X in the US to the erasure of Christian and Jewish Palestinian communities.

In confirming Islam as a metonym for the East, “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” participates in these discourses. There is no room in the film’s representation of Turkey for the histories of the Greeks, the Seljuks, and the Eastern Roman Empire. There is no place in the film’s version of Istanbul for Christians, Kurds, the Roma, Jews, Armenians, and Circassians. The film’s alignment of Turkey and Pakistan as the East through Islam as a metonym is ironic because one of the most visible legacies of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (the Father of Modern Turkey) is his stated commitment to secular government in Turkey—whereas Pakistan was founded, and has henceforth been governed, in the name of Islam. Moreover, the pan-Islamic discourse which buoyed the Khilafat Movement in India in the aftermath of World War I included elements of opposition by Indian Muslims to the creation of Pakistan—precisely on the grounds of a universal Muslim fraternity unbound.

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by the political form of the nation-state, centered on the Caliphate of the Ottoman Empire. Modern Turkey was formed out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire.

The film not only emphasizes Islam as a metonym for the East to align Turkey and Pakistan, it also deploys this metonymic identification to imply that Ajmal Khan and Nazmi Kemal are Muslims — and then it uses problematic and dense sets of significations to mark them as “good” Muslims. As I discuss in the section on the film’s portrayal of Islam, “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” deploys a chain of signifiers to mark certain characters as Muslim, and then as ‘good’ Muslims and ‘bad’ Muslims. This function of a chain of signs is present in the film’s portrayal of an alignment of Nazmi Kemal and Ajmal Khan as fathers of and in the East. Pakistan and Turkey become signified as Muslim nation-states through an automatic affixation of religious and national identifications.

Furthermore, the film uses problematic markers for depicting them as “good” Muslims. For example, as I discuss in the section on Islam, Ajmal Khan (like Changez Khan) is marked as a good Muslim through the figure of his daughter, Bina, and the ways in which she embodies a Pakistani identity always already affixed with a Muslim identity. Here, the film participates and reproduces a problematic discursive tradition in which gender and sexuality, especially of women, is the grounds upon which “some of the most pressing aporias of modernity, enlightenment, liberalism, and Reformation are worked out.”

170 Ibid.
171 Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
Another example is the film’s depiction of both Nazmi Kemal and Ajmal Khan as “good” Muslims through their consumption of alcohol. Alcohol is forbidden in Islam but is still consumed in countries such as Pakistan, which is officially a Muslim country. Since it is forbidden, the consumption of it by those identifying as Muslims may contain multiple and contradictory meanings. For example, the founding father of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah consumed alcohol as well as pork, both of which are forbidden in Islam. This is ignored in official textbooks in Pakistan because it is considered the sign of a “bad” Muslim, which is not possible to admit within the image of the founding father of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. However, it is very much part of Jinnah’s identity as an affluent Anglicized Indian.175

In Pakistan, this consumption is marked as the sign of “secular” Muslim identity according to class: when alcohol is consumed by Pakistani Muslims who are also participants in middle-class respectability through their economic affluence, then this consumption marks them as “secular” Muslims — like Ajmal Khan. The consumption of alcohol by poor and lower middle-class communities is marked as a sign of their lack of respectability, as a social ill produced by poverty and violence.

The film also ignores the politics of class which undergird the meanings around alcohol as a sign.177 This erases one of the most important ways in which Nazmi Kemal and Ajmal Khan are aligned—a transnational politics of class. This transnational circuit of capital produces the circulation of books of poetry from Pakistan to Turkey. If Kemal and

Khan occupy positions of economic and social affluence within Pakistan and Turkey, then they are part of a transnational English speaking class of subjects who are legible in as the proper kinds of worldly subjects precisely because of their social and economic privilege. They are not poor immigrant laborers, asylum seekers, refugees, or undocumented workers. Yet the film’s philic Orientalism obscures this political economy, and reproduces the discursive practices which have historically anchored the Orientalist consumption of places like Turkey and Pakistan by colonial powers such as Britain and France. For a film declared as a challenge to stereotypes by its cast and crew, this is an ironic revelation of the power of Orientalist discourse and the political economy which it produces and is produced by.178

Islam

In the introduction to her book, *At Freedom’s Limit: Islam and the Postcolonial Predicament*, Sadia Abbas notes that she is writing about an Islam which is:

> a name, a discursive site, a flexible and simultaneously constrained signifier, indeed a geopolitical agon, in and around which some of the most pressing aporias of modernity, enlightenment, liberalism and Reformation are worked out179

Following Abbas, I analyze how the politics of this Islam are represented in “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.” I argue that the film reaffirms Pakistani nationalism through a notion of Islam which conforms to the logics of liberal multiculturalism. This is part of the philic Orientalism that underpins the nationalist narrative of Pakistan in the film. It does not take into account the politics of class and language in Pakistan; the articulation of political struggles in religious

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vocabularies in Pakistan; and what Sadia Abbas calls the “historical imbrications between the new enemies of empire and empire itself”\textsuperscript{180} as they have played out in Pakistan and Afghanistan since the Cold War.

“The Reluctant Fundamentalist” constructs a binary of “good” Muslim and “bad”\textsuperscript{181} Muslim according to the logics of liberal multiculturalism without contextualizing or complicating this discourse. The ways in which Changez Khan is represented as the good reaffirm a problematic representation of good Pakistanis as only those who conform to the demographics of identity Changez Khan belongs to.

Changez Khan self-identifies as a Muslim near the end of “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.” By this point in the film, the CIA has deployed an armed extraction team to Lahore University to rescue operative Bobby Lincoln. This is because a student-led anti-American protest is threatening to mutate into a riot, partly because of Bobby’s insistence that Changez Khan has masterminded the kidnapping of his friend and fellow CIA agent, Anse Rainier. It is in this context of heightened emotions and the threat of violence that Changez, trying to convince Bobby that he had no part in Rainier’s kidnapping, tells him, “Yes, I am a Pakistani. Yes, I am a Muslim. Yes, I am an opponent of your country’s assault on mine—but that’s not all that I am. We are both more than these things, Bobby.”

By this point, Changez has constantly been marked as a Pakistani Muslim over the course of the film in other ways. For example, the very word “fundamentalist” in the title of the film marks him as a Pakistani Muslim (and as a representation of the automatic affixation of Pakistani

\textsuperscript{181} Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to \textit{Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror} (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
with Muslim). This is because “fundamentalist” is sticky\textsuperscript{182} with discourses about militant versions of Islam, which have been metonymically signified with certain nation-states in the post-9/11 moment. Pakistan is one of these nation-states. Therefore, a film titled “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” featuring a Pakistani protagonist automatically configures that protagonist as a Muslim.

There are also several references to Changez’s identity as a Muslim throughout the film. For example, at one point in the film, the audience hears a voicemail from Changez’s mother wishing him Eid Mubarak. This is a congratulatory message Muslims greet one another with on the day of Eid, the festival which marks the end of Ramazan, the month of fasting. Another reference is near the start of Plot B, when Changez has been recruited by Wall Street firm Underwood-Samson as one of their new financial analysts. The scene is set in Central Park in New York City on a sunny summer day; Changez, Wainwright, Mike, and their consistently unnamed white female colleague are having a picnic, complete with Frisbees, grilled hot dogs, and soda. The topic under discussion is where each of them sees themselves in the next twenty-five years, and the answers range from Fortune 500 companies and philanthropy to becoming a CEO before thirty. When Mike asks Changez about his plans, Changez deadpans, “In twenty-five years, I’m going to be the dictator of an Islamic Republic with nuclear capability.” This joke is a clear reference to Pakistan, the official title of which is the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and which does have nuclear capability as of May 1998 when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s government conducted nuclear tests in retaliation for India’s own tests. For Pakistanis, this joke as a reference to Changez’s identity as a Muslim has a double meaning because non-Muslims are not allowed to become heads of state in Pakistan.

The third reference is during a lighthearted and flirtatious exchange between Erica and Changez. The scene is set in Erica’s apartment, which Changez and Erica enter after having been to a blues concert on a date. Changez spots the photographs Erica took of him in Central Park on the day they met and teases her, “You know what this is saying to me? This is saying, ‘Changez, throw a burka on me, confiscate my college degree, and take me home to mama!’”

The first two components of this dialogue point to racialized and gendered stereotypes about Muslim-identified men. The burka has become a symbol of the oppression of Muslim women by Muslim men; in the imagery of the War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq, depictions of Afghani and Iraqi women in burkas were deployed to justify the war. The second component, “Confiscate my college degree” also configures into these racialized discourses about Islam. In this context, gender equality is the grounds for contestations about the modernity of Islam. A college degree represents education, and education represents “modernity, enlightenment, liberalism,” so that Changez as a brown Muslim man confiscating a degree held by a woman would be uncivilized, barbaric, and against gender equality. It is through this figure that a discursive, universal object called Islam gets marked as an uncivilized, barbaric, and oppressive religion.

It is important to note that in both the second and third instances of reference to Islam and Pakistan, Changez uses humor to expose and undercut the racism present in each context. His statements are humorous precisely because they are deliberate evocations of racist stereotypes

about Pakistanis, Muslims, and Pakistani Muslims. Both scenes serve as instances in which the film refutes such racism through Changez as a Pakistani and Muslim protagonist who is aware of them, and resists them.

In the previous section, I discussed how “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” constructs a philic Orientalist narrative of Pakistani and Muslim identity categories through the identification of the three father figures with the West (the USA) and the East (Pakistan and Turkey). Here, I am interested in the problematic politics of class, language, gender, and sexuality which underpin the film’s representation of Changez Khan as a good Pakistani and a good Muslim.

The film positions Changez as a good Pakistani and a good Muslim as codes for each other. In other words, Changez is a good Pakistani because he is a good Muslim, and he is a good Muslim because he is a good Pakistani. While the aforementioned examples of references to Islam confirm Changez as a Muslim, his return to Pakistan to better the country through education (he becomes a professor of political economy at Lahore University) and nonviolent resistance to both American interference and Islamic militancy in the name of Pakistani nationalism, specifically configures him as a good Pakistani and a good Muslim.

Changez’s resistance to American foreign policy in Pakistan is illustrated through the narrative arc of Plot A. This pivots around Changez’s refutation of Bobby Lincoln’s racist suspicion of him as an Islamic militant because of his opposition to American interference in Pakistan. The unfolding of this plot is about Changez disproving Bobby’s distinctly American notions about Pakistanis and Muslims as terrorists. For example, Bobby lists two pieces of evidence for his suspicions that Changez is a terrorist: one, that Changez advocates violent

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187 Ibid.
resistance and anti-American sentiment in his courses at Lahore University; two, that he visited a madrassah run by Mustafa Fazil.

At the start of the film, the camera lingers on a storyboard being used by the CIA in their investigation of the kidnapping of Professor Rainier. The movement of the camera over words and images on the storyboard is a deliberate ordering of how these words and images have been interpreted by the CIA to construct a particular narrative about Changez as a terrorist. These fragments of evidence include newspaper clippings, photographs, and written documents.

Later in Plot A, when Changez has revealed that he has known all along that Bobby is a CIA operative, Bobby confronts Changez about this evidence. Changez’s answer is a mirror of the CIA’s storyboard as he rearranges these fragments of evidence to expose Bobby’s suspicions as racist and mistaken. Bobby’s charge that Changez advocates violent anti-American sentiment is revealed as an incomplete picture on Bobby’s part: Changez completes the puzzle to reveal it as a lesson for Changez’s students about how violence will not bring peace or solve problems. Bobby’s charge that Changez is involved with Islamic militants based on his visit to a madrassah is disproved by Changez’s statement that, “A madrassah is a place of learning, Bobby, and I am a teacher.” Bobby’s suspicion is therefore shown to be based on a misunderstanding of what a madrassah is, an Arabic word for a school or college.

The cinematic consequences of the mistake Bobby Lincoln and the CIA have made in their suspicion of Changez is when Changez receives a text and sends a reply, just before Agent Cooper texts Bobby a graphic photograph of the murdered Anse Rainier. What Bobby does not receive, because of poor cell phone reception, is the information that Rainier was killed in a Karachi by a different terrorist cell than the Asal Mujahideen; Changez has nothing to do with either Rainier’s kidnapping or death.
Reacting with grief and fear, Bobby completes the information about Rainier’s murder with his racist stereotype about Changez as a terrorist because he is a Pakistani and because he is a Muslim. He concludes that the text Changez received and sent was to the militants holding Rainier and that Changez ordered them to murder him. Accordingly, he pulls out his gun and takes Changez hostage in front of an already tense crowd of students: they know he is a threat to Professor Khan; they know he is an American, and therefore a representative of American interference in Pakistan; they have already been harassed by Pakistani police officers under suspicion of being complicit in Professor Rainier’s kidnapping and murder; and there is an anti-American protest happening outside the Pak Tea House.

Bobby’s actions escalate this tension into a full-blown riot as the students try to help Changez, Pakistani police officers use force to keep the protest under control, and Agent Cooper sends an armed extraction team to rescue Bobby. Amidst the chaos that ensues, Bobby misfires his gun—the bullet hits Sameer who dies on the spot, in Changez’s arms as Changez looks on in grief, shock, and horror. Sameer’s death at the end of the film as a result of Bobby’s refusal to listen to Changez is about the tragedy of the human cost of the USA’s racist foreign policy towards Pakistanis.

Changez’s resistance to Islamic militancy and violence is depicted in his refusal of Mustafa Fazil’s offer to join the Asal Mujahideen and hide weapons in his office at the university. The scene is set in a science laboratory where Changez is discussing tax reform with his students. This conversation as a set up for the scene that follows does three things: it portrays Changez as involved in nonviolent and meaningful change; it portrays Changez as inspiring to
his students; it portrays Changez as a public intellectual. Mustafa Fazil’s interruption, then, is not just an interruption of a conversation; it symbolizes the interruption of positive change in Pakistan by good Pakistanis (who are therefore good Muslims) by bad Pakistanis (who are bad Muslims).

Mustafa Fazil tries to persuade Changez to join the Asal Mujahideen by asking him a rhetorical question: “How did you feel when you saw the bombs dropping on your brothers and sisters?” This configures Changez as part of a universal Muslim community by designating him as family of his “brothers and sisters” on whom bombs are falling. Fazil, now speaking to Changez as already included in his project, continues with what he sees as Changez’s role in this project: “A wise and effective mujahid appears to the enemy as a negotiable man. He hides behind masks. Wear this mask for us, Changez.” Fazil asking Changez to “wear a mask” is a thematic recall of Changez as not true to himself when he is in the USA at the start of Plot B. The film depicts Jim Cross’ tutelage and Changez’s pursuit of the American Dream as inauthentic to Pakistani identity. It is this mask that Changez refuses to wear any longer in Istanbul when he quits his job and tells Jim, “I have to live in truth.” His return to Pakistan is an embrace of authentic Pakistani identity.

However, this authenticity is not to be found in Mustafa Fazil’s ideological framework either. Fazil tells Changez, “There are items, tools of resistance, we would like to store in your office.” These “tools of resistance” are obviously weapons, which confirms Mustafa Fazil as a militant and codes his opposition to the USA as violent.

As Fazil is saying these words, there is a look of contemplation on Changez’s face as if he is remembering something. What he is remembering is concretized when Fazil makes his

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closing statement of the justification of his project: “Our only hope as a people are the fundamental truths given to us in the Quran.” It is in this moment that the scene changes from a focus on Fazil to a focus on Changez because this is the second pivotal moment for the delineation of Changez’s identity as a good Pakistani and as a good Muslim. This is illustrated through what he remembers through an intertwining words and images. An image of faceless figures in sharply identical suits in cubicles appears as Jim Cross’ words from Changez’s first day at Underwood-Samson echo in the shadowed office: “Focus on the fundamentals.” Islamic fundamentalism of militant terrorism is connected in this scene to American fundamentalism of economic terrorism through the cross-referenced figures of Mustafa Fazil and Jim Cross. The word ‘fundamental’ here is a double play on both as ideological frameworks Changez refuses as a good Pakistani. The title of the film, “The Reluctant Fundamentalist,” becomes about a narrative of Pakistani nationalism that is independent of either framework. The depiction of Changez as the hero and protagonist marks this version of Pakistani nationalism as the good version.

This point is reaffirmed in the final scene of the film, which depicts Changez’s eulogy at Sameer’s burial. The sunlight glints off the dewy green grass and the crisp white shalwar kameez of the mourners, who are all men, since women are not allowed to attend the burial. This sunlit landscape is where Changez stands next to his father, Ajmal Khan, and makes a passionate and poetic declaration against despair and revenge. He advocates courage and hope through nonviolent means to change Pakistan for the better as the best way to honor Sameer’s memory. Speaking in Urdu as the national language of Pakistan, Changez states, “Tell the sun to keep its rays, for I am lighting the lamps of hope within myself.” The fortitude and hope in Changez’s words is symbolized by the rising sun as a beginning, rather than an end. Therefore, while
Sameer’s death is an emotional hook for the audience, it is also inflected with the courage of those portrayed as good Pakistanis, such as Sameer and Changez. This scene underscores the portrayal of an active Pakistani nationalism based on a refusal of both economic fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism.

The problem is that the Pakistani nationalism embodied by Changez Khan as the only good and authentic version of Pakistani nationalism is underpinned by problematic logics of liberal multiculturalism, and problematics politics of class, gender, sexuality, and language. Moreover, the film presents only Mustafa Fazil as another kind of Pakistani and another kind of Muslim, so that the multiplicity of Pakistanis in Pakistan is erased. The problem isn’t about the authenticity of Changez as a Pakistani or as a Muslim. The problem is that besides Mustafa Fazil as the bad Pakistani, there are no other kinds of Pakistanis in the film. This means that the agency of positive change, the ideological markers of a good Pakistani and a good Muslim, are located only within communities Changez represents.

Changez Khan speaks both Urdu and English perfectly. Both languages present particular political complications within Pakistan. Urdu is the language identified with mahajirs, North Indians who came to Pakistan from India during partition between 1947 and 1953. Mahajir is an epistemological category based in an Islamic vocabulary which contains the meanings of ‘refugee’ and ‘immigrant’ simultaneously. The mainly Urdu-speaking mahajir communities have historically claimed greater ownership of the idea of Pakistan than the non-Urdu-speaking communities who were already present in the lands that became Pakistan. This claim is based precisely because of their relocation from India to Pakistan. As Aamir Mufti discusses in *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture*, this configuration deployed the narrative device of hijrat to construct mahajirs as the nation identified...
as the Muslims of India in whose name Pakistan was demanded. The “narrative-mythological constellation” of hijrat constructs them as persecuted in India because they are Muslims, and so they sacrifice their former homes to come to Pakistan.\footnote{Aamir R. Mufti, “Toward a Lyric History of India,” \textit{boundary 2} 31(2) (2004): 260, accessed February 13, 2013, doi:10.1215/01903659-31-2-245}

Changez speaks in Urdu at pivotal moments in the film for the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism. For example, when he refuses to join Mustafa Fazil and the Asal Mujahideen, and when he speaks at Sameer’s burial. This marks Urdu as the language for the articulation of good Pakistani nationalism.

However, the fact is that Urdu’s status as the national language of Pakistan is contested. This is because of the ideological competition over the claim to Pakistan between the Urdu-speaking mahajir identified communities, and those peoples who already inhabited the lands that became Pakistan in 1947. These peoples spoke Punjabi, Siraiki, Sindhi, Pashto, and Baloch as regional identifiers as much as Urdu was the language of specific cities and classes before partition, such as Lucknow and Delhi—both cities in north India, rather than Pakistan. The declaration of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan prioritized the claim on the idea of Pakistan of the mahajir communities located mainly in Karachi and Hyderabad over the narratives of belonging of peoples already located in Pakistan.

At the root of the competition between these narratives of belonging is of course the idea of Pakistan itself. While there was no consensus in Balochistan on becoming a part of Pakistan, the provincial government of Sindh also refused to accommodate all the mahajirs from north India during the first few years of partition. The provincial government argued that the city’s economic, political, and physical infrastructure could not manage this influx of uprooted

people.\textsuperscript{191} This was a direct contradiction of the notion of Pakistan as a homeland for the nation narrated as the Muslims of India at the moment of definition for the new nation-state.

The cities of Karachi and Lahore in particular also saw the exodus of their Hindu, Sikh, and Jewish-identified populations during this time. This was precisely because the terms of belonging had become fraught with the affixation of Pakistani with Muslim. These communities had been identified as part of the social fabric of the city, rather than along lines of religion as the sole category of identity through which to belong. Their uprooting from Lahore and Karachi meant that each city lost a set of feelings, a set of stories, a way of telling stories, and a way of sharing stories through the shared space of a city.\textsuperscript{192}

The second language Changez speaks is English. English is the sign of British colonialism in the subcontinent. The structural legacies of this colonialism have imbued English\textsuperscript{193} with connotations of power through class privilege and social capital. In other words, it is through speaking English that Changez is marked as an upper middle-class Pakistani. Although it is revealed in Plot B that he attended the university on full financial aid, it is Changez’s class privilege that enables him to access this financial aid at all, in very material ways; for example, speaking English as the language the forms for financial aid are in, the language the application forms for Princeton are in. Speaking English signifies Changez’s embodiment of middle class respectability, which in turn enables him to inhabit a specific transnational subjectivity. Changez Khan is not the poor illegal immigrant, he is not the asylum seeker, he is not a Spanish speaking refugee from across the border in Mexico, he is not an undocumented worker or student. Changez is not white but he is respectable through his English

and through his class privilege, precisely because in the USA, whiteness and class are co-constitutive of each other, and of the politics of respectability.

Changez also speaks English at pivotal moments in the film. Indeed, all of Plot A unravels in English through the framework of the conversation between Changez Khan and Bobby Lincoln. This is important because Plot A fulfills multiple narrative purposes. For example, Plot A is the cinematic construction of the poem, “Bol” by Faiz Ahmed Faiz. This poem is sung as part of a duet by Atif Aslam and Peter Gabriel during the closing credits of the film. It is also recited by Shabana Azmi on the Making Of feature of the DVD during a cast get-together. Both of these instances illustrate “Bol” as part of the selection of poems by Faiz which Mira Nair states “is the anthem for this film.” The word ‘Bol’ means ‘speak’ in Urdu. As recited by Shabana Azmi, the poem translates as follows: “Speak, for now your lips are free | Speak, your tongue is your own | Your upright body is your own | Speak, for your life is still your own.”

Plot A is the cinematic illustration of these words because it pivots on Changez Khan speaking truth to Bobby Lincoln about American imperialism and economic fundamentalism. Changez also speaks truth to Bobby across and about the political and ideological positions each of them symbolize in the film: “Yes, I am a Pakistani. Yes, I am a Muslim. Yes, I am an opponent for your country’s assault on mine. But we are both more than these things, Bobby.” While the first three sentences confirm Changez’s identities, the fourth negates the racist assumptions made by Bobby Lincoln about who Changez is based on those, precisely because Changez is “more than these things.” The fourth sentence is also a gesture of friendship from Changez to Bobby through his use of the word ‘we,’ which denotes a bond of mutual recognition between them, that each of them is more than the stereotypes would have each believe. Director Mira Nair describes this as the project of the film in the Making Of feature on the DVD:
This story gave me the chance to let people see beyond that terrible stereotype that is constantly projected in our text, in our media, in our television screen, about, you know, if you’re a Muslim, you’re a terrorist, if you’re an American, you’re a militarist.

Plot A is also the Pakistani narration of the effects of US foreign policy in Pakistan. These effects are symbolized most emphatically by the harassment of Changez and his family by CIA, and by the death of Sameer during the penultimate scene of confrontation between university students, the CIA extraction team, and Pakistani police.

This is also how the cast members of the film understand the narrative purpose of Plot A. In the *Making Of* feature of the DVD, actor Kiefer Sutherland, who plays the character of Jim Cross, explains, “It is a story about how through our own fear and, I guess, ignorance, on some level, that we have taken in some cases our greatest allies and turned them into our enemies.”

The problem with this story and the telling of it is precisely that it is being told in English by a Pakistani (Changez Khan) who is configured as a subject-citizen partly through the transnational terms of legibility English allows him to inhabit. In other words, Changez is the kind of Pakistani narrator recognizable to the transnational audience speaking English enables him to represent and speak to. The authority to tell this story is therefore located in Pakistanis like Changez, which in turn designates the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism as the province of this social, political, and economic demographic. Moreover, the Pakistani nationalism that is affirmed by Pakistanis represented by Changez (and I deploy “Pakistani” here as a transnational category based precisely on the politics of English as a language) is simultaneously produced by their social, economic, and political positions—signified by English as a language.

Since “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” configures Changez as a good Pakistani and a good Muslim, English, alongside Urdu, becomes the language for the articulation of this morally charged nationalism. However, it is precisely English that signifies the production of the version
of Islam Changez embodies through transnational liberal multicultural logics, class privilege, and urban location. The transnational circulation of the logics of liberal multiculturalism is enabled by the legacies of British colonialism in the subcontinent. These politics are espoused by a specific demographic of Pakistanis, aligned through speaking English and class privilege.

“The Reluctant Fundamentalist” does not portray any practices or rituals popularly legible under the signifier of Islam. For example, nobody is shown to offer any of the five daily prayers, nor is any one shown to fast, even though Changez’s mother is heard in a voicemail wishing Changez Eid Mubarak, which is a direct reference to the month of fasting. While alcohol is forbidden in Islam, the opening scene of the film includes Ajmal Khan praising Changez for procuring bootleg liquor, and there is a minibar at Bina’s mehndi later on in the film. Extramarital sex is also forbidden in Islam, yet Changez has sex with Erica while in New York City.

My parents belong to the same social and economic demographic as Changez Khan. Yet they would not recognize his version of Islam as Islam at all, based on his engagement in extramarital sex, and because his family consumes alcohol. When it comes right down to it, my parents consider qavvalis bordering on blasphemy because qavvalis often use the beloved as a metaphor for the love of God, because they mention wine as a metaphor for the ecstasy of divine love, and because they often express devotional love of Ali, the nephew of Prophet Muhammed. As Sunni-identified Muslims, my parents do not consider Ali as a major figure in the narrative of Islam as, for example, the Shias do. While my father does not condone violence against any followers of any faith, he does agree with the law that declares Ahmadis as non-Muslims. My maternal uncles do not consider my mother nor myself good Muslims because we do not wear either hijabs or abayas, which their daughters do. One of my closest friends’ mothers considers
marriage to be compulsory in Islam, while my mother, who identifies as a Muslim, has told me it is my choice whether to get married or not. There are those who would consider neither my parents nor my friends’ parents good Muslims because they sent their children (sons and daughters) to co-education schools.

The point here isn’t about who is a good Muslim and who is not, nor is it about a competition over piety and virtue. Neither is this a moral criticism of Pakistanis who do inhabit and practice Changez's version of Islam. The point precisely is that it is a version of Islam; when “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” sets up Changez as the good Muslim and Mustafa Fazil as the bad Muslim, it erases the multiplicity of the ways in which Islam is practiced in Pakistan.

Moreover, the particular erasure manifest in the film is based on problematic politics of class privilege and urban location. This means that the social and economic demographic represented by Changez—and even those aligned\(^{194}\) as part of this demographic through English, class privilege, urban locations, and transnational mobility do not share homogenous practices of Islam—and their versions of Islam become designated as good and authentic, as opposed to others.

Not only is the construction of binaries a major function of Orientalism, these binaries are imbued with features of Orientalism as “an ostensible polarization between East and West, Islam and the rest,”\(^{195}\) according to which “modern liberalism or radical secular progressivism comes from the West.”\(^{196}\) “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” produces an Islam according to the definition of modern liberalism, and the equation of modern liberalism with the West. Moreover, the film adheres to the ways in which a particular politics of gender and sexuality become the grounds for

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\(^{195}\) Sadia Abbas, “Itineraries of Conversion: Judaic Paths to a Muslim Pakistan,” in *Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan* edited by Naveeda Khan (New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2010), 344.

\(^{196}\) Ibid.
the production and circulation of these definitions. This is also a marker of Orientalism because gender and sexuality are pivotal to constructing racialized narrations of the Orient and the Occident as oppositions. For example, the Khan family’s version of Islam includes Changez’s sister Bina dressed in well-fitted bell bottom jeans and a short flower-printed blouse in the first scenes of Plot B, set in Lahore in 2001. The first scene in which Bina is visible in this outfit also features a family viewing of a short comedic film in which Bina stars as a damsel in distress. Her outfit that for that film (within a film) is a shiny and tight black leather outfit with big red hoop earrings and bright red heels. In the following scene, as she and Changez sit together in the garden, Bina jokes with him, “All I want is an apartment in Manhattan, Mr. Big, and big fake American boobs!” In a later scene, Bina drives Changez from the airport to their home on his visit to Lahore for Bina’s wedding celebrations. During these celebrations, Bina is shown singing and dancing at her mehndi.

Coupled with the significations of English as a language and class privilege, Bina represents a version of Islam marked in Pakistan as modern and liberal (though not necessarily popular even within the social and economic demographic Bina is a part of). This is because each of the aforementioned examples signifies discursive markers of what “modern liberalism or radical secular progressivism” is defined as through an Orientalist narrative. Ergo, Bina’s bell-bottom jeans and short flower printed blouse become symbols of modern liberalism in contrast to the hijab and the abaya. The fact that she participates in the transnational circulation of sexual and economic desires symbolized by the reference to “Sex and the City” makes her legible as a modern subject-citizen through the sexual and economic liberation this reference contains. This

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is produced in contrast to the figure of the sexually repressed Muslim woman forced into marriage and economic dependency. The fact that she drives, sings, and dances come to signify a freedom of mobility not available to the figure of the silent Muslim woman immobilized by the black burka.

The point here is not whether this or that practice is wrong or right or Islamic or un-Islamic or moral or immoral—the point is that they are engaged in by people who identify as Muslims, and that there are heterogeneous practiced versions of Islam. The problem is that since “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” features no Pakistani Muslims other than Changez Khan and Mustafa Fazil through the categories of “good” and “bad” Muslim\(^{199}\) respectively, the version of Islam represented by the Khan family becomes the only version of Islam available to the audiences of the film.

Moreover, that Bina engages in these practices through a narrative framework in which the Khan family as a whole is identified as Muslim means that those practices are marked as part of the modern and liberal Islam Changez as the protagonist stands for. Bina becomes the gendered and sexual referent for the confirmation of Changez’s identification as a modern and liberal Muslim. This is not because of the character of Bina per se, but because no other versions of a lived and ordinary Islam are presented in the film. The film makes no effort to deconstruct the material and discursive terms of legibility that produce Bina as this signifier, which means that those terms remain in place. For example, the film is not at all attentive to how Bina’s practices of a specific version of Islam are products of social and class privilege, nor how the legibility of specific practices as part of a modern and liberal Islam is the product of racialized Orientalist discourses. Neither is there any attention paid to how these terms produce a female

\(^{199}\) Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
character, a female body as the grounds upon which “some of the most pressing aporias of modernity, enlightenment, liberalism, and Reformation are worked out.”200 In other words, Bina becomes a metonym for Islam as “a name, a discursive site, a flexible and simultaneously constrained signifier”201 because the film constructs not only just one version of Islam, but because this version is constructed through an Orientalist framework, which deploys racialized categories of gender and sexuality. This is why Bina is recognizable as a reference for not only “an ostensible polarization between East and West, Islam and the rest,”202 according to which modern liberalism is located in the West. She is also a reference for the legibility of a heterosexual male body, that of Changez Khan as the protagonist, as the embodiment of that modern liberalism.

The Notion of Return

In “Itineraries of Conversion: Judaic Paths to a Muslim Pakistan,” Sadia Abbas explores “the cricketer and global playboy turned politician, Imran Khan’s rediscovery of his Muslim identity”203 as an example of “the self-orientalising tendencies that lodge themselves at the heart of postcolonial culture.”204 Abbas notes that this kind of narrative requires a journey through which Khan can “cast himself as an outsider to Islam, the kind of outsider, moreover, who can be brought back into the fold.”205 This is manifested in an actual journey: “Khan goes from Pakistan

201 Ibid.
203 Ibid, 344-345.
204 Ibid, 345.
205 Ibid.
to Britain back to Pakistan.” He returns to Pakistan as a place where “the edifices of politically inspired spiritual quests will be erected.” Abbas states that in his article, “In Pakistan We Have Selective Islam,” Imran Khan narrates “a story of diasporic self-rediscovery.” His racialized self-hatred is overcome through celebrity amongst “the English aristocracy and Western elites,” and his return to his own identity as a Muslim comes through his experience of “the hostility of the West to Islam” after the controversy over *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie. This experience of Britain and Pakistan as two distinct cultures means that Khan can authoritatively “identify the strengths and shortcomings of both.” Pakistan as “the East,” has moral superiority even if Britain as “the West” has better institutions. Khan’s return to Pakistan is not only a return towards religion but through this turn, he rediscovers and recommits to “his cultural and national identity.” Khan’s return to being a good Muslim means Khan’s return to being a good Pakistani.

“The Reluctant Fundamentalist” deploys the same framework of philic Orientalism through the narrative of return as a narrative of diasporic self-rediscovery by the protagonist, Changez Khan. His journey is from Pakistan to the USA back to Pakistan. He overcomes his internalized racism through his social and economic success on Wall Street, the access to the “highest echelons of Western power” in New York City this success grants him, and romantic success with a white American woman named Erica. However, he turns to his own identity as a

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206 Ibid, 346.
207 Ibid.
208 Ibid, 347.
209 Ibid.
210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
212 Ibid, 348.
213 Ibid.
Pakistani and as a Muslim after experiencing “the hostility of the West to Islam” after the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. His return to being a good Muslim is also his return to being a good Pakistani.

Changez’s return to Pakistan as a return to his true identity as a good Muslim and therefore a good Pakistani embodies a political message. This message is explained as follows by author Mohsin Hamid in the Making Of feature of the DVD:

Changez’s politics are that Pakistanis need to be self-reliant. They should neither accept dictates from the rest of the world nor blame their misfortunes on the rest of the world, but, you know, in a sense, morally grow up and take an adult responsibility for the world they find themselves in and to change that world in the way they would like to see it changed.

This statement reveals the liberal multicultural logics and the political economies which underpin the philic Orientalism present in both the film and the production of the film.

Changez is representative of a particular social and economic demographic of Pakistanis. Therefore, a politics encapsulated in the line, “Pakistanis need to be self-reliant,” is a generalization produced through an erasure of other Pakistanis. This lack of representation is present in the film itself. That is to say, the lack of representation of other Pakistanis in the film unintentionally highlights the politics of class which undergird the production of this film. The scene is of Bina’s mehndi hosted on the grounds of the Khan family home. The lawn is well-maintained and beautifully decorated. There are glowing lanterns everywhere and a minibar under a tree. Bright lights illuminate the inside of an enormous canopy, where the bride and groom to be are dancing with their guests, everyone dressed in color and sparkle.

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Near the end of the celebrations, an incident occurs between a young waiter catering the event and Changez’s paternal uncle. The waiter accidentally spills a drink, and Changez’s uncle yells at him harshly. Being part of the catering team for this upper-class wedding is the waiter’s livelihood; therefore he cannot answer back to Changez’s uncle as his employer for the event. Changez’s uncle has economic privilege that gives him the social power to yell at the waiter. For his part, the young man can only fold his body inwards to make himself less present, mumble an apology so softly as to be barely audible, and hurry away in shame at being yelled at in front of an audience—Changez and his father, Ajmal Khan, who are standing by the bar and see this exchange. However, this class-based shame and humiliation are not the only consequences. Social power is structural, which is illustrated through Ajmal Khan’s remark to Changez about the incident: "When that young man returns to the catering tent, the supervisor will fire him.” The supervisor will fire the waiter precisely because he made a mistake and Changez’s uncle noticed and yelled at him for it. For the supervisor, this reflects on the reputation of the catering company amongst upper-class Lahori clients.

Changez Khan has a job on Wall Street that enables him to help his mother fund lavish wedding celebrations for Bina. Later in the film, Changez Khan will resign from his job out of choice, not the force of circumstances, especially not those involving class-based humiliation.

These politics of class are part of the structures of power that are erased by Hamid’s insistence that all Pakistanis (which is implied through the aforementioned lack of any political or demographic specificity) should "be self-reliant" and “morally grow up and take an adult responsibility for the world they find themselves in and to change that world in the way they would like to see it changed.” This erasure reveals this statement to be inflected with a neoliberal
sentiment.\textsuperscript{217} This sentiment is anchored in political, economic, and social structures. It focuses on a notion of the individual as autonomous and universal, qualities which in turn produce the individual as having perfect agency. This is the individual at the heart of liberal multiculturalism.\textsuperscript{218}

Feminist and feminist of color scholarship and queer of color critique has explained and illustrated the historicity of this notion of the individual in classic liberalism, and the ways in which this figure has circulated through liberal multiculturalism. The work of scholars such as Audre Lorde,\textsuperscript{219} Carole Pateman,\textsuperscript{220} Anne McClintock,\textsuperscript{221} Andrea Smith,\textsuperscript{222} and Pamela Haag\textsuperscript{223} has explored the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality that have produced this myth, and the figure of the individual in it as white, male, heterosexual, economically privileged, and English speaking. It is these structurally anchored privileges that enable the definition of an individual, and for that individual to be autonomous and have perfect agency.\textsuperscript{224}

From the 1980s onwards, this idea has mutated within a neoliberal political and economic framework into a social sentiment which blames those from marginalized communities for the problems they face. These communities intersect and include Native peoples, the working-class, the poor, people of color, sexual minorities, gender minorities, immigrants, and sex workers.

\textsuperscript{219} Audre Lorde, \textit{Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde} (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007).
\textsuperscript{221} Anne McClintock, \textit{Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest} (New York and London: Routledge, 1995).
The myth of American exceptionalism pivots on the notion of the autonomous individual with perfect agency. The structural violence and discriminations that undergird and perpetuate this myth include settler colonialism, slavery, racism, homophobia, economic injustice, and misogyny. The social and material realities they produce are justified through the figure of the autonomous individual with perfect agency.

The historical mark of modernity is the production of global structures and forms of capital and the circulation of epistemologies of sociality through colonialism and settler colonialism from the late 1400s and early 1500s. The subcontinent became a focal point for these circulations through British colonialism. The work of scholars such as Aamir Mufti, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Sadia Abbas, Veena Das, and Lata Mani has detailed the ways in which South Asian modernity is produced through the transfers and transformation of these ideas and structures in the subcontinent.

Mohsin Hamid’s statement is a product of the global reach of neoliberal sentiment, enabled and symbolized by English as a global language through colonialism and settler colonialism. Indeed, there are two intertwined manifestations of this sentiment at work in his

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statement. One is the ideological propagation of this neoliberal sentiment by Pakistanis who are socially and economically privileged—like Changez Khan and like Mohsin Hamid himself. Their expression of this sentiment is evident in the local narratives in which they locate agency, critical thinking, problem-solving, and legitimate national affect within their economic, social, and political demographic. Pakistanis who do not fit this demographic are narrated as violent, gullible, irresponsible, politically uneducated, and uninformed. They are therefore held responsible for the social, economic, and political problems they face, as products of their own unwillingness and inability.

The circulation of these narratives in Pakistan is anchored in transnational narratives about peoples in the Third World, in former colonies such as Mexico, Ethiopia, Honduras, Haiti, Tunisia, and Algeria, to name but a few. These transnational narratives originate in the colonial metropolises. They operate to erase and elide the legacies of exploitation, murder, theft, and trauma by First World countries. The peoples of these countries are racialized as intrinsically unable and unwilling to participate in processes of modernity as defined by the First World, coded in words such as democracy and human rights. Neoliberal sentiments erase the structural legacies of colonialism and settler colonialism in these nation-states, and the ongoing neocolonial processes the First World enacts, which produce social, economic, and political violence, injustice, and instability in these countries. Just like the poor of Pakistan, the peoples of such countries are labeled violent, gullible, irresponsible, politically uneducated, and uninformed. They, too, are held responsible for the social, economic, and political problems they face.

It is the global circuit of racialized capital that enables people like Mohsin Hamid to occupy a position of social and economic privilege in Pakistan that involves transnational
mobility. Moreover, it is because of their privileges that people like Mohsin Hamid can be the proper and respectable kind of transnational subject—who are then represented by cinematic figures like Changez Khan. This representation is produced by the transnational social and economic affluence of this demographic. It gives this demographic claim on the idea of Pakistan in transnational circulation. In other words, the social and economic power of Pakistanis like Mohsin Hamid enables the production of a narrative of Pakistani nationalism such as “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” by the very people who inhabit this circuit. The neoliberal sentiment Hamid’s statement is sticky with produces a demographic of Pakistan aligned not only through social and economic privilege, but also a political ideology. This political ideology is complicit with the aforementioned, transnational politics of race and class.

When Pakistanis represented in social, economic, and ideological terms by Changez Khan espouse these neoliberal sentiments, they are perpetuating both phobic and philic Orientalism: the former is directed at Pakistanis who do not align with this demographic in political and economic terms (those who do not conform in social terms, including those legible through versions of Islam, still have economic power), while the latter is key to the definition and expression of neoliberal multicultural logics through the politics of race and class. Violent, gullible, irresponsible, uneducated, uninformed—each of these words has been a part of the discourse of civilization and civilizing that is intrinsic to Orientalism.

The film locates moral superiority in Pakistan and Turkey as the East in two ways. One is by locating resistance to American financial fundamentalism in Pakistan and Turkey, and a refusal to American military power and Islamic militant fundamentalism in Pakistan. This resistance is made legible through poetry and academia as metonymic for creative and intellectual expression. This is embodied in Pakistan by protagonist Changez Khan, his father
Ajmal Khan, and by Sameer. Sameer is a sweet and idealistic young student studying political economy, taught by Changez at Lahore University. He is convinced of the principles of nonviolence and art as a tool of resistance and change. Sameer is introduced to the audience at the start of Plot A as he ambles through the corridors of the Pak Tea House, quoting Professor Khan: “As Professor Khan says, the most transcendent poetry is by definition political.” Sameer becomes a casualty of American foreign policy and violence in Pakistan at the end of Plot A: he is accidentally shot by Bobby Lincoln amidst the chaos that ensues when student protestors clash with Pakistani police and a CIA extraction team outside the Pak Tea House. His burial is the last scene of the film, and it is in his name that Changez issues a poetic, impassioned call for nonviolence, hope, and courage in the face of violence and death.

In Turkey, Nazmi Kemal embodies this moral superiority. Nazmi Kemal and Jim Cross clash as representations of values the film constructs as opposites: literature versus profit, creativity versus economics. Kemal’s story of the Janissaries as deliberate allegory reveals to Changez that he has become a soldier in the USA’s economic army, and the moral costs of this position. This is the catalyst for Changez to resign from Underwood-Samson in defiance of Jim Cross as the symbol of American capital, and return to Pakistan.

This depiction, of the moral superiority of the East, as the location of art and, therefore, as the site for political change and courage, is problematic for several reasons. The philic Orientalism through which the film constructs the East and the West means that communities located in the USA (the West), which engage in artistic and cultural activities as commitments to political resistance and change, are ignored—in New York City, of all places. There is no mention of Mary J. Blige, Tupac Shakur, Jay-Z, Samuel R. Delany, or Nicki Minaj, all of whom are artists from New York City itself.
This is doubly ironic because Mira Nair is an Indian-American who has lived in New York City for many decades, and she is a filmmaker. Indeed, in an interview with David Poland in April 2013, Nair states, “My creative home is New York City.” Therefore, it is pertinent to ask where all the artists in New York City are in the depiction of the city in “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.” The film’s construction of New York City as a symbol of American capital, which Pakistan and Turkey as the creative and artistic East oppose, also ignores the politics of class operating in this East. This class privilege is embodied by one of the central figures who represent the East in the film: Ajmal Khan.

The Khan family’s social and economic position in Lahore is solidly upper middle-class. This is evident in the opening scene of the film, which is a musical performance hosted in the garden of the Khan family home. The performers are known as qavvals, led by Fareed Ayaz and Abu Mohammed. They are well-known amongst Pakistani and Indian audiences in South Asia and in diaspora. They are known as qavvals because their art form is known as qavvali, which is a form of devotional music popular in Iran and South Asia. The 13th century musician, poet, scholar Amir Khusro has been credited with formally starting the art and tradition of qavvalis.

In South Asia, qavvalis are popularly known as being part of Sufi practices. Sufism is a name given to a set of beliefs and practices that comprise a particular version of Islam located in modern Turkey, Central Asia, Iran, and South Asia. It is not approved of by proponents of Saudi-based Wahhabism. This disapproval is part of the contestations over the truth of Islam, one

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234 “D/P 30: The Reluctant Fundamentalist, director Mira Nair, actor Riz Ahmed,” April 17, 2013, accessed August 1, 2014, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uA05dRNAJDS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uA05dRNAJDS)
of the grounds through which the “aporias of modernity, enlightenment, liberalism, and the
Reformation are worked out.”

Sufis are marked as mystics, as wise, holy men usually found at the shrines of saints. These shrines are where qavvalis used to be performed. For example, there are several performances at a shrine by a pair of famous qavvals, the Sabri Brothers, on YouTube. In these recordings, the Sabri Brothers perform several of Amir Khusro’s most famous poems, including "Zehal-e-Miskeen" and "Namee Daanam."

In recent years, Sufism has been presented as an example of a “good” Islam, dislocated from geopolitical histories and communities, and configured through the binary of private and public as an individual, internal (the code word is "spiritual"), and depoliticized mode of Islam. These qualities have in turn been used to construct Sufism as a peaceful version of Islam, and to configure it as an easily commercialized and consumable cultural commodity from the Orient. Qavvalis have been used as a part of this commodification. Within South Asia and the South Asian diaspora, they have also been transformed into markers of social and economic capital. Hosting a qavvali as part of a garden party, as a private musical evening, or as the main event of a charity concert is a sign of cultural sophistication and affluence in Pakistan.

When “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” opens with a qavvali at the Changez Khan’s home, it is complicit in the reproduction of these twinned ideologies of Orientalism and capitalism. In the context of the film, the qavvali functions as a sign through these ideologies to mark Changez Khan and Pakistanis like him as culturally sophisticated, affluent, and liberal, and

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238 Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
therefore, as modern. Qavvali becomes an object\textsuperscript{239} that infuses Pakistani as a category identified with “good” Muslims\textsuperscript{240} according to the philic Orientalism deployed in the film.

The second way in which the film locates moral superiority in Pakistan as the East is what Sadia Abbas notes in Imran Khan’s narrative as “the Pakistani culture of family.”\textsuperscript{241} The film locates the ideal heterosexual family in Lahore, that is, the Khan family: Abbu, Ammi, Changez, and Bina. When Changez leaves Lahore, he leaves this family, and when he returns to Lahore, he returns to this family. The film equates Lahore and the Khan family through Ajmal Khan as the Pakistani father-poet and Changez as the Pakistani son who returns home. This reaffirms Pakistan as a heterosexual nation-state.\textsuperscript{242} Heterosexuality is therefore the sign of the moral superiority of Pakistan as the East. This depiction of the “Pakistani culture of family”\textsuperscript{243} is constructed through the lack of the heterosexual family in the US, and the lack of heterosexual futurity for Changez in the US. For example, Erica’s last name is never revealed—the only information the audience has about her family background is that her mother comes from a wealthy family, and that her uncle is the CEO of Underwood-Samson, the Wall Street firm Changez Khan works at in Plot B. However, it is not marked whether Mr. Underwood is Erica’s maternal uncle or paternal uncle, so that the presence of her family is never more than an incomplete implication.

This incompleteness is part of the ways in which the film locates heterosexuality futurity for Changez in Pakistan through the failure of such futurity in the US. This failure is symbolized

\textsuperscript{240} Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to \textit{Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror} (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
\textsuperscript{241} Sadia Abbas, “Itineraries of Conversion: Judaic Paths to a Muslim Pakistan,” in \textit{Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan} edited by Naveeda Khan (New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2010), 348.
\textsuperscript{243} Sadia Abbas, “Itineraries of Conversion: Judaic Paths to a Muslim Pakistan,” in \textit{Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan} edited by Naveeda Khan (New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2010), 348.
by the failure of Changez and Erica’s relationship. For example, there is a scene in Plot B between Erica and Changez which underlines the difference each of them attaches to family. The scene is set in Erica’s lavish, open plan Manhattan apartment, full of exposed brick, soft golden light, floor to ceiling windows—and a home photography studio, complete with a scanner and a light table. There is a sleek dark wire strung across the room on which Erica’s photographs are hung. Erica is bustling amongst these hanging photographs and the light table with a hand lens, as Changez talks on the phone to his mother in Lahore about Bina’s wedding celebrations. Noticing how animated Changez has become in his attempt to persuade his mother to let him contribute toward covering the costs of the celebrations, Erica picks up her DSLR camera with the telephoto lens and starts photographing him. Changez notices her attention and playfully gestures for her to stop. As the phone calls ends, Changez’s mother says, “Love you, beta,” and Changez replies with the endearing embarrassment of a teenager when a parent expresses affection, “Yes, yes, okay, bye!” Changez’s insistence on contributing towards the cost of his sister’s wedding to ease his mother’s stress, and this particular exchange, marks the close relationship between mother and son—even across the distance between Pakistan and the US, geographic and temporal (New York City is 9 hours behind Lahore).

When the phone call ends, Changez turns to Erica in half serious and half playful indignation and says, “Hello, excuse me! I’m on the phone with my mom; she’s going crazy trying to plan my sister’s wedding!” This dialogue again underlines how close-knit the Khan family is, with Changez not only helping his mother plan his sister’s wedding financially, but also sharing her stress about the wedding preparations. Again, the closeness of the family is highlighted by the very geographic and temporal distances it crosses.
Erica comments, “A wedding gets her close to grandchildren. It’s what she wants, right?” It is difficult to detect the precise emotions of this comment, but it is this ambiguity which creates unease about what this comment is supposed to mean. It becomes clear in retrospective relation to the next scene that Erica is lonely and envious of the family Changez has, how close and loving they are to each other. Her loneliness and envy emphasize the warmth and love of the Khan family through the ways in which Erica is not a part of it.

The film makes clear that Erica is not a part of this warmth and love of the idea heterosexual family because she is American. This is detectable in the aforementioned comment Erica makes: “A wedding gets her closer to grandchildren. It’s what she wants, right?” This is because it configures the desire for grandchildren as a specifically Pakistani desire, as located in the Pakistani mother. There are no American mothers portrayed in the film; furthermore, that this scene becomes imbued with Erica’s loneliness and envy of the Khan family in the following scene denotes this desire as specifically Pakistani in contrast to American as embodied by Erica.

In this scene, however, the unease created by Erica’s comment is detected by Changez along with the audience; there is a hint of this unease in his own voice when he replies, “You know, my parents have never said it out loud but they want two things in life—security in their old age, and grandchildren.” As Changez is speaking, he is looking down at the kitchen table scattered with photographs, while Erica moves purposefully between the hanging photographs and the light table, examining each with the hand lens, cutting and splicing different photographs in a collage. There is no eye contact between them as they stand and move across from each other. This builds the tension now palpable to the audience.

The camera focuses on Erica at the light table now, in a medium close-up, her eyes highlighted by the white light of the table and the dark blouse she is wearing, her face sombre—
in contrast to a conversation which began with a phone call about the joy of a wedding celebration. Her response is quiet, but it is difficult to miss the presence of an undertone, an ambiguity which contributes to the tension by the hint of anger in it: “And you want to give that to them”—and the fact that it is difficult to ascertain whether this is a question or a statement creates tension in the atmosphere between Changez and Erica.

Changez’s response is based within this tension; he also doesn’t understand whether this is a question or a statement. He affirms, “Well—yeah. They’re my parents.” It is the pause between "well" and "yeah" that makes this line function as the affirmation of a truth Changez has always assumed as axiomatic: that he will provide security and grandchildren for his parents because he is their son and they are his parents. It is this axiomatic quality which marks “the Pakistani culture of family” in opposition to the tension about that family which the film locates in Erica. Her identity as an *American* is highlighted precisely through the contrast between her and Changez as a *Pakistani* through the notion of the heterosexual family. This contrast produces the heterosexual family as Pakistani.

The next scene explodes this tension through a confrontation between Erica and Changez. The scene is diffused with shades of dark blue, pale blue, and silver-white light, signaling the time just before dawn. This time in cinematic terms represents liminality, a space in between, and a space of shadow. This sets up the visual atmosphere for what happens in this scene.

The camera focuses on Changez’s bare back in bed in a wide shot, framed against the white of the bedsheets, the dark of the floor, and shades of blue of the time of morning. The camera moves for a close-up as Changez awakens and looks around for Erica—and then the sound of sobbing comes from somewhere off-screen. Changez walks barefoot through white

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curtains fluttering in the breeze into the bathroom, which is also suffused with pale blue and silver-white shadows. Erica is sitting on the toilet, sobbing, her dark t-shirt falling off of one shoulder, her long, dark hair disheveled. Changez kneels beside her, the close-up shot of his face emphasizing his long lashes and sharp cheekbones in the pale light, as he whispers gently, “Erica? Hey. What’s wrong?”

In between gasps and sobs, Erica’s answer is blunt, “I can’t believe I’m talking about having kids with another man.”

Changez tries to reassure her, “Honey, it was just talking; it was just fooling around”—but like the audience, he has noticed the last two words she said, and he cannot let that go—“And I’m not another man.”

“You are,” Erica tells him, the break in her voice on the word "are" emphasizing what she is saying, “you are another man. You are.” Her repetition is a confirmation Changez cannot refuse or deny under the pretense of any kind of ambiguity. He listens in silent shock as Erica sobs, “Chris—he didn’t have any family, not like you. I was his family, okay. I was his family. And I’m forgetting him.”

At the start of Plot B, on their first unexpected date, Erica had revealed to Changez that her childhood sweetheart was named Chris; he had died 23 weeks before summer 2001—which is when Erica and Changez meet in New York City—and Erica was in mourning. This is whom Erica references in this scene.

The heartbreak is clear in Changez’s dark eyes, shining in the silver-white light of the oncoming but not yet here dawn. This heartbreak will be made much clearer for Changez in a later scene in Plot B when his and Erica’s relationship ends in an ugly drama of race and religion. However, this end to come has already begun in this scene, and the film constructs the
root of it as Erica’s inability as an American to participate in the specifically “Pakistani culture of family.” Her insistence that Changez is another man locates him as an outsider to their relationship through the figure of the American man, Chris. This dislocation is based on Changez’s identity as a Pakistani man who is always already a part of a family to which Erica as an American woman does not have access. This is highlighted when she sobs, “Chris—he didn’t have any family, not like you. I was his family.” Erica and Chris were each other’s family in contrast to Changez, who has a father, mother, and sister. This confirms Changez’s identity as the Pakistani son, which is the crucial identification upon which Plot B pivots overall. This contrast of American versus Pakistani is made explicit in the words, "not like you"—Chris was an American who did not have a family. Changez is not like him because he has a family, and it is this family which underpins Changez’s identity as a Pakistani man. The culture of family, already demonstrated in the preceding scene, is specifically Pakistani and therefore not located in the US, embodied here by Erica and Chris.

This scene marks the beginning of the end of Erica and Changez’s relationship. This is part of the film’s depiction of the failure of family and futurity in the US as a sign of the moral superiority of Pakistan as the East.245

This moral superiority is doubly emphasized in the film’s construction of the character of Jim Cross. As I discuss in the section on the three father figures, the film represents Jim Cross as a symbol of the commercialism and individualism of the West. This character is infused with the emotions of cruelty, single-mindedness, callousness, and selfishness, which in turn, mark the West as a space in which these emotions circulate.246 That the film marks Jim Cross as gay

means that his homosexuality becomes part of the film’s deployment of Cross as a trope of the moral inferiority of the West. This is in contrast to Ajmal Khan as the moral father figure of and in the East. In other words, it is not coincidental that the father figure of the West is gay in contrast to the heterosexual father figure of the East, in the film’s philic Orientalist depiction of the moral superiority of the East through the notion of the family.

The notion of heterosexual family coupled axiomatically with the notion of futurity is also emphasized through the film’s portrayal of Jim Cross’ relationship with his partner of color. As I discuss in the section on the father figures, the film has already constructed Cross as a symbol of the consumerism of the West. The depiction of Cross’ Asian-American partner is part of this symbolism through the portrayal of this gay man of color as an exotic and consumable accessory to Jim Cross. This infuses their relationship as one in which love is not heterosexual and not about futurity—it is about consumption.

In contrast, the heterosexual love that the Khan family embodies and that Ajmal Khan directs Changez as his son towards is about futurity. Ajmal Khan is the father-poet from whom Changez inherits the ethics, hope, and courage to refuse both American capital and Islamic militancy. This refusal by Changez as a “good” Pakistani produces a nationalist future for Pakistan. This nationalist future by “good” Pakistanis is legible through the paternal line of father and son. It is anchored in the heterosexual futurity through which father and son is produced. In other words, Changez Khan will become like his father, Ajmal Khan, both in his role as a public intellectual, and through his marriage to a Pakistani woman for the heterosexual reproduction of a Pakistani future.

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The politics of sexuality in which the philic Orientalism of the film is anchored is problematic for several reasons. The film adheres to the notion that family is always already heterosexual, and the culture of family portrayed in the film is an idealization of heterosexual futurity. This erases the existence of other forms of family, including single parent households, extended families, grandparents as primary guardians, gay and lesbian parents, unmarried couples, and adopted families. The film’s construction of the heterosexual family as a symbol of the nation-state confirms the heterosexuality of the nation-state. That the film anchors a philic Orientalist depiction of Pakistan through these politics marks the film’s complicity in what Jasbir Puar calls a “pernicious binary” in which “the homosexual other is white, the racial other is straight.” According to a philic Orientalist deployment of this binary, homosexuality as whiteness becomes a sign of the moral degeneracy of the West, which is also identified with whiteness. The East as a contrast, then, is constructed as morally superior through the heterosexual of those who are not white.

Such a representation participates in the erasure of queer people of color in the US through the equation of homosexuality with whiteness and whiteness with the US. It marks communities of color in the US as more homophobic than white people through the binary which produces the racial other as straight. This contributes to the ways in which the politics of race, gender, and sexuality are deployed to narrate the US as an exceptional space of freedom.

253 Ibid.
equality, and sexual liberation. This is contrasted with the racialization of other nation-states as less civilized, regressive, and violent because they are homophobic.254

It is ironic, therefore, that a film that declares an intention to portray Pakistan in a positive transnational light, would participate in discourses that mark Pakistan as one of these Other nation-states.255 Moreover, “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” erases the lives of queer Pakistanis in Pakistan through the axiomatic representation of the Pakistani nation-state as heterosexual through the Khan family. The film’s philic Orientalist depiction of Pakistan also ignores how futurity is not available in Pakistan to all Pakistanis equally. This is the direct legacy of the idea of Pakistan: the legal, physical, and political violences state and non-state parties enact against specific communities. For example, entire Ahmadi families have been massacred in genocidal violence against the Ahmadi community in Pakistan. Baloch men who are active members of the resistance movement against the Pakistani state are routinely disappeared, tortured, and murdered by the Pakistan military and military intelligence agencies. Pakistani Christian and Hindu communities are constantly subjected to violence and the threat of violence on allegations of blasphemy. There are also enough stories of Pakistani women from different social and economic backgrounds who have been subjected to violent reprisals when they have exercised their choice of whom to marry. I am not arguing here that Pakistan is exceptional when it comes to the unequal and unjust distribution of futurity; however, when “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” erases these lived realities in Pakistan, it contributes to the denial of justice and reparation for the communities affected by these national politics of futurity.

255 Ibid.
Who Returns?

In the Making Of feature of “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” DVD, director Mira Nair states that in the search for an actor for the lead role of Changez Khan, she was looking for authenticity.

Nair states:

I couldn’t find the combination I needed of an authentic Pakistani young man who speaks Urdu colloquially, who dreams in English, who can be as elegant in a Wall Street corporate party as he is bedding Kate Hudson, as he is with his family in Lahore knowing poems.

In an interview in September 2012 with Anupama Chopra on Star World India, Nair said that she searched for an actor in Pakistan, India, and the US before she found British-Pakistani actor, Riz Ahmed in London.

It is these politics of identity which underpin the production of the film that undo the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism in the narrative of the film. The point here is not to reproduce the binaries of diaspora and homeland, of nationally bounded identities and hyphenated ones, of national ownership of identity and transnational fantasies of the homeland. Rather, the point is precisely that the film adheres to these binaries—which the production of the film undoes.

“The Reluctant Fundamentalist” is a reaffirmation of the Pakistani nationalism. It deploys a narrative of Pakistan as the East to which protagonist Changez Khan must return to inhabit an authentic self. This authentic self is of a “good” Pakistani and simultaneously, a “good” Muslim,

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achieved through “a story of diasporic self-discovery.” The film’s philic Orientalist binaries make it impossible for Changez to locate an authentic self in the US. Such a representation also makes a return to the national homeland a moral imperative. The film articulates the certainty of identity, therefore, in nationalist terms.

According to such a narrative, British-Pakistani Riz Ahmed would be an inauthentic Pakistani, especially because he has never been to Pakistan. For example, in the aforementioned interview with Anupama Chopra, Ahmed explained that it was novelists Mohsin Hamid and Ali Sethi, who are from Lahore and who therefore were able to teach him the body politics of Lahori men — while the film was being shot in Delhi and New York City.

In a BBC interview with Mishal Hussain in May 2013, Ahmed explained that he is quite comfortable with his identity as a British-Pakistani. In the same interview, Hussain also referred to Riz Ahmed as a British-Asian actor, according to the terminology of racial identifications in the UK in which Asian is used to identity communities from across South Asia, including Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and India. It is not that these transnational identifications undo the nation-state in some sort of multicultural, globalized utopia. Rather, they point to the contestations of authenticity which “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” insists on as negotiations, rather than certainties, of identity. This is where the challenges to nationalist narratives are located, through the very boundaries the nation-state attempts to construct and police through epistemological control of language, genealogy, and culture. Riz Ahmed as a British-Pakistani does not transcend Britain and Pakistan; rather, the fact that Ahmed plays a Pakistani man without ever having been to Pakistan represents the ways in which the boundaries between British and Pakistani identities are never complete or secure.

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This existential incompleteness of national boundaries is present in Mira Nair’s own description of what the authentically Pakistani character of Changez is supposed to embody:

a young man who speaks colloquial Urdu, who dreams in English, who can be as elegant in a Wall Street corporate party as he is bedding Kate Hudson, as he is with his family in Lahore knowing poems

Each of these components can only be inhabited by a specific kind of Pakistani. It is English-speaking Pakistanis with class privilege, social capital, and transnational mobility, who can speak Urdu colloquially, who dream in English, who perform the elegance of middle-class respectability required to be present at a Wall Street corporate party, who can woo the wealthy American socialites represented by Kate Hudson in the film.

That Changez Khan as this specific kind of Pakistani is played by a socially and economically affluent British-Pakistani actor Riz Ahmed emphasizes the transnational character of this kind of Pakistani. In other words, Pakistanis like Changez Khan have more in common with diasporic Pakistanis like Riz Ahmed than with Pakistanis like the waiter at Bina’s mehndi. This is not to denote one more authentic than the other; this is to argue against the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism deployed in “The Reluctant Fundamentalist,” which gives Pakistanis like Changez Khan purchase on the identity of Pakistani over Pakistanis like the waiter.

The gendered philic Orientalism of “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” pivots on the notion of return of the Pakistani protagonist, Changez Khan, to the national homeland of the father, Ajmal Khan. This cinematic story is mirrored in director Mira Nair’s dedication of the film to her father, Amrit Lal. In an interview with David Poland in April 2013, Nair stated that the inspiration of to make a film about contemporary Pakistan came from her visit to Lahore in 2005 as the ancestral city of her father before the partition of 1947. It is, therefore, a heartbreaking irony that, “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” reaffirms Pakistani nationalism through an axiomatic
affixation of Pakistani with Muslim, with the memory of partition as nothing more than a backdrop to Bina Khan’s wedding celebrations. This axiomatic affixation erases the presence of Amrit Lal in Lahore before partition. This erasure is necessary to Pakistani nationalism because the presence of Nair’s father, Amrit Lal, represents an epistemological and genealogical challenge to the genealogy this nationalism is based on.\textsuperscript{260} Lal is one of the ghosts\textsuperscript{261} who haunt Pakistani nationalism as remnants of lives and communities that mark Pakistan as part of Indian modernity.\textsuperscript{262}

Through this mirroring of the notion of return, the memory of Nair’s father Amrit Lal is identified with character of Ajmal Khan as the father figure who symbolizes Lahore. That the Pakistani father in the film is a referent to the Indian father of the film means that the narrative of the production of the film resists the narrative in the film. This is doubly highlighted by the fact that Ajmal Khan is played by Indian actor Om Puri. The film’s story of the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism through the figure of the Pakistani father is undone by the story of the production of the film through the figure of the father. Furthermore, as I discuss in the section on the father figures, Lahore in the film is Delhi in the production of the film. The city of the Pakistani father is, therefore, a city in India.

Perhaps the most explicit and poignant illustration of this irony is in the dedication to Mira Nair’s own father, Amrit Lal, which appears at the end of the closing credits of the film. This dedication features a quote in Urdu from a poem by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, which Aamir Mufti

translates as: “Love do not ask for that old love again.” In the film, the father figure of the Ajmal Khan is also a metaphoric reference to Faiz Ahmed Faiz. It is the reference to Faiz in the memory of Amrit Lal as “a true Lahori” which undoes the reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism through the Pakistani father-poet Ajmal Khan. Insisting that the “meaning and legacy of partition” is the central theme of Faiz’s lyric poetry, Aamir Mufti argues that Faiz’s poetry resists the “geometry of selfhood put into place by partition,” through the political and historical configuration of the beloved in his lyric poetry as India. The subject of Urdu lyric poetry as a yearning for the beloved from whom the lover is separated speaks to the ways in which Faiz as the lover yearns for India as the beloved through his geographic and historical location in Pakistan at the time of partition.

Amrit Lal as “a true Lahori” who left Lahore for India at the time of partition undoes the very nationalism Mira Nair affirms in “The Reluctant Fundamentalist.” Amrit Lal, as “a true Lahori” recalled through the lyric poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, is the father figure who haunts the central narrative of “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” as a challenge and as a resistance to that narrative. This challenge and resistance is located in the poignancy of the impossibility of Lal’s return to Lahore in his lifetime, of the finality of his departure from the city to which, as this dedication implies, he truly belonged. It is the feeling this dedication is sticky with, contained in the words “a true Lahori” and in the line from “Faiz,” about yearning for a lost beloved, which challenges the film’s celebration of Pakistani nationalism.

The dedication at the end of the closing credits of the film is as follows:

For my father, Amrit Lal, a true Lahori:

266 Ibid.
Love do not ask for that old love again

This is the cinematic sign, and the emotions with which it is sticky,\textsuperscript{267} which marks the film’s narrative of Pakistani nationalism as incomplete in the very moment of its narrative completion here. The end of the film as the end of a story about the reaffirmation and certainty of Pakistani nationalism is reopened through the very father figure that Pakistani nationalism would deny. The end of the film undoes the epistemological point of origin from which the film begins.

\textsuperscript{267} Ibid.


Chapter 2: In the Name of the Father

Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Origin Story of Pakistan

Every government office in Pakistan displays a portrait of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan. The birthday of the Quaid-e-Azam (“great leader”) on December 25 is a national holiday. September 11 is also a national holiday because Jinnah died on September 11, 1948. In addition to these modes of commemoration, a picture of Jinnah is displayed every year in newspapers on August 14, the anniversary of the creation of Pakistan in 1947. Beyond the memorialization of Jinnah, there also exists a presence in political rhetoric. There are ongoing debates\(^{268}\) about Jinnah’s vision for Pakistan.\(^{269}\) In the 2013 general elections, the leader of the highly visible Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) political party, “cricketer and global playboy turned politician,” Imran Khan\(^{270}\) declared Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Mohammed Iqbal as his twin inspirations and role models.\(^{271}\) It is, therefore, arguable that Mohammed Ali Jinnah remains a constant presence in Pakistan.

In this chapter, I argue that Jinnah’s presence is specifically that of a ghost who haunts\(^{272}\) Pakistan. I assert that this is because Jinnah is a father figure of doubt and insecurity. This doubt is existential because it is about the justification and basis for the creation of Pakistan. While there are certainly other ghosts of existential uncertainty pertaining to Pakistan, I argue that


\(^{270}\) Sadia Abbas, “Itineraries of Conversion: Judaic Paths to a Muslim Pakistan,” in *Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan* edited by Naveeda Khan (New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2010), 344-347.


Jinnah is one of the most powerful figures of haunting precisely because he is considered the founding father of the nation-state. The mythology of father figures for nations and nation-states is neither new nor unfamiliar. However, a father figure of doubt and insecurity is disruptive. This is because the nation-state’s genesis is sexual and gendered, as is the epistemological organization of the nation and state, made legible through the heterosexual matrix. I assert that the figure of the father in this gendered genesis must be epistemologically secure for the nation-state to be secure. Nations and nationalisms cannot abide father figures of doubt because their very emergence and existence, then, is in doubt. Jinnah haunts Pakistan because he is a father figure of doubt. This insecurity is existential for Pakistani identity and nationalism.

To explore Jinnah as a father figure of doubt, I analyze Jamil Dehlavi’s 1998 film “Jinnah.” I put this film in conversation with books by Ayesha Jalal and Stanley Wolpert on Jinnah and the creation of Pakistan. Then I look at how the film was produced and circulated in transnational circuits of identity. I examine the ways in which the film undermines and undoes its own nationalist depiction of Jinnah. Next, I explore how this undoing is also located on the level of representation in the very differences between the representation of Jinnah in the film, in Stanley Wolpert’s *Jinnah of Pakistan* and Ayesha Jalal’s *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. Finally, I analyze how the film as a cultural object was located in specific transnational narratives about Pakistan during historical and political events occurring at the time of the film’s release.

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Theoretical Conversations

There are two main theoretical conversations I use to frame my arguments. The first is the gendered genesis of the modern nation-state. Andrea Smith notes that, “normative futurity depends on an 'origin story.' The future is legitimated as a continuation of the past.” Native, transnational, women of color, and queer of color feminist scholars have long explored how the origin story of the modern nation-state is gendered and sexual. I draw upon these critiques to interrogate the figure of the father in the origin story of the modern nation-state of Pakistan.

I base my understanding of this father figure on Eve Tuck, Angie Morrill, and Maile Arvin’s definitions of heteropatriarchy and heteropaternalism. Heteropatriarchy denotes the social, political, and economic system in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are the default politics of gender and sexuality which underpins this system.

This intersects with the figure of the father as the progenitor of the nation in the three Abrahamic religions, namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Since Pakistan was and is articulated in the vocabulary of Islam, the figure of the father as the founder of Pakistan is inflected with this imaginary. Therefore, there is a double articulation of the figure of the father.

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of the nation in narrations of Pakistan, drawing from both the epistemology of the Enlightenment of the West\textsuperscript{283} and an Abrahamic vocabulary and imagination.

The second theoretical framework I use is that of haunting, for which I turn to Avery Gordon’s work in \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination}. For Gordon, haunting “is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known.”\textsuperscript{284} As Janice Radway notes, “the past \textit{always} haunts the present”\textsuperscript{285} and it is “ghosts that tie present subjects to past histories.”\textsuperscript{286} Gordon is interested in the ways in which “abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt on everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with”\textsuperscript{287} precisely because “the reality of certain obvious things”\textsuperscript{288} such as the political entity of the nation-state\textsuperscript{289}, can blind us “to the ways in which those things are expressly produced and fundamentally enabled by a history of loss and repression.”\textsuperscript{290} Gordon uses haunting as a “mediation,”\textsuperscript{291} which is a “process that links an institution and an individual, a social structure and a subject, and history and a biography.”\textsuperscript{292}

This is my guiding framework for how I read the film, ”Jinnah,” that is, as much a biography of Mohammed Ali Jinnah as a history of the creation of Pakistan through the 1947 partition of India.

\textsuperscript{283} Norma Alarcon, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem, introduction to \textit{Between Woman and Nation} (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 1.

\textsuperscript{284} Avery Gordon, introduction to \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination} (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvi.


\textsuperscript{286} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{287} Avery Gordon, introduction to \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination} (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvi.


\textsuperscript{289} Gabriel Piterberg, \textit{The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics, and Scholarship in Israel} (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 246.


\textsuperscript{292} Ibid.
into two nation-states. I read the figure of Jinnah as a ghost precisely because this history of the subcontinent is “the domain of turmoil and trouble”\textsuperscript{293} that continues to haunt Pakistan and India. Gordon explains, “The ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life.”\textsuperscript{294} Jinnah as a ghost is a sign of lingering trouble\textsuperscript{295} for Pakistan because he embodies doubt for the existence of Pakistan.

“Jinnah” (1998)

The 1998 film “Jinnah” was directed by Jamil Dehlavi.\textsuperscript{296} British actor Christopher Lee stars in the title role. Journalist Owen Bennett-Jones noted in 2000 that the film had “been described as Pakistan’s answer to Richard Attenborough’s film Gandhi.”\textsuperscript{297} A 2012 article in The Express Tribune reported that Dehlavi was commissioned by the government of Pakistan to direct the film to celebrate Pakistan’s fiftieth independence anniversary.\textsuperscript{298} The film is available on YouTube, which is the version I use for this chapter.

The film’s prologue features the following quote from Stanley Wolpert’s book, Jinnah of Pakistan: “Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of

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\item Avery Gordon, introduction to \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination} (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvi.
\item Jamil Dehlavi, “Jinnah” \texttt{http://www.dehlavifilms.com/main/Dehlavi_Films_Jinnah.html}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Mohammed Ali Jinnah did all three.”

The opening scene is a bird’s eyes view of a plane on an airport tarmac in Karachi on September 11, 1948. An ambulance and a car are driven up, and their passengers disembark frantically. Our first sight of Jinnah is pale and unconscious on a stretcher, which is transferred carefully and quickly from the plane to the ambulance. He is accompanied by his sister, Fatima Jinnah, and his physician, Dr. Baksh. They are greeted at the airport by a military officer, Colonel Knowles, who follows the ambulance in the car. As the opening credits appear on screen, the scene is of the ambulance and car being driven through a desert, presumably to Jinnah’s house in Karachi. The camera follows Fatima Jinnah’s somber glance out the ambulance window at refugee camps along the road amongst the dust and bramble, and then back down to a view of the comatose Jinnah, with the doctor holding his wrist to check for his pulse.

The sound of a sputtering engine interrupts the music of the soundtrack as the ambulance and car come to an unexpected halt. There is uncertainty as to the cause; Dr. Baksh speculates that, “It’s out of petrol,” while Colonel Knowles insists, “No, no, it’s engine failure.” Fatima suggests using the car to transport Jinnah but Dr. Baksh refuses, “No, absolutely not. You can’t move him.” The decision is made for Colonel Knowles to drive on to fetch “some petrol” (Dr. Baksh) and “another ambulance” (Fatima) while Fatima and the doctor remain on the tarmac with Jinnah in the ambulance.

There is a panoramic view of two solitary figures against the road and the sky, standing in silent and troubled vigil in the desert. This vigil is interrupted when a nurse hurriedly calls for

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the doctor because Jinnah is having trouble breathing. The camera is angled from Jinnah’s point of view as the dark of the oxygen mask slowly covers the screen. It is Jinnah’s shallow gasps for breath coupled with the hiss of the oxygen tank that we hear as the screen goes dark.

The dark transforms into doors that open in front of the camera. Through a point of view shot, our glance aligns with that of Jinnah’s sight. The doors open for him and for us, to a vast, quiet, dimly lit library. The camera now moves into a medium close-up so that we see Jinnah emerge from the dark, looking around him as he follows in the footsteps of two men carrying a trunk, down a long corridor. There is no panic on his face, which is shadowed by the lighting in the library, a shade of yellow reminiscent almost of the yellowing pages of a book. Footsteps echoing on marble floor and a strangle tinkling as if of tiny bells accompany the following long shot, through which we see Jinnah walk through the central corridor. He is dressed in a black sherwani and crisp, straight white pajamas, instantly recognizable garb for any Pakistani as part of the iconic image of Jinnah.

Finally, Jinnah arrives at an enormous carved desk where four men are putting down trunks and fiddling with wires of a desktop computer. They look up as an irate voice suddenly booms from above: “Oho, just put those things over there, and clear off!”

As this sentence ends, the camera also pans upward to a shelf on the upper floor, where a man in a white pajama and kurta with a black shawl waves his hand at the men downstairs dismissively. Still in the shadows, Jinnah looks up from an angle as the man climbs downstairs, grumbling, “Look, I’m quite happy with pen and paper. I do not want-” This is when he rounds the corner and notices Jinnah, whom he hails as such: “Oh, Jinnah sahib! Salam-wailai-kum.” Jinnah replies, “Wailai-kum salam,” standing framed in the doorway with his hands folded in front of him. The man approaches him with both respect and a genial informality to explain,
“Forgive me. I thought you were one of these wretched computer wallahs. They keep sending in these damned machines from the future.” This is the first indication of the movement back in time from Jinnah’s point of death as the central narrative device in the film.

The second indication is when the man with the shawl answers the ringing phone and says firmly, “No, no, no. No appeal. Tell him to go to hell!” The literal significance of the word ‘hell’ connotes judgment as the central theme of the film. This now revealed by the genial man in the Lucknavi kurta pajama: “You do know where you are? You’ve stopped here so we may decide where to send you.”

Jinnah has died; his soul has come to the place of judgment, which is depicted as a library. The genial man is the Angel of Death and the dramatic premise of the film is the question of Jinnah’s fate, whether he will take up residence in Heaven or Hell.

This is when the film’s plot begins: the Angel of Death discovers that the paper files on Jinnah have been transferred to the computer, which he does not know how to operate. Later, the file on the computer is also missing. Therefore, he decides to use “the eternal shortcut,” which is to move through time and space with Jinnah to events and decisions considered necessary for judgment about Jinnah’s fate. The basis of this judgment, and indeed, the condition which requires it, is the creation of Pakistan through the partition of India in 1947. The Angel of Death tells Jinnah so: “You create Pakistan, and millions die in the division of what was one country into two pieces.” Jinnah answers resolutely, “There was no other way. None.”

The Angel of Death responds thoughtfully, “Maybe, maybe.” This response is precisely the question for the justification of the creation of Pakistan, which the rest of the film attempts to answer, both on the level of narrative and as a cultural project by interrogating the life choices of Jinnah.
The important events and decisions the film chooses to represent are located in Simla 1947; Bombay 1947; Darjeeling 1916; Bombay 1918; Bombay 1920; London 1931; and Lahore 1946. This means that the film’s Plot B begins at the end of negotiation process between the Muslim League, the All-India Congress, and the last Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten. The events of 1916, 1918, and 1920 construct the narrative of why Jinnah quit the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru, and became the leader of the Muslim League. These scenes also chart his marriage to Rattanbai Petit and her death from cancer. London 1931 marks Jinnah’s return to India to lead “the Muslims of India” at the behest of Muhammed Iqbal, hailed thereafter as Pakistan’s philosopher-poet laureate. Lahore 1946 shows Jinnah as a triumphant and determined leader of “the Muslims of India.” The film then moves to the violences of partition and the creation of Pakistan in 1947. These scenes depict Lord Mountbatten’s corruption and discrimination against Pakistan, especially in matters of defense. There is also a recounting of the roots of the ongoing dispute between Pakistan and India over Kashmir.

I note three general components of the film’s movement through time and space. First, there are scenes in each of these spatio-temporal segments where the Angel of Death and Jinnah are not present. For example, in Simla in 1947, we see Fatima Jinnah visiting a poor Muslim village. The Muslim inhabitants have recently experienced anti-Muslim violence on the occasion of Eid; they are now being evicted by Hindu-identified police officers. Fatima Jinnah is arrested after a confrontation with the officer in charge. We do not see Jinnah until the next scene, when he escorts his sister home upon her release from jail. Here, Jinnah is located in the temporal context of the scenes which are flashbacks.

Second, as the scene described above implies, there are always two versions of Jinnah throughout the film. The protagonist is ghost of Jinnah who is accompanied by the Angel of
Death, while the second is his living self of the past, who is present in the particular times and spaces being depicted in this journey through his life.

Third, the conventional boundaries between spectrality and reality are not always clear because the ghost of Jinnah sometimes becomes corporeal and present in particular times and spaces. For example, in a scene depicting a Hindu attack on a Muslim mosque, Jinnah and the Angel of Death are first shown to be praying as part of the congregation. Yet once the attack begins, they are shown to be standing aside, watching it happen without being caught in it in real time. There are also two scenes in which the ghost of Jinnah becomes corporeal to his own younger self. Both scenes are set in Bombay in 1920. This is when the film constructs the beginning of the divide between Hindus and Muslims because of Gandhi’s religion-based politics of mass civil disobedience.

The first scene of this unpredictable corporeality is when Jinnah’s younger self goes for a walk in his garden. He meets an old man resting under a tree, who engages him in conversation about Gandhi and the politics of achieving independence for India. The old man is the ghost of Jinnah made corporeal, whom his younger self does not recognize.

This happens again in a scene depicting the pivotal December 1920 session of Congress in Nagpur\(^\text{300}\), at which Jinnah “spoke openly against noncooperation”\(^\text{301}\) as advocated by Gandhi, and resigned from Congress afterwards.\(^\text{302}\) In this scene, the ghost of Jinnah and the Angel of Death become corporeal participants, and Jinnah defends his younger self’s opposition to the ratification of Gandhi’s programme of noncooperation to the assembly.\(^\text{303}\)


\(^{301}\) Ibid.

\(^{302}\) Ibid.

The film does not doubt Jinnah’s position as the singular leader and father figure of Pakistan. It also does not question what Ayesha Jalal has called “an inexorable drift to the telos of partition” from 1920 onwards as the only solution for a persecuted political entity identified as “the Muslims of India.” Over the course of the film, responsibility for partition is assigned to Gandhi, Nehru, Lord Mountbatten, and Hindus. Gandhi is blamed for bringing “religion into politics.” Nehru is accused of personal and political collusion and corruption with Lord and Lady Mountbatten. Lord Mountbatten is charged with anti-Muslim racism, spite, and hubris. Indian Hindus are accused of anti-Muslim violence. These are the reasons for both the demand for Pakistan and the horrors of the partition. The characters of Gandhi, Nehru, and Lord Mountbatten become malevolent ghosts that haunt the creation of Pakistan according to Pakistani nationalism.

The last scene of the film is temporally located in August 1947 during partition. It is a not so subtle reaffirmation of the film’s political project of justifying the creation of Pakistan and celebrating Jinnah. The Angel of Death escorts the ghost Jinnah, made corporeal and present, to a hot, dusty plain where a group of bedraggled and exhausted mahajirs are journeying from India to Pakistan. Both Jinnah and we as the cinema audience have seen this group of mahajirs before. At the start of the film, the Angel of Death and Jinnah sit in a darkened theatre and watch a black and white film about the violences of partition. The scene of this group of people being attacked by Hindus plays on screen as Jinnah states:

304 Ayesha Jalal, preface to The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xvi.
I had no ambition except for the safety of the Muslims of India. I had no stubbornness or arrogance except that which was required of me to face my enemies. And I died a million deaths myself for all those who suffered through partition.\(^{309}\)

We hear this last sentence played over the visual of a father carrying his young daughter away from the corpse of her mother, who has been killed in front of her eyes. The figure of the child here as a partition migrant confirms Jinnah as the father of the nation-state that she is going towards. She embodies futurity for the Pakistani nation-state, running away from India which signifies violence and persecution, and therefore, the lack of futurity. Futurity signified by the child locates Jinnah’s quest for Pakistan as a quest for futurity for a nation in mortal peril in India.

The ghost of Jinnah and we the viewers see this attack in real time in 1947 later in the film as well. In this scene, the ghost of Jinnah and the Angel of Death stand on a ridge overlooking the dusty plain the mahajirs are moving through. The camera is located amidst the crowd, angled upward in a wide shot. It is aimed towards a tall figure in a black sherwani, next to a portly figure in kurta pajama, visible in the background. It is not clear whether they are visible only to us as the viewers or also to the refugees in real time. There are shots of men looking in the direction of the ridge but it is difficult to confirm whether they are looking up or towards other people in the valley.

As the ghost of Jinnah and the Angel of Death look on, Hindu men on horseback ambush the procession towards Pakistan. They use gunfire, swords, and spears to kill the Muslims. The camera focuses on Jinnah’s face as a woman is speared through her belly and falls to the ground, to the sound of a child’s cry, “Mama! Mama! Mama!”

The camera focuses on Jinnah so that the audience and Jinnah both see the little girl trying to run toward her mother — but she is scooped up frantically by her father, who runs in the opposite direction, trying to get away from the slaughter and chaos.

The film’s last scene is also set amongst these mahajirs. The Angel of Death asks Jinnah, “If you could ask one person’s forgiveness, just one, who would you choose?” It is to these people in August 1947 that Jinnah chooses to go.

The dusty, forlorn, traumatized crowd of Muslims parts for the tall figure in a black sherwani as he walks towards the little girl sitting on the back of a bullock cart. They do not recognize that it is Jinnah. He places his hand on the little girl’s, and asks gently, “What’s your name?” She answers pitifully, “Sakina.” The camera moves in a small arc to Sakina’s father who now comes into frame with a look of disbelief on his face. We see his face as we hear Jinnah ask, “And where are you from?” Sakina answers, “Ferozepur.” Jinnah asks, “And where are you going?” Sakina tells him, “To Pakistan.”

Jinnah tells her quietly, “That’s a brave girl. Pakistan was made for you. You’re safe now.” Sakina asks him, “Will my mother meet me in Pakistan?”

Her father now interrupts: “Hush.” He looks at Jinnah in wonder, almost stammering, “I’m sorry, sir, she is distracted. She lost her mother. It’s been very hard.”

As Sakina insists, “Abbajan, maybe the old man has seen Amma,” the camera focuses on Jinnah’s face, filled with sorrow and his gaze lowered in accountability, in guilt, in empathy.

Her father repeats, “Hush!” His eyes are wide in wonder and his voice shakes as he says, “Do you know who he is? This is the Quaid-e-Azam.” He looks up at Jinnah to apologize again: “I’m sorry, sir, we beg your forgiveness for not recognizing you. She’s only a child.” Jinnah is near tears as he says, “It is I who should ask you for forgiveness, for the part I have had in what
has happened.” Sakina’s father stops him resolutely, with tear-filled eyes: “No, sir, no. I bless you with all my heart. Allah blesses you.”

Jinnah cannot hold his tears back anymore as Sakina’s father whispers, “Pakistan Zindabad,” then a little more certainly, “Pakistan Zindabad,” and finally shouts, “Pakistan Zindabad! Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad!”

His declaration is echoed by his fellow Muslims. The camera moves upward to a bird’s eye view of Jinnah standing at the head of the crowd, raising his hand in a salute as the refugees chant, “Pakistan Zindabad! Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad!”

The image of the refugees transforms into an image of the crowd at Jinnah’s declaration of the creation of Pakistan in Lahore in 1946: men and boys in white shalwar kameez echoing the cry with raised fists of triumph in the air. The camera lens, which has been tinted with sepia tones throughout, becomes black and white to echo a photograph. The screen fades to black to the sound of “Pakistan Zindabad! Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad!”

The film ends with this epilogue: “Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah died peacefully at 10:20 p.m. at the Governor General’s house in Karachi on 11, September, 1948.”

There are several ways in which the film’s celebration of Jinnah as the father figure of Pakistan through whom the existence of Pakistan is deemed secure and coherent is simultaneously undermined within the film itself. I explore these undoings in two broad thematic sections that focus, respectively, on judgment and temporality. The first focuses on the film’s premise, which is the question of judgment on the legitimate existence of Pakistan; the second concerns the question of temporality, which is integral to how the film constructs the judgment it ultimately produces about Jinnah and Pakistan.
Judgment

The film reinforces the identification of Jinnah with Pakistan through his position as the father of the nation.\textsuperscript{310} Using Avery Gordon’s notion of haunting as a mediation between “a social structure and a subject, and history and a biography,”\textsuperscript{311} I argue that the film’s judgment about Jinnah is also a judgment about Pakistan.

The central narrative drama of the film is the fate of Jinnah’s soul after death. The basis of this judgment is the justification of the creation of Pakistan. The Angel of Death tells Jinnah as much when he arrives at the library: “You create Pakistan, and millions die in the division of what was one country into two pieces.” Furthermore, the other charges against Jinnah are about his personal as political responsibility in partition: “They accuse you of being ambitious, arrogant, humorless, stubborn. A man without charm, a bully. They say you used people.”

The film’s protagonist is a ghost, that is, the ghost of Jinnah. This is an almost ironic and darkly humorous illustration of Avery Gordon’s notion of haunting as a mediation.\textsuperscript{312} Moreover, that the film’s protagonist is a literal ghost already points to the “turmoil and trouble”\textsuperscript{313} embedded in the question of judgment about Pakistan’s existence. Jinnah as a ghost is “the sign, or empirical evidence if you like,”\textsuperscript{314} which signals that, “things are not in their assigned places”\textsuperscript{315} in the question of the origin story and legitimacy of Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{313} Avery Gordon, introduction to \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination} (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvi.
\textsuperscript{315} Avery Gordon, introduction to \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination} (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvi.
This is highlighted when we think of other biographical films about national heroes and leaders. There are no ghosts in Richard Attenborough’s 1982 film, “Gandhi,” to which “Jinnah” was supposed to be an answer, no less.\textsuperscript{316} This film does not question the legitimacy of Gandhi’s demand for an independent India, nor the methods he advocated for its achievement. Like “Jinnah,” “Gandhi” begins with the death of Gandhi at the hands of an assassin, and the national and international mourning that followed. The film then moves back in time to Gandhi as a shy young lawyer in South Africa. Attenborough charts his defiance of institutionalized South African racism, and his return to India to begin and inspire a mass movement for independence. The film’s celebration of Gandhi rests on a constant emphasis on Gandhi’s lived example of the principles of nonviolence, self-sacrifice, personal courage, and humility. Through a temporally linear construction, the film reaffirms the mythic transformation of a simple, brave, unassuming man into a determined leader committed with unflinching idealism to the causes of the disadvantaged and ostracized of India at the cost of personal comfort and safety. The conflict and tragedy in the film does not involve Gandhi; rather, it is located in the deliberate and institutional racism of the British; the elitism of other Indian leaders; and Hindu extremism. There are no doubts or contradictions in this portrayal about the righteousness or necessity of Gandhi’s vision or his methods for the achievement of that goal.\textsuperscript{317}

That a ghost is the protagonist of “Jinnah” and that the emotional heart of the film is the decision of his fate between heaven and hell speaks to a profound and inextricable doubt within Pakistani identity and nationalism. Judgment on Jinnah rests on the justification of the creation of Pakistan. The film’s ultimate resolution of this judgment in favor of Jinnah and, therefore, of

Pakistan, is not surprising. However, it is the premise that gives away the doubt. Moreover, such an ending can be attributed as much to an interpretation of history as to the fact that the film was originally commissioned by the Pakistani government explicitly as an answer to “Gandhi.” In other words, the film’s own existence as a response to a constant accusation shows the doubt within Pakistani nationalism about its origin story. That such arguments can be made at all is part of the doubt, which the main narrative drama of the film exudes.

The culmination of this drama, encapsulated within the plot as the Angel of Death’s case about Jinnah, is a courtroom scene. Given the central dramatic premise of the film, I argue that this scene functions as the Court of “future history.” This is evidenced not only by the premise of the film, but also that it is the Angel of Death, dressed in British colors and wig no less, who is the judge at the center of the room. His recognizably English garb belies not only Jinnah’s own position as an Anglicized South Asian, but also that the standards of judgment about nationhood, governance, and progress are located in Britain.

As the camera moves in a circle angled upwards, we see crowd of people lining the room on several floors. The visuals recall an audience at an amphitheater with tiers. These tiers as the benches for the crowd are built of slim wooden columns that reach the ceiling. Pakistani flags hang from each column. The crowd is too vast to be recognizable by their faces and the camera moves too quickly for any one face to be discernible as an individual characters. However, they

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321 Ibid, 77-79.
are not soundless: cheer on Jinnah and heckle the British government and military figures called to the stand.

It is the very fact that they are presented as a multitude, as well as their clothing, that constructs them as the masses of the subcontinent. These multitudes were called into being as a nation as “the Muslims of India,” whom Jinnah declared himself the sole spokesman of and for whom he claimed to have made Pakistan. This crowd has to be present in the court of history, and on Jinnah’s side to validate Jinnah and through him, Pakistan.

Recalling his reputation as a brilliant lawyer, as well as previous scenes of Jinnah in court, the ghost of Jinnah appears here in his “humble role of advocacy.” Advocacy is the accurate description for Jinnah’s role in this scene because he is both the prosecutor and the defense. As the former, Jinnah submits evidence in support of his accusation that, “most of the blame lies with Mountbatten” for the horrors of partition and its complicated geopolitical aftermath, including the ongoing dispute between Pakistan and India over Kashmir. However, Jinnah is also the defense, arguing against the charges the Angel of Death stated at the beginning of the film, which are existential for Pakistan through Jinnah. The prosecution of the British is necessarily the defense of Jinnah, and through him, Pakistan.

Jinnah accuses Lord Mountbatten “of being, from the first, an enemy of Pakistan” based on five “pieces of evidence.” These are, first, that Lord Mountbatten “advanced the date of partition by eight months, hoping that the new country would be like a regiment of soldiers

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327 Ayesha Jalal, introduction to The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1-5.
parachuted into enemy territory without maps.”

Jinnah’s choice of words is strange because it connotes his government and possibly the citizens of Pakistan as “a regiment of soldiers” and Pakistan as “enemy territory.” While it is arguable that the lands collated to create Pakistan were “maimed, mutilated, and moth-eaten,” how could they be “enemy territory”? Indian Muslims already lived there, and there was a mass displacement of non-Muslims from these areas due to partition. Furthermore, why would the father of the nation not have “maps” for this “enemy territory”? Was this solely about not having enough time to prepare to govern a new nation-state or could it possibly be that there were no “maps” for this “enemy territory” because of the ambiguities and contradictions in the claim to that territory?

Jinnah’s second accusation is that, “Lord Mountbatten interfered in the division of land between India and Pakistan, giving the whole military arsenal at Ferozepur to India after it had been allocated to Pakistan.” Jinnah’s witness is British lawyer Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who headed the commission for partition. As Yasmin Khan points out, Radcliffe had never been into India before. In an ironic and barely believable twist, this was taken as proof of his “impartiality” in the division of lands between India and Pakistan.

Then, there is the “mess over Kashmir.” Lord Mountbatten’s defense is that, “Mr. Jinnah hates to lose. He signed a document allowing the Maharajah of Kashmir to choose either India or Pakistan. He chose India. Now he cries foul.” While Jinnah admits that he “did sign,” he insists that, “the Maharajah, being a Hindu with a population 80% Muslim, should have signed to

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333 Ibid.
Pakistan. My Lord, I am guilty, guilty of trusting Lord Mountbatten and the British army officers who came to command my army at my request.”

He interrogates General Gracie who states that he refused “the orders of the government of Pakistan” to repel “Indian regiments under Lord Mountbatten’s command” who had invaded Kashmir. This was, Gracie contends, because “I am a British officer. The Indian side was led by British officers. I wasn’t going in to a war with other officers commissioned by the King. I refused.”

The history of the dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan has been, and continues to be, contested. While it is entirely unsurprising that this scene sets up a Pakistani nationalist position on the origin of the dispute, one of the most important facets this the contestation is that it occurs on the grounds of feelings, rather than technicalities and law. Mountbatten’s defense is that the British are absolved of technical and legal responsibility because Jinnah “signed a document allowing the Maharaja of Kashmir to choose either India or Pakistan.” Responsibility is assigned to Jinnah as a feeling, as ambition and pride: “Mr. Jinnah hates to lose.”

Jinnah’s claim of Kashmir is also a claim felt by Pakistani nationalists based on religion: “The Maharaja being a Hindu with a population 80% Muslim should have signed to Pakistan.” Jinnah’s statement confirms Mountbatten’s, that the decision to “choose either India or Pakistan” was the Maharaja’s, rather than the population 80% Muslim.” That the Maharaja chose India is part of the dispute about what he should have done because the population of his state was “80% Muslim.” In other words, although the document Jinnah signed was adhered to according

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to legal requirements, it is the moral as felt requirements of the choice made by the Maharajah of Kashmir.

Jinnah’s last word in the court of History is to hold the British responsible for the violence and horror of partition and Kashmir. He turns to Lord Mountbatten and demands, “Why did you not stop the slaughter? Why did you not send in your troops?” Lord Mountbatten insists, “As I said to you before, Mr. Jinnah, British troops could not get involved in your squabbles. Britain had to withdraw with honor.”336 This response is in line with Ayesha Jalal’s comment about British intentions at the end of the Raj: “A main preoccupation of British policy was to shift the burden of responsibility for these troubles squarely, if not fairly, onto the shoulders of Indians themselves.”337

Jinnah’s sarcastic reply to Mountbatten is also in line with this sentiment: “After two hundred years of looting, exploitation, and colonial theft, I suppose there is honor among thieves.” Indeed, Jalal is more blunt about it:

On behalf of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims who were slaughtered in their hundreds of thousands, and the refugees who in their millions stumbled fearfully across the frontiers of the two states, the historian has a duty to challenge Mountbatten’s contention and ask whether this ‘great operation’ was not in fact an ignominious scuttle enabling the British to extricate themselves from the awkward responsibility of presiding over India’s communal madness.338

As a culmination of the theme of judgment in the film, this scene encapsulates the film’s political project: the demand for Pakistan became a necessity due to anti-Muslim discrimination by Hindu citizenry and politicians. Partition and the dispute over Kashmir was violent because of the

337 Ayesha Jalal, The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 244.
deception of the Indian government, and the collusion and hypocrisy of the British. Jinnah, and by ghostly\textsuperscript{339} extension, Pakistan, are absolved in both practical and logical terms. The basis for the demand for Pakistan, and partition as a logic and process are not questioned. Sabotage comes from without; Pakistani nationalism and the existence of Pakistan is protected and affirmed.

However, even the “ignominious scuttle enabling the British to extricate themselves”\textsuperscript{340} cannot quite function as the defense of Jinnah as coherently and neatly as this scene belies. It is ironically the existence of this scene which undoes the certainty of and for Pakistani nationalism it attempts to construct. That Jinnah is depicted as both prosecutor and defense in a court of “future history”\textsuperscript{341} in a culmination of judgment as the main thematic framework for a film about Jinnah and therefore about Pakistan, is precisely what produces doubt. That this is not only the central theme of the film but also the context of its production as an answer to “Gandhi” is what reveals insecurity. This scene is performative and pedagogical\textsuperscript{342} for the affirmation for Pakistani nationalism. Jinnah as a lawyer in this court of “future history” in front of an audience emphasizes how much of a performance\textsuperscript{343} this affirmation is, and it is precisely how elaborate this performance is that reveals how performative\textsuperscript{344} and pedagogical\textsuperscript{345} it is.

Ayesha Jalal states that, “Islam should not be seen as the only driving force behind the creation of Pakistan.”\textsuperscript{346} However, it is impossible not to address the question of Islam here

\textsuperscript{340} Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 293.
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{346} Ayesha Jalal, preface to \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994), xvii.
because these are the discursive terms through which Pakistan is produced. Here, my concern is not to establish any kind of truth about Islam here. Rather, I argue that it is precisely this impossibility which undoes the basis and justification of the demand for Pakistan in the film’s nationalist narrative. This is a constant existential crisis for Pakistan because it is embodied by Jinnah as the father of the nation, and the fact that Jinnah could not resolve this impossibility of a truth about Islam, which Pakistan was supposed to have been founded on. This is a pivotal component of the “lingering trouble” which Jinnah embodies in his haunting of Pakistan.

In the film, Jinnah is portrayed as a “Muslim of the modern age,” as the character of Mohammed Iqbal describes him. His Islamic modernity is depicted most prominently through the immediately familiar discourse of the role and rights of women in Islam. There is a scene early on in the film, set in Simla 1947, in which a bearded man reprimands Jinnah on what kind of Muslim he is: “You call yourself Muslim and you parade your respected sister in front of crowds shamelessly?” Jinnah retorts, “Islam stands for equality for men and women, maulana sahib, and the women in the family of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, were active in public life.”

In a later scene, Jinnah’s life is threatened by an unkempt, bearded young man who accuses Jinnah of betraying Islam: “You are a traitor, Jinnah! If there is to be a Pakistan, it must be a Muslim state!” Jinnah keeps his temper and replies, “Pakistan will be a Muslim state.”

348 Ibid.
young man spits back, “But with you as leader! You speak of the rights of Christians, of Hindus, you talk of the right of women!”

Jinnah replies with dignity but with anger, “You are an ignorant fool. I have fought for your mother, your sister, and your children’s children, to live in dignity. Islam doesn’t need fanatics like you. Islam needs men of vision who will build the country. Now grow up! And serve Pakistan.”

This resonates with contemporary debates about the modernity of Islam as a mark of identity, a political and temporal entity, as a historical fact, and as a distinct form of consciousness. One of the most contested terrains through which these debates occur is the question of gender and sexuality. The most visible of these contestations concern female bodies and femininity, as evidenced by the works of transnational feminist scholars such as Saba Mahmood. Such analyses revolve around a woman-identified subject who is produced by and acts through a set of histories, practices and discourses categorized as Islamic. Jinnah’s statement of the roles and rights of women in Islam is very much in keeping with these discussions, and makes him legible as a modern Muslim man in instantly recognizable discursive terms.

However, what the contours of a modern Muslim are is not as neat and clear as that. If Jinnah’s legibility as a modern Muslim is read through figures of women in the film, then opposite the figure of his sister, Fatima is the figure of his wife, Ruttie. The film portrays Fatima Jinnah as a strong-willed, articulate, and intelligent woman who was active in Indian politics alongside her

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brother. Yet the film also portrays her as always dressed in loose, plain, flowing clothes such as white and grey ghararas, and modestly draped saris. As Saba Mahmood notes, piety is often legible through sartorial and bodily registers of feeling and presentation.\(^{356}\)

However, if this is correct, then Jinnah’s credibility as a specifically Muslim man “of the modern age”\(^{357}\) is thrown into doubt by the figure of Ruttie, not only in the film but also in Wolpert’s account. Dehlavi portrays Ruttie as a beautiful, lively, outspoken woman who dressed in fashionable and revealing clothing. Wolpert writes:

> Ruttie’s long hair was decked in ever-fresh flowers, her lovely lithe body draped in diaphanous silks of flaming red and gold, pale blue, or pink. She wore headbands replete with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, and smoked English cigarettes in long ivory and silver filters that added a flamboyance to her every graceful gesture, bend, and twirl of arm or body.\(^{358}\)

If Jinnah’s Islamic modernity is legible through Fatima Jinnah’s modest and sober clothes and covered head, then the figure of Ruttie in “diaphanous silks”\(^{359}\) and “headbands replete with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds”\(^{360}\) either crosses a moral line according to many a popular Muslim view, or at least positions Jinnah’s Muslim piety as precarious. This is further complicated because Fatima and Ruttie both dressed in fashions prevalent amongst specifically upper class Indians with various religious affiliations. The gharara and sari are both distinctly South Asian attire, rather than distinctly and solely Muslim outfits, after all.

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\(^{359}\) Ibid.

\(^{360}\) Ibid.
This is not about a judgment of competition of morality and Islamic piety between Fatima Jinnah and Ruttie. Rather, I am arguing about the semiotics the film deploys to produce Jinnah as “a Muslim of the modern age,” and the contradictions embedded within that deployment precisely because of the terms of the discourses about Islamic modernity.

This is important precisely because, first, the genealogy of “Pakistani” is constructed as a direct and autonomous product from “Muslim” dislocated from “Indian” so that there has to be a distinctly Muslim identity embodied by the father of the nation. The problem, as Ashish Nandy puts it, is that in “South Asia at least, the new national boundaries are built not on the earlier distinctions, but on their ruins.” Jinnah claims in the film that Islam is determinant of something called “our culture, our language” yet this determination is precisely what cannot be pinned down.

Second, it is precisely the version of Islam as the true version and therefore the correct version for the production of Pakistan nationalism, which is constantly being contested. These often violent contestations do not occur only between different sects in Pakistan, but in everyday inhabitations of something called Islam by Pakistani Muslims. Moreover, the conflicts between different sects in Pakistan are inextricable from ethnic, linguistic, and economic identities. This also contradicts the nationalist project of the film encapsulated in

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Jinnah’s claim that Islam is a unifying factor. It is because religion is an “articulated category”\textsuperscript{367} that it cannot be a universal category.\textsuperscript{368}

This is what is revealed in the very necessity to construct a binary between good Muslims and bad Muslims\textsuperscript{369} in the film. The film’s portrayal of who a good Muslim is and who a bad Muslim is adheres to racist and geopolitically dense stereotypes about Islam, which have their roots in colonialism. It is because of these stereotypes that this portrayal is instantly recognizable, and why it is instantly condonable by specific demographics of the audience for this film. The good Muslim is the English accented, well-dressed, and clean-shaven Jinnah. The bad Muslims are the Indian-accented, lower class, and bearded maulana and angry young man.

**Temporality**

Both Jamil Dehlavi’s “Jinnah” and Sir Richard Attenborough’s “Gandhi” begin at the moment of death of the titular characters. Both move back in time for the start of the central plot. However, while “Gandhi” is structured according to a linear temporality, “Jinnah” is not. It begins on September 11, 1948, at the moment of Jinnah’s death, and then moves from 1947 to 1916. The next temporal location is 1918 and 1920, followed by a fast forward to 1931. This transforms into 1946, and then we return to 1947.

Mishuana Goeman and Qwo-Li Driskill argue that modern nation-states construct and require linear temporality\textsuperscript{370} to discipline\textsuperscript{371} the past, the present, and the future.\textsuperscript{372} This resonates

\textsuperscript{369} Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
with my argument that the genesis of the modern nation-state is gendered as heterosexual. To follow the work of Sara Ahmed and Jack Halberstam, the straight line of time\textsuperscript{373} and the straight line\textsuperscript{374} of the heteropaternal\textsuperscript{375} nation-state are co-constitutive. Both are “straightening devices that keep things in line.”\textsuperscript{376} National temporality is linear temporality\textsuperscript{377} as heteronormative temporality,\textsuperscript{378} each functioning as a code of legibility for the other. I read the nonlinear temporality of “Jinnah” as a sign of, and productive of, Jinnah as the father figure of doubt for Pakistan. This is an embodiment of and reason why there Pakistan’s national temporality cannot be disciplined into a straight line\textsuperscript{379} of the past, present, and future.

I note two structural features of the film. One is that the nonlinear movement through time and place is governed by the specifically nationalist project of the film. Each event depicted serves that purpose. This is evident in the moment at which the narrative begins, which is in 1948. This means that Pakistan is already in existence. In other words, the film begins at the conclusion. This confirms the “telos of partition”\textsuperscript{380} and the existence of Pakistan. The rest of the

\textsuperscript{371} Ibid, 23-29.
\textsuperscript{380} Ayesha Jalal, preface to The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xvi.
film, then is, a nationalist portrayal of the history\textsuperscript{381} and justification for this conclusion. The subsequent temporal movements serve to provide context as justification for the conclusion of partition, and produce particular emotions about this “future history.”\textsuperscript{382} For example, scenes of anti-Muslim violence in the early months of 1947 by Hindus mark “the Muslims of India” as a persecuted\textsuperscript{383} minority.\textsuperscript{384} A visual of crowd cheering Jinnah with chants of “Pakistan Zindabad! Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad!” confirm his position as a popular and representative leader. Two scenes between Lord Mountbatten and Jinnah introduce the ego and anti-Muslim racism of Lord Mountbatten while affirming Jinnah as a clever, determined, and dignified figure.

The temporal locations of 1916, 1918, and 1920 serve to provide context for the demand for Pakistan. Since this conclusion has already been depicted, this provision of context is shaded with that teleology. The scenes set in 1918 and 1920 depict Jinnah as a passionate defender of Indian independence from Britain who is patronized by Gandhi. For example, in a scene of a political meeting in Bombay in 1920, Fatima Jinnah remarks acidly, “Your Mr. Gandhi is very patronizing. As though you were the newcomer and he had worked to build the Congress party instead the other way round!” Jinnah responds to his sister that he doesn’t care about his own ego as much as Gandhi’s politics of a mass movement conjured and driven by articulating politics through religion. This is, as the film has shown previously, is not the method Jinnah himself advocates. This turns out to be a prophetic wariness, which culminates in a scene located in 1920

at what can be historically identified\textsuperscript{385} as the Congress Nagpur Session. Jinnah opposes Gandhi’s noncooperation program, warning that it will lead to communalized divisions in the movement for independence. Although both Jalal\textsuperscript{386} and Wolpert\textsuperscript{387} support this version of events, the point of this portrayal in and through the film is to hold Gandhi accountable for bringing “religion into politics”\textsuperscript{388} and for his arrogance for Jinnah’s alienation from Congress. According to the film, Jinnah joined the Muslim League because “someone had to speak up for the Muslims.”

The next temporal context is 1931 in London. This scene is introduced through the arrival of Muhammed Iqbal at the London High Court, where Jinnah is arguing a case. His victory in court serves to reaffirm his reputation as a brilliant lawyer and as foreshadowing for the future scene of the court of history.

The sequence that follows is a conversation between the two of the future icons of Pakistan: Jinnah, and philosopher-poet laureate, Muhammed Iqbal. Although the film’s depiction of Iqbal is not expansive (we see him in just this one scene), it is powerful precisely because it reinforces nationalist representations of Jinnah and Iqbal that it adheres to: Jinnah hails Iqbal as “our great poet and philosopher” and Iqbal persuades Jinnah to return to India to lead “the Muslims of India.” in “the struggle for Pakistan and inspire the country at its birth.” Iqbal as an icon\textsuperscript{389} confirms Jinnah as the father of the future nation of Pakistan when he says, “There is no other.”

\textsuperscript{385} Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8.
\textsuperscript{386} Ibid.
To the strains of a violin playing the future national anthem of Pakistan, Iqbal narrates a nationalist history of “the Muslims of India,” instantly familiar to Pakistanis as their lineage: “For 200 years, the Muslims of India have lost the direction of their destiny. And now, as the mists clear, a vision is born of a country of purity and compassion.” Predictably, this scene cannot be temporally followed in the narrative by any other than 1946 in Lahore. The opening shot is of the Pakistani flag flying high in the wind. The camera, situated amongst the crowd, then moves up to show the size of the crowd assembled at the Red Mosque, visible on the horizon. There is a medium close-up shot of Jinnah standing at the head of this rally, framed by the Red Mosque as he makes the triumphant announcement that the “Muslim League has swept the polls throughout India.” This is evidence of nationhood. He declares that it proves, “in the eyes of the world,” that the Muslim League has the “right to represent the Muslims of India” in and through the demand for Pakistan as a homeland for that nation. The camera moves from behind Jinnah to focus the jubilant crowd as they raise their hands in salute and celebration, chanting, “Allah hu Akbar (God is great)! Pakistan Zindabad! Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad!”

There is a temporal loop in the film’s narrative structure, which will come into play in the end, when the ragged band of mahajirs seen in August in 1947 morphs into the jubilant crowd at this particular rally and the chants of the refugees merge with the voices of this crowd. This temporal loop produces the echo of validation amidst the violence and horror of Partition in August in 1947 with the victory and hope of Lahore in 1946. This spatio-temporal echo is necessary precisely because it is about validation. In August in 1947, Jinnah asks for forgiveness from a crowd of traumatized and bedraggled mahajirs. He receives a recognition and salutation as the founding father of Pakistan with joy and hope by the refugees. This simultaneously grants
him forgiveness as well as absolution from the need to ask for forgiveness through this naming: “Pakistan Zindabad! Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad!”

These mahajirs are the primary category deployed for the coherence of Muslim with Pakistani. In the scenes set in Lahore 1946 and August 1947, they are the future Pakistanis in whose name Jinnah claimed to stand and speak for. The echo of the crowd in Lahore in 1946 has to be heard in August in 1947 because they are the people in the narratives of partition as “the desperate flight of thousands from their ancestral homes.” The validation of Jinnah through them is paramount to justify the creation of Pakistan. Otherwise, Pakistan cannot be read as worth what happened in 1947.

This temporal loop and the emotional resonance it constructs within the film is given away by the visual manifestation of it. The final scene of the film is the transformation of the shot of the cheering refugees in 1947 into the shot of the cheering crowd in 1946. This transformation occurs through the colors of the camera lens, which have been tinted with sepia tones throughout. As the scene of “the Muslims of India” in 1947 becomes that of “the Muslims of India” in 1946, the visual becomes black and white and eventually a still image, to echo a photograph.

This brings me to the second structural element about the film’s deployment of temporality, which is precisely the tinge of the camera lens with sepia tones. The visual on the screen often looks like an old photograph (made explicit in the final scene as described above) or

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an old film reel. Although it is arguable that this points to an emphasis of the film as a historical film, sepia toned photographs also often popularly denote and evoke nostalgia. Nostalgia can be defined as wistfulness about a past remembered with both pleasure and sadness. It also involves longing and wishfulness. Therefore, there is a particular emotive quality in “Jinnah” through the sepia tinge of the camera lens. It evokes the tone and reference of old photographs or an old film reel to denote history so that the film is shaded as a historically accurate film.  

However, the sepia tinge undoes this inflection because it also indicates a wistfulness, which underpins the tone and reference to historical accuracy. In other words, “Jinnah” is the narration of Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the creation of Pakistan Pakistanis wish for. The film constructs an India certain Pakistanis wish to remember as the past to justify the creation of Pakistan through Jinnah as the father of the nation. Since this is a longing for a remembered past, this wishfulness is nostalgia. It is haunting as Avery Gordon describes, as a sense of “what we never had can be brought back from exile and articulated fully as a form of longing in this world.”

The central dramatic figure in “Jinnah” has everything to do with temporality because this figure is a ghost. The central dramatic premise of the film is that ghost of Jinnah as to go back in time to justify partition and the creation of Pakistan. This is an ironic commentary on the film as a nationalist narrative because the protagonist is a ghost rather than an icon, which is a crucial difference between “Jinnah” and “Gandhi.” Ghosts are signs of haunting as “the domain

of turmoil and trouble, that moment (of however long duration) when things are not in their assigned places, when the cracks are rigging are exposed.”  

Not only is the protagonist a ghost, but one of the film’s primary narrative locations is the liminal space between heaven and hell. Here, time has both ended for life (the past) and it has been suspended for judgment (the future). The Angel of Death explains to Jinnah, “You’ve stopped here so we may decide where to send you.” The “stopped here” refers not only to the place but also to time because time has to be “stopped here” before a decision can be made as to where Jinnah will go. This judgment requires going to the past to justify the future. The library, then, where the ghost of Jinnah has stopped to be judged, is “that place where an unremembered past and an unimaginable future force us to sit day after day.” It is the “day after day” which points to the constant return to the past necessary for nationalist affirmations of Pakistan, embodied by the ghost of the father of the nation in a nationalist film.

The first and most obvious thing about ghosts is that they are spirits of the dead. However, in “Jinnah,” death is already imbued with an anticipatory temporality. When the ghost of Jinnah first arrives at the library, the Angel of Death tells him, “We’ve been expecting you.” This is not a statement of the fact of mortality; as a scene located in 1947 reveals, it is a statement about Jinnah having been diagnosed with tuberculosis; Jinnah’s physician tells him it will lead inevitably to “deterioration and death.” The father of the nation of Pakistan was dying before the creation of Pakistan. He died a year and a half after August 14, 1947.

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Jinnah knew he was going to die before the creation of Pakistan. He kept this knowledge secret until it was too physically obvious to do so.\textsuperscript{399} His death stunned Pakistanis on September 11, 1948, as an unexpected loss. This loss is still mourned as a pivotal one for the destiny of Pakistan. The ghost of Jinnah in the film is an almost meta-prophetic depiction for how Jinnah haunts Pakistan. Before and during partition and the creation of Pakistan, he was becoming a ghost. He was becoming the past which “always haunts the present.”\textsuperscript{400} The present \textit{then} was the moment of the creation of Pakistan intertwined with the future through the ghost the father of the nation was becoming.

For Pakistan, then, the origin story is inflected with death and haunting through the figure of the father. This is not an inflection of mortality per se, but of an anticipatory temporality, of the father of the nation becoming a ghost during the moment of creation of the nation-state. The moment of creation for Pakistan is also pricked with defensiveness. This is evident through the fact of the first accusation made by Jinnah against Lord Mountbatten in the court of history: “Lord Mountbatten changed the date of partition to force Pakistan into failure.”

The film has already shown the historical fact of this accusation, and the malice embedded in it. In a previous scene, Lord Mountbatten smugly reassures Nehru, “Jinnah can have his truncated little country. He’ll come limping back to you in a matter of months. Jinnah will beg for reunification.” This reassurance is based on Lord Mountbatten’s plan to move the transfer of power “forward by eight months. India will gain her independence on the 15 of August 1947. Pakistan will have to scramble to get itself ready.”

\textsuperscript{399} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{400} Janice Radway, foreword to \textit{Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination}, by Avery Gordon (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), viii.
The horrors of partition are blamed on this malice in the very next scene set in August 1947, almost as a punctuation mark of emphasis: a caravan of Muslims going from India to Pakistan is attacked and massacred by Hindus. This emphasis is also produced through the repetitious replay and recall of exactly this scene at other points in the film. There is, then, a simultaneous resonance in the historical moment of this decision by Mountbatten, and the actual change of the date of partition in the origin story of Pakistan. This resonance is not one of celebration, but of defensiveness, of the fact of Pakistan’s survival despite machinations “to force Pakistan into failure.” Although this moment can be mobilized as a heroic one in and for nationalist narratives, it is not celebratory. Mountbatten’s change of date is depicted not only as an accusation Jinnah makes in the court of history, but also as an entire scene of cause and effect precisely because it haunts Pakistan. There is an existential “if only” and “what if” built into the moment of creation of Pakistan, between the numerals of August 14, 1947, and August 14, 1948. The time of the origin story was changed. It is this change in time, which nationalist narratives still return to as an account of the difficulties Pakistan faced on the eve of independence and afterward, including in the dispute over Kashmir. It is a constant accusation in nationalist narratives against both Nehru and Mountbatten. The scene of the Court of History is, therefore, a representation of the repetitive return to this matter of time.

The film’s emphasis on the change in date in the matter of all the things that went wrong with partition is a representation of the nationalist emphasis. Yet this constant return to the matter of time in nationalist narratives of Pakistan reveals not only the defensiveness in the

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moment of creation for Pakistan, but that time is used almost as a veil over “the seething presence”404 of what was wrong with the basis for the demand for Pakistan at all, and with partition as a consequent process of that demand.

Avery Gordon writes, “Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future.”405 There are three pivotal scenes in which the ghost of Jinnah is made corporeal in times and places that are past. Since the third scene is, chronologically, the last scene of the film, which I have discussed previously, I focus on the first one. This is a particularly important scene because it is dense with the thematic contradictions present for the film’s nationalist narrative overall.

The first scene is set in Bombay in 1920. The political context of the 1920s for Jinnah is his increasing alienation in Congress due to Gandhi’s iconicity and his plans for a mass noncooperation movement for independence articulated in a religious vocabulary.406

The scene opens with a young Jinnah strolling through the gardens of his house on Malabar Hill. Through the dappled sunlight and overhanging leaves, he sees an old man sitting on a bench under a tree. We instantly recognize him as the ghost of Jinnah but in real time and place, the younger version of Jinnah does not. The old man greets him, “Good afternoon, young man. I hope you don’t mind me resting for a few moments in your lovely garden.” Jinnah is surprised but impeccably courteous and asks, “No, no, of course not, sir. Can I ask them to fetch some water?”

The old man replies, “No, no, I’m not unwell. It’s just that the climb up the hill is a little tiring.” Jinnah inclines his head in respect and says, “You’re most welcome.”

He turns to walk on when the old man hails him by name, “Mr. Jinnah,” and he looks back in surprise. The old man continues, “You are right to trust logic. But isn’t there some logic to Gandhi’s nonviolence?”

There is something deliberately provocative about the old man’s tone. Since we know who the old man is and the political context of this point in Jinnah’s life, it is almost as if the ghost of Jinnah is playing devil’s advocate with his younger self. Yet why would the ghost of Jinnah do this, especially since Pakistan has already been created? One explanation could be to test and therefore confirm Jinnah’s convictions, with the ghost of Jinnah as the skeptic affirming his own strength of conviction through his younger self. The historical fact of the creation of Pakistan emphasizes this conviction.

However, the ghost of Jinnah is always already the sign of haunting as “the domain of turmoil and trouble.” This means there is something else, an unease about this scene, the purpose of this scene. This is revealed in the conversation that follows.

The younger version of Jinnah asks, “What do you mean? Who are you?”

The ghost of Jinnah, made corporeal and simultaneously unrecognizable to his younger self, answers euphemistically, “Just a traveller,” and returns to his line of questioning. “Gandhi angers you because he patronizes you?”

The Jinnah of 1920 answers calmly, “No, no. I’m not a child. Mr. Gandhi is an extraordinary man, a man who believes in his own mission. But the clothes. This imitation of the

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Hindu peasants, the spinning wheels, the fasts, the bits and pieces of Sanskrit philosophy, ahimsa, satyagraha. He is calling forth a flood.”

The old man is again contrary and says, “Isn’t that what the movement needs? Millions of people demanding the British leave India?”

Jinnah’s younger self answers, “Yes, but will it stop there? What else will they demand?” He leans forward intently and continues, “You talk of spirit, you release darker forces, powers that can’t be questioned, illogical urges, anger. If they succeed in kicking out the British because they have usurped power in India, won’t their attention, then, turn to the Muslims? After all, we Muslims conquered India long before the British.”

The ghost of Jinnah, almost sorrowfully, replies, “Isn’t that logical too?”

Now his younger self becomes passionate, as the camera moves to focus on him in a close-up. “No,” he states, “because we are not outsiders. We are part of this country.” Suddenly, there is a hint of melancholic smile as he finishes with a sigh, “And besides, we have no England to go back to.”

This is exactly the “turmoil and trouble” the ghost of Jinnah is a sign of in this nationalist narrative of Pakistan, that of time in the question of who “we Muslims” are. On one level, the evocation of the founding father as a ghost who must move in a nonlinear temporality to justify the creation of Pakistan signals this conflict over the genealogy of “a nation-people” called (and called into being as) “the Muslims of India.” On a second level, it is this scene of the ghost of Jinnah made corporeal to his younger self so that, “the experience of being in time,

412 Ibid.
the way we separate the past, the present, and the future,” is collapsed. This cinematic collapse is a manifestation of the epistemological collapse of the genealogy of “the Muslims of India” present in nationalist narratives. This is why the film cannot confront this question of time, but it cannot escape it as this scene proves.

The younger version of Jinnah makes three triangulated statements: “After all, we Muslims conquered India long before the British,” alongside “We are not outsiders. We are part of this country,” ending with, “we have no England to go back to.” These statements are inadvertent yet inescapable proof of the contradictions of constructing a genealogy of “Muslim” separated from “Indian” that can transform in a straight line into “Pakistani.” These are the excess which Aamir Mufti states “cannot be contained within the categorical structure of the nation-state” because each of them is epistemologically fallible. “We conquered India long before the British” is a direct contradiction of “We are not outsiders” because conquerors are by definition “outsiders” to the conquered. “We are part of this country,” then, becomes legible only through a negation of “We are not outsiders” because “we Muslims” as conquerors can only be “part of this country” as “outsiders,” as conquerors. Jinnah’s last melancholic statement, “we have no England to go back to” is a neat encapsulation of the spatio-temporal confusion over how to define “we Muslims” and where to locate such an entity. Logically, if “we Muslims conquered India long before the British,” then “we Muslims” are

“outsiders.” However, if “we Muslims” have “no England to go back to,” then this entity called “the Muslims of India” is existentially homeless, because “we Muslims” are “outsiders” to India and “we have no England to go back to.”

These three statements point to the confusion between locating in space and time an identity claimed to be universal. This paradox is intrinsic to constructions of Pakistani nationalism through the identity of Muslim. In the anthology Beyond Crisis: Reevaluating Pakistan, Sadia Abbas and Robert Rozenhal both explore Pakistani nationalist imaginings of Pakistan as “a geographical tabula rasa.” Abbas discusses Muhammed Asad and Imran Khan as Muslims who come to Islam through a journey of self-discovery, rather than mere birth. Abbas points out that, “Islam seems to provide a historical narrative that is cast, romantically, as outside European time” which signals that these are “orientalist movements.” Abbas notes that while an “invocation of orientalism may seem tired at this point, a trite iteration of the hermeneutic of suspicion,” it is necessary “precisely because it is so easy to forget the flattery that can lie so insidiously at orientalism’s core.” Abbas cautions, “Orientalism can be philic as well as phobic.” She points out that a self-Orientalism does not detract from the reality that it is still orientalism and carries with it technologies of producing Others in time and space. Abbas notes that the “value of Islam becomes apparent” to Asad and

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421 Ibid, 348-349.
422 Ibid, 344-347.
423 Ibid, 344-347.
424 Ibid, 345.
425 Ibid.
426 Ibid.
427 Ibid.
428 Ibid.
Khan “whilst they are in the West” precisely because of their perception of Islam as a geopolitically monolithic entity “somehow still suspended in its own past.”

Pakistan, then, becomes a blank canvas upon which this time “out of Western modernity” can be written into a space. Abbas’s analysis points to “the shape of religion in modernity, and its relationship with political power” in which the figures such as Asad, Jameela and Khan narrate “a story of diasporic self-discovery, a conversion narrative with an international itinerary.” This is story, however, is thoroughly modern: the centering of a universal philosophy, the possibility of a universal individual, international mobility, and notions of home, self and other forged in diaspora. In particular, the discourse of a blank time and space outside of modernity solely defined by and through European notions and practices is exceedingly familiar.

Rozenhal raises an existential question about Pakistan: “What are the parameters of Islamic orthodoxy and who rightfully speaks for the tradition? What is the role of religion in framing the nation’s educational, legal, economic, social and administrative policies?”

Rozenhal reads a text by Shaykh Wahid Bakhsh Sial Rabbani to look at how Shahykh Wahid as a Sufi master claims that authority. Wahid is an ardent Pakistani nationalist who imagines Pakistan as “a new and welcoming space for South Asian Muslims to resurrect the ideals of the early Muslim community.” Yet it is important to note that part of the romantic and mythic proportions assigned to “the Prophet Muhammed and the early community of believers in

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431 Ibid.
432 Ibid, 347.
433 Ibid 344.
434 Ibid, 366.
437 Ibid, 119.
438 Ibid, 125.
Medina⁴³⁹ come precisely from this community being formed, essentially, in exile from Mecca so that this ideal and historical model of a Muslim community was not formed as a nation-state. How are we to imagine Pakistan as a Muslim nation-state if it is supposed to be based on a Muslim community formed in exile and homelessness, which can very well be translated as statelessness today?

As I discuss elsewhere, these contradictions of location in space and time are embodied in the existence of Indian Muslims such as Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad. It is through such figures that genealogical separation of “Muslim” and “Indian” is undone. This was precisely why Jinnah himself had to disavow Indian Muslims as “traitors, cranks, supermen or lunatics.”⁴⁴⁰

This genealogical and epistemological impossibility is discussed by Aamir Mufti in *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture*. Mufti reads the works of Abdul Kalam Azad, the poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto to argue that, “Pakistan cannot become the site for the elaboration of a narrative that is strictly national,” one which contains “the sense of a collective destiny, whose contours, furthermore, are already visible, however imperfectly, at the moment of origin”⁴⁴¹ “Pakistani” is “incomprehensible without reference to the self whose development is the theme of the *Indian* national narrative.”⁴⁴² He discusses the deployment of central “narrative-mythological constellation”⁴⁴³ of *hijrat* for the retroactive construction of a genealogy from

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⁴³⁹ Ibid, 133-134.
⁴⁴² Ibid.
“Muslim” in a straight line\textsuperscript{444} to “Pakistani.”\textsuperscript{445} This is deployment is present in the film precisely because it is a nationalist narrative of Pakistan. The reason Jinnah must be judged is because of the partition and the suffering of those who came to Pakistan from India, who are known in Pakistani national mythology as mahajirs.\textsuperscript{446} Mahajirs are depicted throughout the film, from the first film reel of the violence of partition the Angel of Death shows Jinnah, to the last scene set in August 1947 in which the ghost of Jinnah is made corporeal to ask for forgiveness from mahajirs on the way to Pakistan. As the “foundational narrative of Islamic community,”\textsuperscript{447} the trope of \textit{hijrat} deployed in nationalist discourses of Pakistan\textsuperscript{448} attaches land and people through religion, and coheres “Pakistani” with “Muslim.” The claim of belonging figured within a national identity is articulated through religious terms. Perhaps this is illustrated best in Zamindar’s clarification that the word \textit{mahajir} was used only for Muslim refugees displaced from India to Pakistan, even though there were mass displacements across both Pakistan and India; for example, of the Hindu Sindhi populations who left Sind in Pakistan for India.\textsuperscript{449} That such stories are not counted as \textit{hijrat} in nationalist historical discourses of Pakistan\textsuperscript{450} speaks to how \textit{hijrat} as the organizing narrative for movement coalesced “Muslim” and “Pakistani” identities as the proper basis for an attachment to the land of Pakistan. It is important to note here that the figure of the \textit{mahajir} as “both migrant and refugee”\textsuperscript{451} as integral to the foundational

\textsuperscript{446} Aamir Mufti, \textit{Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 223.
\textsuperscript{447} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{449} Ibid, 45-78.
\textsuperscript{450} Ibid, 161-189.
\textsuperscript{451} Ibid, 45.
narratives of Pakistan, is almost in direct opposition to the figure of the subject as citizen within nation as “organic community” characteristic of modern Europe. It is exactly this disjuncture within the terms of modernity that the trope of *hijrat* attempts to reconcile within this very same figure of movement by producing it as a genealogically coherent and identifiable subject in the coalescing of “Muslim” to “Pakistani” as having already been that which was never “Indian.” Mufti argues that the “notion of a new beginning unburdened by the past, inherent as a defining element in the discourse of *hijrah*, becomes subject in the Partition” to “an entire dialectic of memory and forgetting that constitutes one of the modalities of Partition into our own times.” If Pakistani cohered as Muslim is the “new beginning unburdened by the past” configured as Indian, then *hijrat* is a key element of producing a separation the categories of “Indian” and “Muslim.” This is because the story of *Hijrat* figures a community already ontologically coherent as “Muslim” driven out of India because of discrimination, a narrative deployed to legitimate Partition and the demand for Pakistan. Consequently, “Pakistani” as synonymous with “Muslim” requires a retrospective genealogy that disallows and disavows the identifications of “Indian” and/or “Indian Muslim.” This is evident in the recall of the original stories of both Exodus and *Hijrat* because both emphasize “Jews” and “Muslims” as “separate and identifiable” communities, which become primary identities through which

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453 Ibid, 69.
454 Ibid, 89.
455 Ibid, 235.
457 Ibid.
458 Ibid.
460 Ibid, 1.

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nationhood is constructed and through which “the nation-people”\textsuperscript{461} are territorialized. Exodus and \textit{hijrat} are thus pivotal for how communities must retroactively construct a history of themselves to lay claim to being a nation-people and to territorialize this nation. These stories are “the pre-given or constituted historical origin or event” which provides “a nationalist pedagogy” and “a process of signification.”\textsuperscript{462} These are the pedagogical and performative temporalities “of the production of the nation as narration.”\textsuperscript{463}

Zamindar points out that \textit{mahajir} was formulated as “governmental category” by the Pakistani government “to classify Muslim refugees such that it left open an imagined \textit{mahajir} return to India.”\textsuperscript{464} This not only directly negated the claim by the same state that, “Pakistan would be a home for all Muslims,” but also imbued the category of \textit{mahajir} as a specifically Indian Muslim category of identity so that inadvertently (yet necessarily),\textsuperscript{465} “Indian” and “Muslim” could not be genealogically separated. Additionally, if such a classification “left open an imagined \textit{mahajir} return to India,”\textsuperscript{466} then who was the figure for whom Pakistan could be narrated as a homeland to which to permanently relocate?\textsuperscript{467}

In his reading of the poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Mufti notes another instance of the trope of \textit{hijrat} being deployed differently, within a specifically Indian modernity “without reference to” which “Pakistani” is “incomprehensible.”\textsuperscript{468} Reading “the meaning and legacy of Partition” as the “foremost theme of Faiz’s poetry,”\textsuperscript{469} Mufti argues that the word \textit{hijr} meaning

\begin{footnotes}
\item[462] Ibid.
\item[463] Ibid, 296-297.
\item[464] Ibid, 45.
\item[466] Ibid.
\item[467] Ibid, 59-60.
\item[468] Ibid, 235.
\item[469] Ibid, 210.
\end{footnotes}
separation is a deliberate invocation by Faiz to “the historical density” of the stories of Exodus and *hijrat*, and that if Partition is the central theme of Faiz’s poetry, then this separation from the beloved is about being separated from India, since Faiz is geopolitically and historically located in Pakistan. That is to say, Faiz refuses the construction of “Muslim” and consequently “Pakistani” through Partition as dialectical to “Indian” and Indian modernity. If the “sadness of *hijr* echoes the finality of *hijrat*, of leaving one’s home forever,” this “also inverts the implied religious sanction for partition by re-inscribing the self’s leave-taking of the (antagonistic) other as separation from the beloved.” This means that, “Indian” is what the artificially coherent “Muslim/Pakistani” are separated from, and “Indian” is also “the beloved.” Pakistan “cannot become the site for the elaboration of a narrative that is strictly national,” one which contains “the sense of collective destiny, whose contours, furthermore, are already visible, however imperfectly, at the moment of origin,” based on “Muslim” as an epistemologically and ontologically certain identity that is not Indian.

**Who is Jinnah?**


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*470* Ibid, 221.


*473* Ibid.

*474* Ibid.


*476* Ibid.

*477* Stanley Wolpert is an American historian and renowned scholar of South Asian politics and histories. He is professor emeritus at the department of History at UCLA.
There is a direct reference in the film to Wolpert’s book: the first three lines from the book’s preface are the prologue of the film. *Jinnah of Pakistan* chronicles the life of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, from his birth in Karachi “sometime in the 1870s” in a “Shi’ite Muslim Khoja” family, through his years as a barrister and rising star in Indian politics, to his becoming the president of the Muslim League and the first president and governor-general of Pakistan. Wolpert writes that Jinnah was “one of recent history’s most charismatic leaders and least known personalities” whose story had “to date never been told in all the fascinating complexity of its brilliant light and tragic darkness.” This “brilliant light and tragic darkness” included Jinnah’s marriage to Rattanbai Dinshaw, or Ruttie as she was known, in 1918. Ruttie was sixteen and Jinnah “at least forty” when they fell in love, and for the first years of their marriage, they looked “as happy and fulfilled as they felt.” As Wolpert details, however, this was not to last: Jinnah’s political and professional work and experiences left him “precious little time for the whims or fancies of a young wife and infant daughter” and the marriage could not be sustained. Ruttie died in 1929 and so Jinnah “lost the one love of his life.”

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478 Jalal is a Cambridge trained historian, well-known for her work on South Asia. She is a professor of History at Tufts University.
480 Ibid, 4.
481 Ibid, 8-20.
482 Ibid, 16-118.
486 Ibid.
487 Ibid.
489 Ibid, 44.
490 Ibid, 54.
491 Ibid, 61-75.
492 Ibid, 73.
493 Ibid.
494 Ibid, 73-104.
495 Ibid, 104.
496 Ibid, 89.
Wolpert’s Jinnah is a brilliant lawyer and masterful politician with an indomitable strength of conviction. He has a sharp perception of popular feeling, and is always in control of the tactics he deploys in the battle of wills between the Muslim League, Congress, and the British government.

Ayesha Jalal details the formal constitutional and legal politics of the creation Pakistan through partition. In the introduction, Jalal states that the “central problem to which the book will address itself” is “how did a Pakistan come about which fitted the interests of most Muslims so poorly?” Jalal contends that, “from first to last, Jinnah avoided giving the demand a precise definition,” because his real political aim was to be “the sole spokesman of Indian Muslims on the all-India stage.” Jalal explores the “uncertainties, ambiguities, and indeterminacies” of Indian politics after the 1920s between the Muslim League, Congress, and the British government. Jalal argues that Pakistan was a tactic in Jinnah’s strategy to gain parity in a central government of India. Pakistan was simultaneously a discursive maneuver deployed by Jinnah to persuade Muslim-identified politicians to support the Muslim League as representative of Indian Muslims, instead of politicking according to their provincial allegiances and

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497 Ibid, 45-60.  
499 Ibid, 92-306.  
501 Ibid.  
502 Ibid.  
506 Ayesha Jalal, introduction to The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5.
Jalal portrays Jinnah as an intelligent, ambitious, and stubborn man who often had to improvise in difficult situations. This Jinnah has to scramble, often with nothing more than his tenacity and strength of will, to manage intrinsically contradictory interests in the very production of an imagined community known as “the Muslims of India.” The “tragic darkness” for Jinnah is that he overplays his hand in the political game of the postcolonial subcontinent to be.

Both books focus on Jinnah and the story of his position as the founding father of Pakistan. Both books document many of the same events; for example, the Government of India Act of 1935; Direct Action Day in Calcutta in 1946; the elections of 1945-1946, and the Cabinet Mission of 1946. However, as described earlier, Jalal and Wolpert construct quite different and opposite portraits of Jinnah, and the emotions embedded within the processes that resulted in the demand for Pakistan and partition. I am interested in the epistemological, emotional, and political difference between these two representations. It is not about a disagreement over historical interpretation or details or technicalities, but the very possibility of this difference which, I argue, produces Jinnah as the father figure of doubt.

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509 Ibid, 212.
The ghost of Jinnah in the film can be read as a sign of this possibility that is embedded and circulates within a story that is presented as linear and accomplished, that is, the nationalist narrative of the origin story of Pakistan. This possibility is detectable in Wolpert’s portrait of Jinnah in contrast to Jalal’s because of the emotions each produces about the idea of Pakistan. These are the emotions that inflect futurity for Pakistan, and are part of nationalism as a set of feelings about the nation-state. Wolpert and Dehlavi’s Jinnah is a worthy father figure, a brilliant and determined leader with dignity, charisma, and integrity. This infuses Pakistani nationalism with unproblematic emotions of pride in Pakistan around the figure of Jinnah, and sorrow at the loss of the father of the nation so soon after independence. Both these emotions produce a community known as Pakistanis through alignment around Jinnah.

Jalal’s portrait of Jinnah is of an intelligent, tenacious political strategist who lost control of a fairly reckless political gambit. This is Jinnah as a father figure who made mistake, who sometimes had nothing but sheer strength of will and stubbornness to go on. This is also a Jinnah who did not believe in Pakistan as an ideological commitment, and therefore never defined what Pakistan was or would be. This does not make for a good nationalist narrative. This means the nation-state of Pakistan was a mistake, that it was an amorphous and complicated code.

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containing political strategy, ambition, politicking, religion, and “the dignity”\textsuperscript{525} the ashraf\textsuperscript{526} did not have “to become a minority.”\textsuperscript{527}

The definition of minority and nation is precisely the problem Wolpert does not address in his work. However, this is one of Jalal’s main contestations. She charts the constant and often bitter\textsuperscript{528} negotiations between Jinnah as the president of the Muslim League and politicians who prioritized their provincial loyalties and interests, rather than any sense of allegiance to the Muslim League as Muslims.\textsuperscript{529} Furthermore, Jalal argues that the Muslim League did not have active political party offices in several provinces.\textsuperscript{530} This meant that, far from based on the mobilization of mass support, the elections of many candidates to provincial and central government positions was arranged between Jinnah and provincial leaders.\textsuperscript{531} Jalal also asserts that Islam was a political tactic used by Jinnah to threaten and/or cajole provincial politicians and local Muslim leaders to support him. It was also a discursive tool he wielded against the British authorities and Congress. These alliances, however, were never stable or permanent. Neither were they very responsible, particularly ethical, or thought through by Jinnah.\textsuperscript{532} This was demonstrated in the violence in Calcutta on Direct Action Day in 1946.\textsuperscript{533}

\textsuperscript{526} Ibid, 111-112.
\textsuperscript{527} Ibid, 171.
\textsuperscript{528} Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 82-98.
\textsuperscript{529} Ibid, 82-173.
\textsuperscript{530} Ibid, 132-153.
\textsuperscript{531} Ibid, 146-173.
\textsuperscript{532} Ibid, 82-173.
Jalal’s discussion of the precariousness of an entity such as “the Muslims of India,” resonates with Aamir Mufti’s exploration of the figure of the Muslim in Indian modernity in his book *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture.*

Mufti’s epistemological and ontological exploration of the problems Jalal discusses historiographically may also be put into productive conversation with Gabriel Piterberg’s work on Israel in *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics, and Scholarship in Israel.* Mufti and Piterberg undo the “taken-for-granted realities” of the production of nation through the dialectic of majority and minority and articulations of genealogy, identity, and territoriality through religion as an autonomous register.

Piterberg shows how Zionism as the claim to territoriality of a nation identified as Jewish was produced through the model of European nationalism and Protestant settler colonialism. This is in direct conversation with Mufti, who argues that the production of the figure of the Jew as minority is the “ground for elaborating the fiction of organic national community” so that Europe becomes a specifically modern “concert of national histories and narratives” through this minoritization. Accordingly, the dialectic of a figure of minority and a figure of majority are a necessary term of legibility for the modern nation. Europe solves the problematic of the figure of the Jew as the site of contradiction and fragmentation through the creation of Israel as the

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540 Ibid.

541 Ibid, 56.
modern territorialized Jewish nation. Through Israel, Jews are simultaneously outside of Europe, and legible as modern. This condition of modernity is displaced through British colonialism into India so that in Indian modernity, it is the figure of the Muslim who is constructed as minority. The Partition of 1947, then, becomes the South Asian solution to solving this problematic.

The evidence that this problem cannot be solved is present in both “Jinnah” and Jinnah of Pakistan through “repressions, disappearances, absences,” which are necessary in nationalist narratives of Pakistan. These absences are of prominent political figures such as Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, as well as those Indian Muslims who either did not journey to Pakistan at the time of partition, or returned to India. Neither Wolpert nor Dehlavi give a serious account of Indian Muslims who did not join the Muslim League and/or align with Jinnah. The film deletes their presence completely.

This is a political echo, an epistemological manifestation, of what Wolpert recounts as Jinnah’s own attitude toward people like Maulana Azad; he branded and dismissed such people as “traitors, cranks, supermen or lunatics.” This reveals one of the most important ways that Jinnah is a father figure of doubt, why he haunts Pakistan as a “seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities.” For Jinnah to declare that, “We are not a

542 Ibid, 88-90.
543 Ibid, 93-94.
minority, but a nation,” there could not be dissident voices of people who articulated
“Muslim” and “Indian” through each other. Jinnah could only engage the presence of such
people through disavowal from the category of Muslim. This disavowal has to be repeated by
Pakistani nationalism on an existential level. Jinnah of Pakistan and “Jinnah” are both
manifestation of this performative disavowal, located in the father of the nation. These
“repressions, disappearances, absences” in “Jinnah” are necessary to the origin story being
told in it for a specifically nationalist reaffirmation.

Yet the category of a Muslim identity which would include Jinnah is also complicated.
Jinnah was not a part of the majority Muslim-identified population of contemporary Pakistan,
which is Sunni. He was born into an Ismaili family, and then became a selectively practicing
Shia. The fact of selective practice is in itself important here because Jinnah’s embodiment of
a particular version of Islam was also refracted through his class privilege, and through being
visibly Anglicized. This is evident through the absence of a very visual cue of Muslim
identification, that of the five daily prayers, as well as an incident Wolpert documents in which
Jinnah orders and enjoys pork sandwiches. Pork is forbidden in Islam. These two discursive
features of Muslim identification are related because each demonstrates how easily Jinnah can be
imagined as the kind of Muslim who did not pray and who ate pork.

Such an imagination has to be negated by Pakistani nationalism. This is exactly why the
film depicts Jinnah praying in a mosque, but does not show Jinnah eating pork sandwiches, even

549 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and
551 Janice Radway, foreword to *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis and
553 Ibid.
555 Ibid, 5-9, 79.
556 Ibid, 79.
though Wolpert’s book is clearly referenced as a source for historical legitimacy and accuracy for the film. None of this is intended to judge whether Jinnah was a good Muslim or a bad Muslim. Nor do I wish to debate whether Jinnah truly believed in a political entity as “the Muslims of India” at various points in his political career. Moreover, religion was and is a felt identity, and an important vocabulary for critiquing economic and social inequalities.

Rather, my argument is about how Muslim is an articulated category, which Jinnah could not define nor acknowledge. This is an existential contradiction, often dismissed as personal rather than political, precisely because nationalist narratives of Pakistan cannot resolve this problem in the figure of the father of the nation.

Neither “Jinnah” nor Jinnah of Pakistan can evade being haunted, and the genealogical and epistemological instability of their projects that this haunting reveals. There is a double undoing caused by the ghosts here: Wolpert’s book contradicts the film even though the latter is based on the former. Simultaneously, Jinnah of Pakistan is undone from within. I discuss this undoing through one of the most significant differences between the film and the book. This is also the moment within the book, which undoes the nationalist feelings Jinnah of Pakistan is imbued with.

One of Jinnah’s most famous speeches is the one he gave at the first meeting of Pakistan’s constituent assembly in Karachi on August 11, 1947. This speech is quoted from by specific demographics of Pakistanis, including the middle to upper-class, urban, English-

557 Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
speaking, and transnationally mobile. Indeed, this invocation aligns these demographics as a particular social and political constituency as much as anything else. This is the primary audience for a film like “Jinnah” (and “The Reluctant Fundamentalist,” which I have discussed in the first chapter).

This speech is used as evidence of a specific political vision for Pakistan, and the legitimacy of this claim is through Jinnah as the father of the nation. These oft-quoted lines include:

You are free; free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan … You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State.\(^{563}\)

Jinnah also stated:

We should begin to work in that spirit and in the course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community - because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on and amongst the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khatris, also Bengalees, Madrasis, and so on - will vanish.\(^{564}\)

The first quote is portrayed in the film as a deliberate speech, which Jinnah makes as an enlightened\(^{565}\) and liberal Muslim. Pakistan is intended not only as a country for “the Muslims of India,” but one in which the human rights of all citizens will be safeguarded. This is part of the contention against a Hindu dominated Congress and government which Jinnah voices in the film.

The film produces this sentiment through a scene in which Jinnah watches the events around the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodha in India in December 1992. As he watches, Jinnah observes, “I always thought British Raj would give way to Ram Raj.” The footage of the

\(^{563}\) Ibid, 339.

\(^{564}\) Ibid.

\(^{565}\) Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
destruction of the Babri Masjid is used in the film to prove Jinnah’s prophetic wariness that the “safety and dignity” of “the Muslims of India,” would not be guaranteed by Congress in undivided India.

The inclusion of the first quote in the film confirms the portrayal of Jinnah which has been built throughout the story; Jinnah is a modern, liberal, good Muslim. This depiction of Jinnah coupled with the aforementioned quote is deployed in the film to advocate for a specific political vision of Pakistan, that is, as a nation-state based on a modern and liberal version of Islam. This vision is legitimized in both the film and for the audience of the film, through the figure of Jinnah as the father of the nation.

However, Wolpert writes quite a different story in Jinnah of Pakistan. He notes that this was not a prepared speech; Jinnah was speaking extempore. Here, Wolpert reads Jinnah as “troubled” and “disoriented.” He writes that this was “an uncharacteristic troubled monologue of reflection, in which, for “the first time,” Jinnah “openly challenged his own judgment, wondering out loud if it might not have been correct, sensing perhaps that the worst part of the dream — the true tragic nightmare of partition was about to begin.”

Wolpert’s account is not of a leader who is control, who has wisdom and foresight. On pages 337 to 340, Wolpert’s Jinnah is almost closer to Ayesha Jalal’s depiction than Wolpert’s own thus far. This is a Jinnah who has been caught off-guard by the reality of partition and the creation of Pakistan. This is a Jinnah who cannot quite believe what he has wrought, what has

566 Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
568 Ibid, 338.
569 Ibid, 340.
570 Ibid, 338.
571 Ibid.
572 Ibid.
573 Ayesha Jalal, introduction to The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1-5.
happened and what is happening in 1947. There is an eerie, emotional resonance here with Jalal’s assertion that Pakistan was an idea Jinnah never gave definition to, geographically or epistemologically.\(^{574}\)

Wolpert names the second quote as “a remarkable reversal,”\(^{575}\) as though Jinnah “had been transformed overnight once again into the old 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity’ that Sarojini Naidu loved.”\(^{576}\) I read this “remarkable reversal” as a sign of what constantly haunted Jinnah, that is, the absence of a cohesive genealogical separation\(^{577}\) of “Muslim” and “Indian” which he himself never resolved. Between the lines of the second quotation are “the living traces”\(^{578}\) of the failure of that genealogical disarticulation. Wolpert never addresses the construction of an entity known as “the Muslims of India,”\(^{579}\) but these “echoes and murmurs”\(^{580}\) cannot be evaded. This is illustrated in Wolpert’s own bafflement as he wonders about Jinnah: “What was he talking about? Had he simply forgotten where he was? Had the cyclone of events so disoriented him that he was arguing the opposition’s brief? Was he arguing for a united India - on the eve of Pakistan?”\(^{581}\)

Wolpert’s words also intimate a haunting to be: “Was he pleading for a united India - on the eve of Pakistan - before those hundreds of thousands of terrified innocents were slaughtered,

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\(^{574}\) Ibid, 4.


\(^{576}\) Ibid.


fleeing their homes, their fields, their ancestral villages and running into an eternity of oblivion or a refugee camp in a strange land?\footnote{Ibid.}

This haunting to be is not only retrospective from 1984 when \textit{Jinnah of Pakistan} was published; it was present for Jinnah on August 11, 1947. This is what the fact of the ghost of Jinnah in the film inadvertently unveils about nationalist narratives: that the violences of partition were inevitable and predictable. This inevitability is part of the excess which nationalist narratives cannot contain, which is revealed in the very moment a film about the founding father of Pakistan is pivoted on a ghost who must return to the past to justify the creation of Pakistan. This excess cannot be contained even by so sympathetic a biographer as Wolpert. Wolpert’s Jinnah is already haunted by the ghosts of “those hundreds of thousands terrified innocents,” who would be “slaughtered, fleeing their homes, their fields, their ancestral villages and running to an eternity of oblivion or a refugee camp in a strange land.”\footnote{Ibid.} The future ghosts were already there on August 11, 1947, in Karachi,\footnote{Ibid, 337-340.} as harbingers of both those who would never reach Karachi and those who would never be able to return.\footnote{Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, \textit{The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 19-76.}

These future ghosts must be recuperated by nationalist narratives of Pakistan because they are part of the existential doubt within the origin story and futurity of Pakistan. The film “Jinnah” attempts to do this through the ghost of Jinnah who is made corporeal to receive forgiveness and salutation from a group of refugees at the moment of partition in August 1947. Yet the fact that the image of these refugees cheering for the founding father transforms into a black and white photograph of the crowd in Lahore in 1946 speaks to how they have been constructed as symbols rather than real people precisely for the justification of Pakistan in the
origin story. The very fact that this scene is about not only forgiveness but celebration, and that it is the last scene of the film, gives away the “seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities,”\textsuperscript{586} which are the anxiety and the doubt about the “telos of partition”\textsuperscript{587} and the creation of Pakistan.

Pakistan Zindabad

In his address to the first meeting of Pakistan’s constituent assembly on August 11, 1947, the Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah stated:

\begin{quote}
A division had to take place. On both sides, in Hindustan and Pakistan, there are sections of people who may not agree with it, who may not like it, but in my judgment there was no other solution and I am sure future history will record its verdict in favor of it.\textsuperscript{588}
\end{quote}

I argue that the film “Jinnah” as a cultural product functions as a “verdict in favor”\textsuperscript{589} of Jinnah’s judgment that, “there was no other solution”\textsuperscript{590} other than the partition of India. The film is a reaffirmation of Pakistani nationalism, yet what haunts the film is a failure of precisely this reaffirmation, twinned in both narrative and cultural components.

“Jinnah” was commissioned by the government of Pakistan in celebration of Pakistan’s fiftieth anniversary.\textsuperscript{591} It was also popularly perceived as an answer to Richard Attenborough’s film “Gandhi”\textsuperscript{592} in which the figure of Jinnah is represented as an elitist, arrogant, and stubborn politician. This immediately points to an explicit political purpose of the film, which is a

\textsuperscript{587} Ayesha Jalal, preface to the paperback edition of \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xvi.
\textsuperscript{589} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{590} Ibid.
nationalist version of the place of Jinnah in the history of South Asia. More specifically, it is about a Pakistani nationalist version of Jinnah’s position in the politics of the partition of India in 1947 and through this, a justification for the creation of Pakistan.

The anxiety and doubt about the father of the nation and the origin story of Pakistan is revealed not only by how explicit the political purpose of the film is, but also that the film as a product was positioned as an answer to “Gandhi.” This reveals the Pakistani feelings behind the commissioning of the film as an answer to “Gandhi,” which are pride, offense, and defensiveness. Ironically, it is precisely this positioning of the film as a cultural product opposite “Gandhi” which undoes Pakistan’s origin story as one that can be separated from India. It is the anxiety about this separation, how easily it can be undone, which is manifest in this context of the film’s production.

“Jinnah” was made by British-Pakistani filmmaker Jamil Dehlavi. The original version of the film is in English, rather than Urdu. These two factors of the context of production indicate who the intended primary audience for the film was. The Pakistani-identified audience was urban, economically privileged, English-speaking and transnationally mobile, including diasporic Pakistanis. The film was also intended for non-Pakistani audiences precisely as a defense of Pakistan on the international stage.

This configures the film itself as a cultural performance as much as the narrative told in it. This is emphasized by the fact that a British-Pakistani filmmaker was brought in for this

593 Ibid.
Dehlavi’s identity as a diasporic and English-speaking Pakistani speaks to the kind of circulation the film was intended to have. The intended audience indicates the kind of the film “Jinnah” was supposed to be. In other words, a very particular image of Pakistan was intended for international circulation. It is this international component which indicates who the figure of Jinnah as depicted in such a film was supposed to represent, that is, a specific demographic of an urban, economically and socially privileged, and transnationally mobile Pakistani subject-citizen. This is, in fact, an arguably more accurate reflection of Jinnah himself. Stanley Wolpert’s biography of Jinnah makes it clear that he was an urbane, wealthy, and transnationally mobile, Anglicized South Asian man. For example, Wolpert notes Jinnah’s sophisticated sartorial sense, and the wealth it required to be maintained. Jinnah’s social and political circles in both England and India consisted of the upper echelons of society, as did his geographic locations. Jinnah’s house in Bombay was located in the fashionable and private district of Malabar Hill. Jinnah and his wife Ruttie’s favorite hotel was Maidens, which Wolpert describes as “The perfect mixture of imperial elegance and British privacy.”

How Anglicized Jinnah was is also an important component of the controversy around Jamil Dehlavi’s decision to cast two English actors, Christopher Lee (protagonist) and Richard Lintern (the younger version of Jinnah in the scenes set in 1916-1920), in the title role. Lee in particular was a considered a controversial choice. The main and explicitly stated objection

601 Ibid, 9.
602 Ibid, 159-160.
603 Ibid, 53, 159-160.
605 Owen Bennett-Jones, “Jinnah film overcomes doubt,” BBC South Asia, June 2, 2000
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/775267.stm
was that this was not a dignified enough choice since Lee is famous for playing Count Dracula. However, it was also suggested that this choice was offensive because Lee is British.\textsuperscript{606} In interviews, Jamil Dehlavi has hinted that this was why the Pakistani government withdrew funding from the project.\textsuperscript{607}

While the politics of race and nationality of a white Englishman playing a South Asian man are real, there is an added nuance here of an odd sense that Dehlavi’s decision makes sense in the context of how Anglicized Jinnah was. Indeed, Christopher Lee bears a striking physical resemblance to Jinnah: tall and thin, with sharp cheekbones and an iron reserve, and impeccable manners borne of social and economic privilege.

However, the film as a Pakistani nationalist project cannot admit the Jinnah’s social and economic privilege within the British Raj in India, or much how this privilege shaped his politics and identity. His primary and most visible identity has to be constructed as Muslim connected in a genealogical straight line\textsuperscript{608} to Pakistani. The ways in which this is genealogy is undone speak precisely to how these compartmentalizations of categories of identity do not work.\textsuperscript{609} Jinnah’s subject position as an upper-class, Anglicized Indian cannot be willed away, and is present in the film. As I discuss earlier, this is indicated in the film’s original version being in English and the choice by the Pakistani government to commission a British-Pakistani director to make this film. Dehlavi’s casting decision, then, is an unintentional and ironic reflection of the “articulated categories”\textsuperscript{610} of identity Jinnah embodied. It is these inescapable manifestations of the

\textsuperscript{606} “Troubled Jinnah film Opens,” \textit{BBC News World: South Asia}, September 26, 1998 \hfill \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/180736.stm}
\textsuperscript{609} Anne McClintock, \textit{Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest} (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 61.
\textsuperscript{610} Ibid.
production of his identity, which reveals the intended audience and the demographic represented precisely in the specificity of their location in the origin story of Pakistan.

This is complicated further when one considers that the prototype of Pakistani represented in the film are mahajirs, that is, those Indian Muslims who journeyed to Pakistan between 1947 and 1952. Mahajir was a category deployed by the government of Pakistan to account for these communities, but it did not account for Indian Muslims already living in the lands which had been collated to create Pakistan. Neither was the term applied to Indian Muslims who chose to go to India from these lands during 1947 and 1952.

I have discussed the politics of the identity of mahajir in detail earlier in this chapter. Here, I am concerned with how such a depiction of Pakistani identity produces fissures in the intended Pakistani-identified audience for the film. If a film about the father of the nation only depicts mahajirs as Pakistanis, how then is Jinnah to be ideologically claimed by Pakistanis who do not identify as mahajir?

A telling example of the geopolitical and ideological problems this encapsulates is the social and political upheaval in Balochistan. Journalist Mahvish Ahmed writes that, for Balochistan, “Jinnah is seen as a man who ordered the Pakistan Army to annex Balochistan and

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613 Ibid, 66-68.

Ayesha Jalal’s analysis of Jinnah’s politicking with the upper echelons of provincial political leadership\footnote{Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 35-207.} resonates here, as Ahmad notes that:

\begin{quote}
Only a group of British-appointed tribal \textit{sardars} in Balochistan’s northern Pashtun belt agreed to join Pakistan in a July 1947 conference, where neither the Khan of Kalat—then the ruler of the Kalat state in present-day Balochistan—nor its \textit{sardars} were included. The only body, similar to a representative assembly was the two-chamber Kalat Assembly. It declared that Kalat did not want to join the new state.\footnote{Mahvish Ahmad, “(Mis)Understanding Balochistan,” \textit{Tanqeed: A Magazine for Politics and Culture}, June 2013, http://www.tanqeed.org/2013/06/misunderstanding-balochistan/}
\end{quote}

Jinnah as the founding father of Pakistan is not a figure of celebration and pride for all Pakistanis. This has everything to do with the complications of ideologically, politically, and geographically defining Pakistan, which Jinnah never did.\footnote{Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 35-240.} These contestations are simultaneously veiled and exacerbated through the depiction of Pakistani only through the category of mahajirs.\footnote{Aamir Mufti, \textit{Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture} (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 221-227.}

This sleight of hand is also present in the earlier discussion about the film’s original language being English. The position of English in South Asia as a language of class privilege\footnote{Stanley Wolpert, \textit{Jinnah of Pakistan} (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 9-160.} through the history of the British Raj in India almost masks the problem of language as a mark of identity and belonging\footnote{Aamir Mufti, epilogue to \textit{Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture} (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 244-262.} embedded in this representative collation of Pakistani with

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Mahvish Ahmad, “(Mis)Understanding Balochistan,” \textit{Tanqeed: A Magazine for Politics and Culture}, June 2013, http://www.tanqeed.org/2013/06/misunderstanding-balochistan/}
  \item \footnote{Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 35-207.}
  \item \footnote{Mahvish Ahmad, “(Mis)Understanding Balochistan,” \textit{Tanqeed: A Magazine for Politics and Culture}, June 2013, http://www.tanqeed.org/2013/06/misunderstanding-balochistan/}
  \item \footnote{Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 35-240.}
  \item \footnote{Aamir Mufti, \textit{Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture} (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 221-227.}
  \item \footnote{Stanley Wolpert, \textit{Jinnah of Pakistan} (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 9-160.}
  \item \footnote{Aamir Mufti, epilogue to \textit{Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture} (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 244-262.}
\end{itemize}
mahajir.\textsuperscript{625} This problem is that of Urdu as the language popularly identified with mahajirs\textsuperscript{626} and the language Jinnah declared as the national language of Pakistan, was not the language of the majority of the nation-state, especially across the 1000-mile stretch of Indian territory\textsuperscript{627} in what was East Pakistan, (now Bangladesh) where the dominant language was Bengali. The choice of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan is a powerful symbol of the conflict between West Pakistan and East Pakistan, which resulted in the war of 1971 and the cessation of East Pakistan to become Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{628}

There is a further complication here because while English can be positioned as a sleight of hand here, one cannot ignore the politics of English in Pakistan either. As I noted before, English is primarily the language of class privilege, and it is not widely spoken in Pakistan. That it was Jinnah’s own primary language, especially as a political language, speaks to his specific location in India and in Pakistan. The social and economic privileges marked by Jinnah’s position as an English-speaker are manifested in his politics in the creation of Pakistan. As Ayesha Jalal documents, Jinnah politicked with landlords, political elites, and religious figures\textsuperscript{629} rather than “the will and want of billions of people”\textsuperscript{630} that he claimed to represent as the president of the Muslim League.


\textsuperscript{626} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{627} Naveeda Khan, introduction to \textit{Beyond Crisis: Re-evaluating Pakistan}, edited by Naveeda Khan (New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2010), 1-28.


\textsuperscript{629} Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 35-240.

This contradiction in and of social and political representation is present in contemporary Pakistan through evocations of Jinnah himself. For example, in the 2013 national elections, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf leader Imran Khan declared Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Mohammed Iqbal as his twin inspirations.\footnote{Pankaj Mishra, “Imran Khan must be doing something right,” New York Times, August 16, 2012, accessed March 7, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/19/magazine/pakistan-imran-khan-must-be-doing-something-right.html?pagewanted=all\&_r=0} There is a darkly humorous and bitterly ironic historical echo between Khan and Jinnah in this evocation, which reveals the ambiguities and contradictions in both these figures of Pakistani nationalism. For example, Khan’s emulation as president of PTI of Jinnah as president of the Muslim League is that, while claiming to stand for integrity and honesty, Khan admitted into his party Pakistani politicians\footnote{“Javed Hashmi of PML-N Joins PTI,” Dawn News, December 24, 2011, http://www.dawn.com/news/682897/javed-hashmi-of-pml-n-joins-the-pti} who served in the administrations of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif.\footnote{“Profile: Shah Mahmood Qureshi, from PML to PPP to PTI,” The Express Tribune, November 27, 2011, http://tribune.com.pk/story/298471/profile-shah-mehmood-qureshi-from-pml-to-ppp-to-pti/} In the 1990s, Bhutto and Sharif led some of the most violent, incompetent, and corrupt governments in Pakistan’s controversial democratic history.

In some ways, Imran Khan’s evocation of Mohammed Ali Jinnah is perhaps obvious, since Khan’s own Pakistani nationalism is based on many of the same ambiguities and contradictions Jinnah embodies. As Sadia Abbas demonstrates in her article “Itineraries of Conversion: Judaic Paths to a Muslim Pakistan,” Khan is as unable to acknowledge the multiple locations through which his identities as Muslim and as Pakistani are produced as Jinnah was.639

According to Sir Christopher Lee, “Jinnah” was very well received in Pakistan, and was shown in various festivals in cities such as Cairo, Houston, New York, Los Angeles, and London.640 However, it did not get picked up for wider theatrical release by studios in the US and the UK.641 Lee opines that this was because it portrayed a Muslim leader who does not conform to narratives of terrorist or fundamentalist.642 While this is quite credible, another reason may be the time of the film’s release, which was 1998. In May 1998, Pakistan tested nuclear weapons in retaliation to India’s nuclear tests.643 There was a sharp and predictable contrast to how the government of Nawaz Sharif portrayed this, and how other nation-states reacted.644 While the US, Japan, Britain, Australia, and NATO condemned the tests and threatened Pakistan with sanctions,645 Prime Minister Sharif declared that it was India’s tests that made Pakistan’s “inevitable,”646 and that May 28 was “history in the making.”647 He also stated

644 Ibid.
646 Ibid.
that, “We have proved to the world that we would not accept what was dictated to us,”\textsuperscript{648} so that the point of the nuclear tests was articulated as a defiance of international injustice and hypocrisy toward Pakistan, especially in (inescapable) relation to India.\textsuperscript{649}

1998, then, was not a good year in which international film studios, especially those located in the US or the UK, were going to distribute a film celebrating Pakistani nationalism. In a way, it was the transnational and geopolitical discourses that constructed Pakistani as terrorist and/or fundamentalist,\textsuperscript{650} which interrupted the international circulation of this narrative of Pakistani through the figure of Jinnah who was a Muslim man who was neither.

Of course, terms such as terrorist\textsuperscript{651} and fundamentalist\textsuperscript{652} always historically\textsuperscript{653} and geopolitically\textsuperscript{654} located. Therefore, they have as much as to do with Pakistani as Jinnah does. Such terms circulate in tension with other terms such as liberal and modern\textsuperscript{655} within the same sphere of the modern consciousness and problematic of political Islam, which, in and through Pakistan, is made territorial and national.\textsuperscript{656}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{647} “World Fury at Pakistan’s Nuclear Tests,” \textit{BBC News On This Day}, May 28, 1998, \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/28/newsid_2495000/2495045.stm}
\item \textsuperscript{648} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{650} “Christopher Lee talks about his favorite role,” YouTube video 3:46. Posted by “Smitrof,” June 27, 2007, \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CE_1ofnBFos&index=36&list=PL28D21D2521E70116}
\item \textsuperscript{652} Mahmood Mamdani, introduction to \textit{Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror} (New York: Random House Inc, 2005), 3-16.
\item \textsuperscript{654} Joseph Massad, introduction to \textit{Desiring Arabs} (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1-50.
\item \textsuperscript{656} Veena Das, foreword to \textit{Beyond Crisis: Re-evaluating Pakistan}, edited by Naveeda Khan (London, New York, and New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), xv-xix.
\end{itemize}
Although “Jinnah” was not picked up by any major film studio, the film is available in two parts on YouTube. The first part of the film has 102,112 views\textsuperscript{657} and the second has 27,440\textsuperscript{658}. The user account I watched it through is titled JinnahofPakistan. This account has uploaded other videos about Jinnah as well, and is networked with similar users, who upload and promote nationalist videos about Jinnah and Pakistan. That most of this activity is in direct confrontation with the circulation of Indian nationalist narratives is evidenced by the viewer comments on “Jinnah.” Most of these comments comprise of vitriolic diatribes in defense of the demand for Pakistan predictably twinned with blaming India for Pakistan’s current problems, versus comments blaming Muslims for dividing the country and Pakistan for being the base for terrorists who attack India. All of these comments on nationalism are articulated through religious identifications, so that the latter are anti-Hindu while the former are anti-Muslim.

If any further proof was necessary for the gendered\textsuperscript{659} and sexual\textsuperscript{660} epistemology of the modern nation-state,\textsuperscript{661} these YouTube comments can be submitted as evidence. The vitriolic anti-Pakistan and anti-India quarrels are consistently couched in gendered and sexual insults. These insults are gendered and sexualized in two ways, the misogynistic and the homophobic. Both components mark the speakers as nationalist through heteronormative masculinity.\textsuperscript{662}

The production and reproduction of the modern nation-state as heteronormative and masculine, necessarily anchored in misogyny and homophobia, has been illustrated through the


work of transnational feminist, women of color, and queer of color scholars. Veena Das and Urvashi Butalia have explored how the heteronormative masculine nation-state requires the metaphorical and literal body of the woman as the grounds upon which contestations of nation and nationalism occur. These contestations over securing and affirming the nation-state are between men.

Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, and Jasbir Puar have illustrated the epistemological and ontological resonances between masculinity and the nation-state through heterosexuality as a biopolitical technology of power. Homophobia is a referent to xenophobia in the production and maintenance of the sovereignty of a heterosexual masculine nation-state. Both are biopolitical constructions that must be reiterated to exist and speak to a profound anxiety that someone will transgress the borders of an already constituted and coherent self.

The intersection of these anchors of the heteropatriarchal nation-state in South Asia reveals precisely the anxieties about the origin stories of distinct nations in South Asia, which

663 Ibid, 18-37.
673 Ashish Nandy, An Ambiguous Journey to the City: The Village and Some Other Odd Ruins of the Self in the Indian Imagination (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 129.

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may claim justified territorialization. The straight line\textsuperscript{675} in the origin story of the nation-state which the father figure embodies is unstable\textsuperscript{676} and shadowed.\textsuperscript{677} This is why the lines as borders between nation-states in South Asia are unstable and shadowed, because of the very claims of identity upon which they are based.\textsuperscript{678}

\textsuperscript{676} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{678} Ashish Nandy, \textit{An Ambiguous Journey to the City: The Village and Some Other Odd Ruins of the Self in the Indian Imagination} (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 130.
Bibliography


Chapter 3: Even If It Feels So Good?
Fathers, Sons, and Everything In Between in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*

*A Case of Exploding Mangoes* is Mohammed Hanif’s debut novel, published to international critical acclaim in 2008. It is a witty, lively, and sharply satirical telling of real historical events leading up to the death of General Zia-ul-Haq on 17 August, 1988 in a plane crash. On board the president’s plane with General Zia were the US Ambassador Arnold Raphel, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Akhtar, and eight other generals from all three branches of the Pakistan military. General Zia’s death ended his eleven-year military dictatorship of Pakistan during which the country became a key political and logistical ally of the United States of America in the CIA’s proxy war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. This war lasted from 1979 to 1989. It was part of the Cold War as it was fought between the USA and USSR across the continents of Asia and Africa.

The mystery of why Pak One crashed and exploded remains unsolved. There are numerous suspects, including the CIA, the ISI, and the KGB. In an interview with NPR in 2012, Mohammed Hanif stated that the impossibility of solving this mystery as a journalist is what prompted him to solve it in fiction. Hanif’s solution is a darkly comedic convergence of several assassins and causes of death, each of which occurs simultaneously within the space of twenty minutes on August 17, 1988.

One cause of death is poison from a krait on the tip of a sword with which General Zia is scratched during a silent drill inspection. The sword is wielded by Under Officer Ali Shigri, who wants to assassinate the president because he believes General Zia ordered the murder of his own

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father, Colonel Quli Shigri. The poison begins to work before Pak One takes off: “Taking his first step on the red carpet and chaperoning a dozen confused generals towards Pak One, General Zia feels the first pang of an intense, dry pain in his lower abdomen” (Hanif, 306-307). This “sudden surge in his blood circulation” (307) awakens the second cause of death: tapeworms, which have caused bleeding from General Zia’s rectum before. On August 17, 1988, the tapeworms attack the liver first, then make a tunnel in his oesophagus and continue “moving up and up. Their seven-year life cycle will be cut down in twenty minutes, but while they are alive, they will eat well” (ibid).

While the krait’s poison and the tapeworms eat away at General Zia’s insides, a fourth cause of the impending doom is in flight outside Pak One, a crow who is accidentally “sucked into a side duct” (317) of the Hercules C-130. However, this is not accident but fate, since the crow is carrying a curse put on General Zia by Zainab. Zainab is a blind rape survivor whom the Pakistani judicial system has failed. Zainab cannot identify her rapists, prove “that she was a virgin before this horrible crime was committed,” (155) nor produce “four male Muslims of sound character who have witnessed the crime” (ibid). These are legal requirements given to General Zia by “ninety-year-old Qadi, his man in Mecca, who had retired as a judge of the Saudi Sharia court thirty years ago and since then had never missed a prayer in the Khana Kaaba” (153). Since Zainab cannot fulfill these requirements, she is accused of “unlawful fornication” (149) and sentenced to death by stoning.

It is after a protest by a young woman during his Rehabilitation Programme for Widows and a sharply critical article in the New York Times about this case, that General Zia has Zainab disappeared from the city jail to a secret prison underneath the Lahore Fort. The city jail superintendent tells Zainab sadly, “Your picture was printed in America. Apparently, the orders
have come from the very top to take you to a place where you can’t give interviews” (187). This final act of cruelty and injustice is why blind Zainab, “who had listened in silence when a lecherous judge had sentenced her to death, she who had not given her tormentors the satisfaction of a scream, she who had spent her life thanking God and forgiving His men for what they did to her: Zainab screamed and Zainab cursed” (188). Her curse is for General Zia: “May worms eat the innards of the person who is taking me away from my home. May his children not see his face in death” (189). It is this curse the crow carries into the side duct of Pak One on August 17, 1988.

At the time of Zainab’s disappearance to the Lahore Fort, Ali Shigri is also imprisoned in the same underground prison on suspicion of plotting to kill the president. The occupant of the cell next to him is another would-be assassin: the Communist secretary-general of the All-Pakistan Sweepers’ Union. Before he started organizing the sweepers, the secretary-general was a mango farmer who organized the mango orchards owners all over the country. Although the secretary-general is killed by the head of ISI, his death is the catalyst for the cause of the explosion of Pak One: explosives hidden in a crate of mangoes loaded onto Pak One as a gift to General Zia from the Pakistan Mango Farmers’ Cooperative. When the plane crashes, the crate explodes.

The plane crashes because the pilots die when VX gas in the air-freshening tube is released through the air-conditioning ducts. The lavender air-freshener has been replaced with VX gas on the orders of General Akhtar, General Zia’s second-in-command, who wants to be president of Pakistan. Due to either unforeseen circumstances or divine judgement, General Akhtar ends up on Pak One with General Zia on August 17, 1988. He therefore orders that the air-conditioning be switched off. However, when the crow gets sucked into the side duct of the
aircraft, the pilot “puts the aircraft into a shallow dive” (117). This causes the pressure to drop and the air-conditioning is switched on automatically. The air-conditioning ducts “hiss into life” (318) and release the VX gas. VX gas “takes two minutes to paralyze, another minute to kill” (ibid).

In this chapter, I read this multiplicity of assassins as excess. I argue that excess as a motif in the novel represents those lives that exceed “the categorical structure of the nation-state,”680 or those terms of legibility681 through which life is configured. Here, excess denotes those lives that are too much for the categories and alignments682 of identity deployed by the nation-state.

I focus on three characters: protagonist-narrator Ali Shigri, his lover, Cadet Obaid-ul-Allah, and his father, Colonel Quli Shigri. Ali is one of General Zia-ul-Haq’s assassins. He is motivated by a desire for vengeance for his father's murder which, he believes, was ordered by General Zia. This was because Colonel Shigri burned twenty-five million US dollars in circulation between the Pakistan government, the CIA, and the Afghan mujahideen in defiance of the necrocapitalist structure of the war.

I focus on Obaid and Colonel Shigri because Ali’s narration is anchored in his relationships with them. Both are consistent threads through Ali’s narration. Ali’s memory of the night before his father was murdered results in his plot to assassinate General Zia. His relationship with Obaid is what prompts Obaid to try a stop Ali from carrying out his plan, causing them both to be disappeared and imprisoned by the ISI. Both Obaid and Colonel Shigri

represent the ways in which Ali, who ostensibly embodies the perfect soldier and son of the nation-state, is also a traitor marked by what Puar and Rai call “a certain queer monstrosity.”

I draw on the work of Michel Foucault, Achilles Mbembe, and Giorgio Agamben to argue that through the military dictatorship of General Zia, the form of sovereignty enacted by the nation-state of Pakistan is necropolitical. This sovereignty is embodied by the figure of the father in the epistemological structure of the heterosexual nation-state. The figure of the soldier is the figure of bare life, which is life included in the nation-state through “its capacity to be killed.” I argue that sexuality is deployed as a necropolitical regime of truth to produce the figure of the soldier through heterosexual masculinity. This production is located within the necrocapitalist context of the war in Afghanistan.

I explore Obaid, Colonel Shigri, and Ali as figures who embody different kinds of excess that the nation-state cannot contain. I argue that Obaid embodies sexual excess and Colonel Shigri embodies emotional excess, both of which are triangulated in Ali. Since the military regime configures Pakistan as a necropolitical state, the containment of this excess takes the form of death. Following the work of Puar and Rai, I use the figure of the monster to discuss

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the figure of the traitor. Obaid, Colonel Shigri, and Ali are each marked as traitors in different yet interconnected ways. Each of them represents an excess of life that cannot be managed by the nation-state. I argue that in a necropolitical nation-state heterosexuality is predicated upon death. Life that cannot be contained is therefore queerness as excess. Each of them embodies queerness as an excess of life that cannot be contained within the “categorical structure of the nation-state.”

The Kids Are Not Alright

_A Case of Exploding Mangoes_ narrated in both first and third person. The first person narration is by the protagonist, Ali Shigri. Ali is an officer in the Pakistan Air Force and son of Colonel Quli Shigri. Ali believes General Zia ordered the death of his father after Colonel Shigri burned twenty-five million US dollars in circulation between the CIA, the Pakistani government, and the Afghan mujahideen during the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. His father’s death is the driving force behind Ali’s actions, and he narrates his memory of the night of Colonel Shigri’s murder by the Inter-Intelligence Services (ISI) in bits and pieces throughout the novel.

Interwoven with Ali’s narration are the chapters written in third person by Mohammed Hanif as the author. They are set in the same temporal context as Ali’s story so that all events in the novel occur simultaneously. The third person narration concerns the other characters in the book, including General Muhammed Zia-ul-Haq; General Akhtar; Major Kiyani; Arnold Raphel; the First Lady of Pakistan; and Osama Bin Laden. Most of the chapters are about General Zia.

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The prologue is narrated by Ali Shigri but does not have a temporal location in the context of the events of the novel. In other words, the reader does not know how long after August 17, 1988, this prologue is set. It does, however, contain the time of the beginning of Ali’s story: “My punishment had started exactly two months and seventeen days before the crash.” Since the crash happened on August 17, 1988, the date of Ali’s punishment would be May 31, 1988. General Zia’s story within the novel, narrated in third person, begins before morning prayers on 15 June 1988. Although General Zia and Ali’s stories do not begin on the same day, they overlap and coincide later in the novel.

Ali’s adventures in plots to assassinate heads of state begin on the morning of May 31, 1988, when he wakes to find that his roommate, fellow soldier, and lover Obaid, is not there:

when I woke up at reveille and, without opening my eyes, reached out to pull back Obaid’s blanket, a habit picked up from four years of sharing the same room with him. It was the only way to wake him up. My hand caressed an empty bed.*693

Obaid is gone and, as Ali predicts wryly, “the buggers would obviously suspect me” because “You can blame our men in uniform for anything, but you can never accuse them of being imaginative” (7).

The first chapter of the novel is narrated by Ali. It is about his interrogation by the 2nd OIC about Cadet Obaid’s whereabouts and Ali as his “clever-dick collaborator” (22). Through Ali’s chapters, the reader learns that Obaid tried to steal a plane to fly toward the Army House. This was a diversion Obaid created, hoping to cause a security alert so that the president’s inspection would be canceled. This was because Obaid knew of Ali’s “silly plan” (256) to poison General Zia by scratching him with the tip of his ceremonial sword polished with poison from a

krait. Obaid tells Ali, “And then at least I could talk to you. I would at least have the time to drill sense into your head” (257).

Things do not, of course, go according to Obaid’s plan. The ISI learns about the plan through an American drill commander at the PAF Academy, Lieutenant Bannon (who is, unsurprisingly, later revealed to be a CIA agent). Obaid is spirited away for interrogation (read: torture) at a secret prison underneath the Lahore Fort by the ISI. Ali is also picked up later as his friend and possible accomplice, by the second-in-command of the ISI, Major Kiyani and taken to the same prison. While Obaid is subjected to torture, Ali is subject to imprisonment and the threat of torture due to the status and respect accorded to his father, Colonel Shigri.

Ali and Obaid are released on the orders of General Beg, when he is appointed the new head of the ISI by General Zia. The former head of the ISI, who ordered their arrests, was General Akhtar. Obaid guesses that they have been released because “We were General Akhtar’s suspects; General Beg will find his own” (264). This theory is made murkier by Ali’s speculation that they were released because both General Akhtar and General Beg want Ali to carry out his plan to assassinate General Zia. This is confirmed later in the novel on the fateful day of August 17, 1988 when Ali does indeed carry out his plan.

So Many Histories, So Little Time

In a 2012 interview with NPR, Mohammed Hanif noted that the idea for A Case of Exploding Mangoes came from his failed attempts to solve the mystery of the death of General Zia-ul-Haq.
This was because of “layers and layers and layers of deception and cover-ups to cover the other cover-ups.” Therefore, Hanif decided to unravel the mystery in fiction.

This perfect murder mystery of why Pak One crashed and exploded remains unsolved. Everyone is a suspect, from the CIA, KGB, and ISI, to Murtaza Bhutto, the son of former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, whom Zia had hanged in 1979. Moreover, not only did General Zia die in the crash, but so did the US Ambassador to Pakistan and Afghanistan, Arnold Raphel; the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff Committee, General Akhtar; and Pakistani generals from all three branches of the military. Such an illustrious list of both the dead and the suspects, alongside the mysterious circumstances, marks the novel as an intriguing story.

The historical context of the novel is also the stuff of spy thrillers (nonfiction, fiction, or both). *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* is set in 1988 during the Cold War, near the end of the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, which lasted from 1979 to 1989. The Saudi Arabian, British, and Pakistani governments were the USA’s major allies. The US, Saudi, and Pakistani governments organized guerilla fighters called the mujahideen to fight in Afghanistan. The mujahideen consisted of Afghan, Uzbek, Tajik, Pakistani, and Saudi nationals. They were funded and supplied mainly by the USA and Saudi Arabia, while the Pakistani military and military intelligence (Inter-Intelligence Services or the ISI) were the point of contact, exchange, and informational and logistical support. Pakistani soldiers were also often in battle alongside the mujahideen.

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In the prologue, Ali’s silent obituary for General Akhtar is “one of the ten men standing between the Free World and the Red Army” (4). This is a direct reference to the “ideological formations of necrocapitalist practices”696 deployed in this context, which were the discourses of the Cold War twinned with, and coded through, the discourses of a holy war, articulated in the vocabulary of Islam. The shadowy political economies and ideological discourses of the war machines697 now operating in and from Afghanistan are genealogically located in this war.

The ideological framework of this geopolitical rivalry was a polarized discourse of social, philosophical, political, and economic modes of nation and state; for example, capitalism and democracy versus communism and dictatorship.

When the Soviet Union invaded and occupied Afghanistan in 1979, Pakistan, under the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq, aligned with the USA, and became the logistical base for the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan. This is explicitly stated as such in the novel: “The CIA was running the biggest covert operation against the Soviets from Pakistan since their last biggest covert operation against the Soviets somewhere else” (78). This involved not only training the mujahideen and the circulation of arms and funds, but also the opening of the borders between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Hanif deconstructs the narratives of this proxy war in a vivid and amusing example of a Kabul/Texas-themed barbecue on July 4, hosted by US ambassador Arnold Raphel and his wife, Nancy, at their “eighteen-bedroom ambassadorial mansion” (227). Although Nancy Raphel “had planned an evening of culturally sensitive barbecue,” what “she got was a row of small carcasses

slowly rotating on iron skewers, her guests cueing up with their Stars and Stripes paper plates, pretending they were guests at some tribal feast” (229).

These guests included “many Americans decked out like Afghan warlords,” (Hanif 2008, 228) the wife of the French ambassador “dressed like an Uzbek bride,” (229) while “the local CIA chief, Chuck Coogan, one of the first guests to arrive, sported a Karakul cap” (227). Then came the US cultural attache “wearing an Afghan burka, one of those flowing shuttlecocks that she had tucked halfway over her head to reveal the plunging neckline of her shimmering turquoise dress” (ibid). Next to arrive are “a hippie couple draped in identical Afghan kilims that smelled as if they had been used to pack raw hashish,” and “Texan nurses wearing bangles up to their elbows and a military accountant from Ohio showing off his Red Army medal, most probably taken off the uniform of a dead Soviet soldier by the muj and sold to a junk shop” (ibid).

The theme Kabul/Texas points to the relationship between the US and Afghanistan, but the fact that this barbecue happens in Islamabad points to Pakistan as the geopolitical point in between. This triangulation confirms the nature of this war as a proxy war. It also represents the collapse of Afghanistan and Pakistan in terms of a patchwork of histories and geographies deployed interchangeably by the US in future narratives. Hanif’s wry descriptions of the costumes worn by the guests pretending they were “at some tribal feast” are a sharp criticism of the racialized nature of this war in an Other698 country (“The guests had decided to ignore the Texas part and gone all native for the evening” [227]), where going native signifies the legibility of Afghanistan through racist stereotypes. That the most absurd costumes are the ones worn by American guests and point to specifically American narratives of Afghanistan. These narratives

are also part of the racialized necrocapitalism as it operated in Afghanistan, as part of the political economy of the Cold War.

The “Texan nurses wearing bangles up to their elbows” and the US cultural attache in “an Afghan burka, one of those flowing shuttlecocks that she had tucked halfway over her head to reveal the plunging neckline of her shimmering turquoise dress,” are representations of how bangles and something called the Afghan burka were marked as exotic, precisely through the ways in which they are worn by American women: excess (“up to their elbows”), and removal from their sociopolitical meaning in the ways in which Afghan women wear them (“tucked halfway over her head to reveal the plunging neckline of her shimmering turquoise dress”). The bangles and “the Afghan burka” have been commodified here, consumed as exotic and exciting fashion accessories for guests who have “gone all native for the evening.” The term “gone all native” confirms this commodification through the clear reference to the ways in which European colonialism racialized colonized populations, one of which was the commodification of the stories, symbols, and cultural objects important to them. Such commodification involved the dislocation of these stories, signs, and objects from their context for consumption by European colonizers. This consumption marked not only the destruction of the sociopolitical and historical context that gave these things meaning to the communities to which they belonged. It also marked their incorporation into European histories according to a linear temporality in which colonized peoples were located in what Anne McClintock calls anachronistic space\(^699\) with Europe as the temporal point of civilization, progress, and humanity\(^700\).


This commodification is not only racialized, but also gendered so that Afghanistan is marked as both a racial and gendered Other. This is evident in the fact that it is bangles and “the Afghan burka” which are dislocated and commodified. Both the Texan nurses and the US cultural attache are American women, and their consumption of bangles and the Afghan burka as fashion accessories through excess and social dislocation marks them as modern. It is precisely the dislocation that marks Afghan women as located in anachronistic time.\footnote{701} This is why the connection between the war on terror and this proxy war in the 1980s as its predecessor is so important, because the discursive political economies of racial and gendered Othering through which the war on terror in Afghanistan was justified were located in this first war.

Moreover, the “Afghan burka, one of those flowing shuttlecocks” is also a sign of a gendered Other through the racialization of Islam. The burka has become the subject of a tiresomely racist discourse about the oppressed Muslim woman, who is always already not American\footnote{702}—she is often Afghan, Pakistani, or something called “Arab,” but always a universalized category of “Muslim.”\footnote{703} This narrative was vividly present in the USA’s justifications for the invasion of Afghanistan in 2003.\footnote{704} Hanif’s inclusion of it here serves as a reminder of the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s as part of the genealogy of these narratives, and their political economy.

\footnote{701} Anne McClintock, \textit{Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest} (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 40-42.
It is precisely in this context that Islam was deployed as rhetoric\textsuperscript{705} to construct the narrative of a holy war against the Soviet Union by the American, Saudi, and Pakistani governments. One example of this is Arnold Raphel’s offhand observation about Bill Casey, the director of the CIA:

Bill kept reminding everyone that he had the Russkis by their balls in Afghanistan. Bill was always telling his old chum Ronald Reagan that it was the Wild West all over again, that the Afghans were the cowboys with turbans and that they were kicking Soviet ass as it had never been kicked before\textsuperscript{706}

The ownership of the proxy war as an American war is marked first through Bill Casey’s insistence that, rather than the mujahideen, it was he who “had the Ruskies by their balls in Afghanistan.” Second, that the director of the CIA referred to the Afghan fighters as “cowboys in turbans” shows the ideological and political ownership claimed by the US over this war precisely through a necrocapitalist control—even though it was the mujahideen, Pakistani soldiers, and Afghan peoples at the frontline. It is because of the American funding and arming of the mujahideen that Bill Casey claims the power of narrative of this war.

It is, however, a narrative that does two things simultaneously. While the word “cowboys” incorporates Afghans into American mythologies so that Afghanistan becomes a mythical extension of the Wild West of the US, the word “turbans” simultaneously distances Americans from Afghans through racialization as an Other. Like the burka, the turban is also a marker of the racialization of Islam, but the “cowboys in turbans” were the war machines\textsuperscript{707} created by the USA. Islam was an ideological vocabulary to justify the war against the Soviet Union. This is also contained in the naming of the guerrilla fighters as the mujahideen.

\textsuperscript{706} Hanif, 2008: 78.
Mujahideen is an Arabic word, which means those who struggle in the way of God. It comes from the now over-determined and dangerously overused word “jihad,” which means “struggle in the way of God” in the Quran. Both words were deployed in the war in Afghanistan by the American, Saudi, and Pakistani governments to recruit guerilla fighters. This is the contemporary moment in which jihad came to denote an armed struggle articulated and justified in the vocabulary of Islam.

After the USA declared victory against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1989, the mujahideen divided into factions, according to political loyalties, religious affiliations, ethnic and linguistic differences, and international affiliations. The latter included politicking between Iran, India, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia (to name a few), all of whom were vying for political influence over each other through these proxy militant groups. These guerilla fighters transformed into a network of militant groups including what is now known as Al-Qaeda, the Afghan Taliban, and the Pakistan Taliban. Today, these networks include various sectarian militant organizations with political, ideological, material, and social affiliations with the aforementioned groups, such as Jaish-e-Mohammed, Jaish-e-Islam, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. These groups are responsible for violent attacks on Pakistani Hindus, Christians, and Muslim minority communities such as the Shia and Ahmadi peoples, in Pakistan. They have been responsible for attacks against the Pakistani military and state, including the June 2014 attack on Karachi Airport. These groups have also become part of the material and discursive fabric of opposition to the state by communities in the northern areas of Pakistan, who have always had contentious relationships with Pakistan as a nation-state. This is present in the province of Balochistan, where there is an ongoing resistance movement to social, political, and economic injustices by the central Pakistani government towards the people of Balochistan. This movement is being
brutally dealt with by the Pakistani military under the guise of a discursive collapse between this movement and militant groups across the border in Afghanistan.

If this sounds like too much, that’s because is too much. It is the too much or the excess built into the epistemological narrative of Pakistan as an “experiment with Muslim modernity, tied to national territory.” This aftermath of the war in Afghanistan represents the excesses—and their violent concretizations—built into “Muslim modernity, tied to national territory,” which Pakistan is now attempting to manage. Mohammed Hanif explores the beginning of this epistemology of excess and its concurrent violent manifestations under General Zia’s military regime in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*.

Queer of color critique provides a vocabulary for the analyses of how such excess is simultaneously marked by and produced through, categories of gender, sexuality, race, and class. In *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, Sara Ahmed explores “a new way of thinking the spatiality of sexuality, gender, and race.” She discusses lines which direct us to turn in specific ways, towards and/or simultaneously away from objects and others as communities, desires, political positions, histories. These alignments also locate us within different intersected axes of identity. These lines direct us and hold us in place, through different idea and objects, through “straightening devices that keep things in line.” We are also held in place through repetition. That is to say, staying in line is about repeating a line or a direction of a way of being. This repetition disappears the lines according to which we are directed:

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609 Ibid.
612 Ibid, 66.
“When the lines on the tracing paper are aligned with the lines of the paper that has been traced, then the lines of the tracing paper disappear: you can simply see one set of lines.”  

I have used Ahmed’s discussion of heterosexuality as a line that directs us as national subjects before, in conversation with the work of other feminists such as Anne McClintock (1995), Adrienne Rich (1980), and Judith Butler (1999) to explore how the nation-state is epistemologically heterosexual. As the work of Ahmed, Mishuana Goeman, and Jack Halberstam shows, this epistemology produces the temporality of the nation-state as a straight line. In other words, the temporality of the nation-state is heterosexual. Both are “straightening devices that keep things in line.” National temporality is linear temporality as heteronormative temporality, each functioning as a code of legibility for the other.

This linear temporality simultaneously requires and produces a straight story of the genealogy of the nation that has a claim to territorialization and statehood through that genealogy. As Mishuana Goeman argues, this straight line disciplines the past, present, and future of the nation-state, which includes the production of a nation according to a linear as heterosexual temporality. That the nation-state is heteropatriarchal also means that such a genealogy is linear and singular. There can be only one story of the nation-state where one as singular means a straight line.

714 Ibid, 66.
As I have discussed in Chapter Two, this epistemological construction of Pakistan is located in both “the Enlightenment and liberalism of the West”719 and an Abrahamic vocabulary and imagination. It was through the vocabulary of Pakistan as a Muslim nation-state that the discourse of a holy war was mobilized by the American, Saudi, and Pakistani governments for the recruitment of guerilla fighters in Afghanistan. This mobilization and its political economy are the contexts for *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. General Zia-ul-Haq’s eleven-year military dictatorship is popularly remembered in Pakistan for its processes of Islamization, which entailed the social, political, and legal construction of a Wahhabi-based version of Islam. Wahhabi Islam is the version of Islam enforced by the Saudi government. The political economy of the war anchored these dynamics in Pakistan through Saudi Arabia’s position as a major source of money, military hardware, and fighters for the mujahideen and the Pakistani government. This process of Islamization was inflected with, and produced through, nationalist anxieties about the straight line of a genealogy of Muslim and Pakistani. I read these anxieties as heterosexual because it is the lack of a straight genealogical line between Muslim and Pakistani that causes them. In other words, the straight line between Muslim and Pakistan and the heterosexuality of the nation-state are epistemological codes of the gendered construction of the nation-state. Nationalist anxieties about the former are evident in nationalist anxieties about the latter.

These anxieties were not new, nor was the process of Islamization begun by General Zia—that honor goes to the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who outlawed Ahmadis as Muslims.720 However, the particular contours of social and legal violence intersected with the political economy of the war in Afghanistan and reconfigured the ways in which such anxieties

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played out in Pakistan. The consequences of General Zia’s regime are deeply felt in Pakistan today, for example, by Ahmadi, Shia, Christian, and Hindu communities, by Pakistanis who do not inhabit the Wahhabi mode of Islam, by secularists and by atheists. These consequences are psychic, legal, and political wounds that have not yet become scars. It is precisely because of these legacies that General Zia’s regime is a popular marker of Islamization, and is discussed as such in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. We learn that the morning after the 1977 coup against the Bhutto government, General Zia and the top eight generals of the Army, Navy, and Air Force meet to discuss what to do next. As the new president of Pakistan, the first thing General Zia, insists on, is starting the meeting “with a recitation from the Quran” (Hanif 38) This bewilders the generals:

They shifted in their seats, not knowing how to deal with this. They were all Muslims and they all knew that the chief had a religious bent. Some of them even called him “the mullah” when talking on secure lines. But a meeting was a meeting, and mixing religion with the business of running the country was not a concept comprehensible to them.

The implication of the generals not knowing how to deal with starting a meeting with a recitation from the Quran is that, “mixing religion with the business of running the country” had not been done before. However, that the generals find the idea of mixing religion with the business of running a country incomprehensible points precisely to the existential problem in the idea of Pakistan: the straight line, according to which Muslim is constructed as a nation then territorialized as Pakistan, is “wonky.”

In *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, General Zia lectures his generals on theology as follows: “There is no God but Allah. And since Allah Himself says there is no God, let’s abolish

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the word” (38) According to General Zia, God is a Western construct and is not truly Muslim. He insists that, “Christians call Jesus the son of God,” while “Jews are pretty close to calling Moses their God,” and “Even the Hindus call their six-armed monsters their gods” (40). It is Allah who is exclusively Muslim. General Zia’s decision to have “all God’s names deleted from the national memory” (42) because it is a word used by Christians, Jews, and Hindus discursively produces Allah as exclusively Muslim, and Muslim as exclusively Pakistani. That is to say, Christians, Jews, and Hindus cannot be Pakistani because they use the word God, and Pakistanis who are all Muslims should use the word Allah because that is exclusively Muslim. As Mbembe states, “peoplehood itself is forged by the worship of one deity, and national identity is imagined as an identity against the Other, other deities.”

However, the excess of the national category of Pakistani represented by Christians, Jews, and Hindus, is not the only excess to be managed within the idea of Pakistan. The straight genealogical line between Muslim and Pakistani must also be secured against the plenitude of versions of Islam in South Asia. This plenitude is configured as excess within the idea of Pakistan precisely because it contains the national anxieties around the supposed straight genealogical line of the nation-state. This excess is existential, rather than symptomatic.

The artificiality of a linear construction of a genealogy of Islam in South Asia is pointed out beautifully by Hanif:

all God’s names were slowly deleted from the national memory, as if a wind had swept the land and blown them away. Innocuous, intimate names: Persian Khuda, which had always been handy for ghazal poets, as it rhymed with most of the operative verbs; Rab, which poor people invoked their hour of distress; Maula, which

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Sufis shouted in their hashish sessions. Allah had given Himself ninety-nine names. His people had improvised many more. But all these names slowly started to disappear—from official stationery, from Friday sermons, from newspaper editorials, from mothers’ prayers, from greeting cards, from official memos, from the lips of television quiz-show hosts, from children’s storybooks, from lovers’ songs, from court orders, from telephone operators’ greetings, from habeas corpus applications, from inter-school debating competitions, from road inauguration speeches, from memorial services, from cricket players’ curses, and even from beggars’ begging please.

There is a historical and geographically anchored profusion of Islam contained in God as God, as Allah, as Khuda, as Rab, as Maula, and in the ninety-nine names Allah had given Himself,” which are in the Quran itself. When these names are “exiled from the land and replaced by the one and only Allah,” temporality is used as a means to dislocate meaning from place. A linear temporality can only configure a singular meaning for Pakistani always already coded as Muslim. As the multitude of God’s names suggests, however, “Muslim” is not a universal category that may be dislocated from place in any sociocultural context, and certainly not in modern South Asia. It is important to note that the plurality of God’s names represents diverse practices and beliefs under the rubric of Islam. These beliefs and practices are enacted by communities that are heterogeneous in terms of class, language, ethnicity, and region. It is through these intersections of class, language, ethnicity, and region that produce different practices and beliefs of Islam as a lived reality for different communities. For example, Maula is a word “which Sufis shouted in their hashish sessions” points to a different practice of Islam than one that is likely to be found in upperclass drawing rooms in Karachi that are imbued with a politics of respectability.

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I argue that General Zia’s decision to have “God exiled from the land and replaced by the one and only Allah” is a straightening of the articulations of Pakistani and Muslim, coded almost as metonymic alignments of each other. If, “In the name of God, God was exiled from the land,” this exile was a straightening device used to hold Pakistan and Muslim in place, according to a linear temporality. Such a temporality is required by nationalism. There has to be “the one and only Allah” because Rab, Maula, Khuda, God all are evidence of plenitude and place, rather than a single straight line of time. This is demonstrated by the fact that if Khuda is as valid as Allah, then Muslim is articulated through Farsi and Arabic simultaneously, because both languages have been present in South Asia. Indeed, Farsi is more present precisely due to the geographic proximity of Iran, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian communities to South Asia. Modern South Asia’s histories of Islam are located in these places, not in universal and linear time.

This is what the multiplicity of names, God, Rab, Maula, and Allah in South Asia contain, an excess which “cannot be contained within the categorical structure of the nation-state.” This excess can be configured as queer because it disturbs Pakistan as a heterosexual nation-state. General Zia-ul-Haq, as the head of the state and head of the army, is the father who has to construct this genealogy through force. However, precisely because “Heterosexuality is

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compulsory precisely insofar as it is not prescribed by nature,” that force as a straightening device does not work. This does not mean the effects of such force are not dangerous, as evidenced by the necropolitical violences against Shias and Ahmadis in contemporary Pakistan. It does, however, mean that the accomplishment of a straight past, present, and future of and for Pakistan cannot be produced or maintained.

This is succinctly acknowledged in A Case of Exploding Mangoes through three lines about the father of the nation, Mohammed Ali Jinnah: “Jinnah had never gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca” and “even if he had found the time to get away for some spiritual replenishment, the founder would have probably have headed for a pub in West London” (72).

Death in the Story of the Nation-State

In the foreword to Beyond Crisis: Re-evaluating Pakistan, Veena Das notes that one of the multiple definitions of Pakistan is “the idea of an experimentation with Muslim modernity, tied to national territory.”

In Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture, Aamir Mufti discusses how conditions of modernity are displaced through British colonialism onto India. Like Gabriel Piterberg discusses in The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics, and Scholarship in Israel, these conditions of modernity include political Islam as a claim to the territoriality of a nation defined as Muslim produced through the model of European

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735 Ibid, 66.
nationalism.\textsuperscript{739} This is why subjectivity in South Asia becomes legible through the categories of the nation, state, and nation-state.

The threshold of this of modernity\textsuperscript{740} is marked by Michel Foucault as a transformation in modes of power. In \textit{The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume One}, Foucault charts the movement from pastoral power organized around souls and sovereignty organized around territory, to sovereignty as power focused on the generation and management of life. Foucault points out that for the sovereign-as-monarch, the right over death was the right to take life or let live. The expression of power over life was present only in the exercise of the right to kill.\textsuperscript{741} The transformation Foucault elucidates is that of bio-politics, that is, the politics of life: “what might be called a society’s ‘threshold of modernity’ has been reached when the life of the species is wagered on its own political strategies.”\textsuperscript{742} Power now works to “incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, organize the forces under it.”\textsuperscript{743}

It is important to contextualize Foucault’s notion of biopower as genealogically located in the geopolitical and historical framework of Europe.\textsuperscript{744} However, modern South Asia has been produced through the cartographic and epistemological legacies of British colonialism. This is why I am interested in what happens to Foucault’s theory of biopolitics in Pakistan. In other words, if biopolitics is the framework of power that defines the modern nation-state, then what happens to that framework in the specifically postcolonial nation-states of South Asia?

\textsuperscript{739} Gabriel Piterberg, \textit{The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics, and Scholarship in Israel} (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 192-239.
\textsuperscript{740} Michel Foucault, \textit{The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1} (New York: Random House, 1990), 143.
\textsuperscript{741} Ibid, 135-159.
\textsuperscript{742} Ibid, 143.
\textsuperscript{743} Ibid, 136.
Genealogically, the principle of intelligibility of the threshold of modernity is bio-power, of which governmentality is a mode. Sovereign power is articulated in terms of the affirmation, generation and management of life, rather than negation and destruction through the paradox present in the right to kill as the power of death.^745^ Governmentality and bio-politics are legible and operable through each other: governmentality as sovereignty is power focused on humanity-as-population rather than territory, and bio-power is power exercised through right over life. Governmentality is legible through the state’s focus on population as a biopolitical invention.^746^ Death is now the limit of power, rather than the previous mode of power in which sovereignty is exercised in the right over death.^747^ Accordingly, Foucault states that, “Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone.”^748^ Moreover, the “existence in question is no longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population.”^749^ What Foucault does not address are the narratives which epistemologically anchor biopower legible through the nation-state. In other words, the nation and the nation-state are still stories to be told.^750^ The story is no longer about the “juridical existence of sovereignty,”^751^ it is about “the biological existence of a population.”^752^

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^748^ Ibid, 137.
^749^ Ibid.
^752^ Ibid.
of the nation-state simultaneously produces, and is produced by, the politics of race, gender, sexuality, class, and religion. The “existence of everyone”\textsuperscript{753} is managed through these politics.

The work of scholars such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Kumkum Sangari, Lata Mani, Andrea Smith, and Sara Ahmed has shown that the nation-state is epistemologically narrated as heterosexual and patriarchal. The figure of the father is the point of origin in these narrations,\textsuperscript{754} and the “biological existence of the nation-state is continued through the son in the heterosexual line of descent.”\textsuperscript{755}

\textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes} foregrounds the opportunity to analyze how Pakistani nationalism may be narrated as a story of fathers and sons. This story is anchored in heterosexuality through a double articulation of the figure of the father in both “the Enlightenment and liberalism of the West”\textsuperscript{756} and an Abrahamic vocabulary and imagination.\textsuperscript{757}

Hence, I focus on Ali Shigri and his relationships with his father, Colonel Shigri, and his lover, Obaid-ul-Allah. Ali’s story is triangulated between the two of them as the most consistent figures in his narrations. Each also represents a diametric opposition or contradiction: Colonel Shigri is the father who locates Ali on the heterosexual line of the nation-state. Obaid is the lover who is forbidden because of that line.\textsuperscript{758} This contradiction, then, is performed through Ali’s body in relationship to each as an impression\textsuperscript{759} of both.

\textsuperscript{753} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{756} Norma Alarcon, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem, introduction to \textit{Between Woman and Nation} (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 1.
\textsuperscript{757} Naveeda Khan, introduction to \textit{Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan} (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 1-20.
Foucault also does not adequately imagine how death functions within this transformation of power in the historical context of Europe as a colonial and settler colonial power. In other words, Foucault does not take into account how the invention of biopolitical technologies of power and regimes of truth in Europe is located in colonialism and settler colonialism.

In “Necropolitics,” Mbembe argues that there are multiple definitions of sovereignty. He argues that Europe’s biopolitical definition of sovereignty is underpinned by the colonial and settler colonial form, which is “sovereignty, expressed predominantly as the right to kill.” Mbembe names this necropower, or power over death. He explores necropolitics as the politics of “the subjugation of life to the power of death.” These necropolitics are pivotal in the European turn to the biopolitical through colonialism and settler colonialism. Colonialism and settler colonialism as “sovereignty, predominantly expressed as the right to kill” are constitutive to the historical demarcation of modernity and the narrative of teleological history.

If necropolitics is constitutive of the threshold of modernity, then the modern nation-state is imbued with the definition of sovereignty as the right to kill. Mbembe’s example of necropower in late modernity is Israel’s occupation of Palestine. The primary instrument of this occupation is the Israeli military. The necropower of the Israeli state is therefore enacted by the Israeli military. Whereas Foucault argues that within a biopolitical modernity, wars “are

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761 Ibid, 39.
763 Ibid, 16.
764 Ibid, 14.
765 Ibid, 11-40.
waged on behalf of the existence of everyone,“^766\footnote{Michel Foucault, \textit{The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1} (New York: Random House, 1990), 137.} Mbembe argues that, “War, after all, is as much a means of achieving sovereignty as a way of exercising the right to kill.”^767 In other words, Foucault imagines war insufficiently in his theory of biopolitics and sovereignty as power over life, because he does not take into account the historical deaths of Others in Europe’s colonies and settler colonies as constitutive to European modernity. This is where Mbembe offers a corrective, to imagine war “as a means of achieving sovereignty as much as a way of exercising the right to kill.”^768

In the context of \textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes}, I am interested in the ways in which necropolitics functions in the case of a modern nation-state where there is arguably no colonial or settler colonial occupation, but the government is a military government, and the military is an institutional manifestation of the nation-state’s necropower. In other words, it is not coincidence that Mbembe uses the example of a military to illustrate necropolitics in late modernity. While the state as government is biopolitical, the state as military is necropolitical. This is why, when the state deploys militaries in war, the form of sovereignty produced is necropolitical, because “War, after all, is as much a means of achieving sovereignty as a way of exercising the right to kill.”^769 This is why the notion of biopower is not “sufficient to account for the contemporary ways in which the political, under the guise of war, of resistance, or of the fight against terror, makes the murder of the enemy its primary and absolute objective.”^770 This is where the notion of necropower comes in. Again, it is not a coincidence that Mbembe uses the context of “the guise of war, of resistance, or of the fight against terror”^771 as an example, and it is because of

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^766\footnote{Michel Foucault, \textit{The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1} (New York: Random House, 1990), 137.} Mbembe argues that, “War, after all, is as much a means of achieving sovereignty as a way of exercising the right to kill.”^767 In other words, Foucault imagines war insufficiently in his theory of biopolitics and sovereignty as power over life, because he does not take into account the historical deaths of Others in Europe’s colonies and settler colonies as constitutive to European modernity. This is where Mbembe offers a corrective, to imagine war “as a means of achieving sovereignty as much as a way of exercising the right to kill.”^768

In the context of \textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes}, I am interested in the ways in which necropolitics functions in the case of a modern nation-state where there is arguably no colonial or settler colonial occupation, but the government is a military government, and the military is an institutional manifestation of the nation-state’s necropower. In other words, it is not coincidence that Mbembe uses the example of a military to illustrate necropolitics in late modernity. While the state as government is biopolitical, the state as military is necropolitical. This is why, when the state deploys militaries in war, the form of sovereignty produced is necropolitical, because “War, after all, is as much a means of achieving sovereignty as a way of exercising the right to kill.”^769 This is why the notion of biopower is not “sufficient to account for the contemporary ways in which the political, under the guise of war, of resistance, or of the fight against terror, makes the murder of the enemy its primary and absolute objective.”^770 This is where the notion of necropower comes in. Again, it is not a coincidence that Mbembe uses the context of “the guise of war, of resistance, or of the fight against terror”^771 as an example, and it is because of

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this truth that I argue that the military is a manifestation of the nation-state’s necropolitics. Therefore, I argue that General Zia-ul-Haq’s eleven-year military dictatorship located necropolitics, rather than biopolitics, at the center of the nation-state. The heterosexual life of the nation-state becomes founded on death as much as on life — and both life and death must function towards the security and reproduction of a heteronormative nation-state. The story of the nation-state, and the politics of identity that produce and are simultaneously produced by this story, are both anchored in the deaths of some for lives of others.

At the time of General Zia’s military dictatorship, Pakistan was an important geopolitical location within the global circuit of the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. This war began in 1979 with the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan. The political economy, therefore, of General Zia’s military regime was anchored in a global necropolitics.

According to Foucault, “Biopower was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes.” He states that:

the adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profits, were made possible in part by the exercise of biopower in its many forms and modes of application.\footnote{Michel Foucault, \textit{The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1} (New York: Random House, 1990), 140-141.} \footnote{Ibid, 141.}
However, as the work of scholars such as Anne McClintock, Mark Rifkin, and Grace Hong has illustrated, necropower has also been pivotal to the development of modern capital, and remains so today.

In his article, “Live and Let Die: Colonial Sovereignties and the Death Worlds of Necrocapitalism,” Subhabrata Bobby Banerjee draws on the work of Mbembe and Agamben to define necrocapitalism as contemporary practices of political economy based on “accumulation by dispossession and the creation of death worlds.” Necrocapitalism is the “nexus between capitalism and death,” operating “through the establishment of colonial sovereignty, and the manner in which this sovereignty is established in the current political economy where the business of death can take place through states of exception.”

While the concept of necrocapitalism is relevant to my project, there are two problems with Banerjee’s argument: he only focuses on necrocapitalism in the context of, first, colonialism, and second, the war on terror.

Although I agree with his genealogy of necrocapitalism in European colonialism, I would argue that necrocapitalism may also operate in postcolonial contexts such as Pakistan. This is not to say that former colonies do not experience the material and ideological effects of colonialism and contemporary imperialism, many of which do enable necrocapitalism. Rather, it is to

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778 Ibid, 4.
779 Ibid, 2.
780 Ibid, 2-3.
examine how necrocapitalism operates through structures and institutions that cannot be strictly
defined as colonial.

This is connected to my second objection. Banerjee discusses the operation of
necrocapitalism through the war on terror, without examining the first US-Soviet war in
Afghanistan. This is a mistake because the consequences of that proxy war form much of the
political and economic foundation of the war on terror. These consequences include Al-Qaeda as
what Achilles Mbembe calls a war machine and the ongoing circuits of money, men, and
weaponry that were activated first during the war on terror, again in Afghanistan. These are the
necrocapitalist configurations I examine in Mohammed Hanif’s *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*.

The novel is set in Pakistan in 1988, during the USA’s first proxy war in Afghanistan
against the Soviet Union, as part of the Cold War. Pakistan under the military dictatorship of
General Zia-ul-Haq; in other words, the head of the state and the head of the army were one and
the same, and it was the top brass of the Pakistan military which were ruling the nation-state. The
American, British, Saudi, and Pakistani governments funded the organization of guerilla fighters
known as the mujahideen, under the banner of a holy war against the Soviet occupation of
Afghanistan.

As the USA’s proxy, the Pakistan military was the only state military directly involved in
this war. It was supplied money and arms by the American, Saudi, and British agencies including
the CIA and MI6. Pakistani military personnel fought in Afghanistan alongside the mujahideen,
which included Pakistanis as well as Afghans, Saudis, Chechens, Tajiks, and other Central Asian
communities.

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The protagonist of *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* is Ali Shigri, a young Under Officer in the Pakistan Air Force, who wants to assassinate General Zia as revenge. He believes General Zia ordered the murder of his father, Colonel Quli Shigri. Through fragments of Ali’s memories threaded throughout the novel, it is revealed that this was because Colonel Shigri burned twenty-five million US dollars in circulation between the mujahideen, the CIA, and the upper echelons of the Pakistan military.

The novel makes explicit the “nexus between capitalism and death.” On the fateful night he burns twenty-five million US dollars, Colonel Shigri tells Ali:

The thing about these Afghans is that they are not in it for the killing. They fight, but they want to make sure that they are alive after the fighting is over. They are not in the business of killing. They are in the business of fighting. Americans are in it for the winning.

The word business to describe war is not a coincidence because war is a business, which means that business is predicated on death. Ali is informed of this business by a Lieutenant Bannon at the Pakistan Air Force Academy, who turns out to be a CIA agent (to nobody’s surprise except Ali’s). According to Bannon, “There was a lot of moola going into Afghanistan. This whole jihad against communism was nothing but loads and loads of mazuma” (164). Capital did not take the form of just “the price on the hardware,” (ibid) or “the humanitarian aid,” (ibid) or “mules from Argentina and ack-acks from Egypt and AK-forty-sevens from China and Stingers from Nevada” (ibid). It also circulated as “Just the moola in Samsonites. Three hundred million dollars’ cash. Every quarter. And that is American taxpayers’ money, not counting the Saudi royal dosh” (165).

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This money went to “the leadership, the commanders with their villas in Dubai and their cousins trading in Hong Kong” (165). This leadership included not only the mujahideen, but also the generals of the Pakistani military (ibid). The latter were, of course, in power in Pakistan at the time.

Ali remembers that on the night his father died, “Colonel Shigri had kept talking even after his sixth drink” (262). He remembers:

For the first and last time in his life, he talked to me about his day job. “I had gone to pick up one of my officers, who’d lost a leg planting antipersonnel mines. Then I get this message that I should forget the officer and bring this thing back. This thing.” He pointed to the suitcase as if he had been ordered to carry a dead pig.\(^784\)

There are twenty-five million US dollars in the suitcase. Colonel Shigri states that the money rather than the Pakistani officer was his mission: “To retrieve this money from someone who was dead. And I buried my man there brought this here. Do I look like an accountant? Do I pimp my men for this?” (263)

The word pimp expresses the “practices in contemporary capitalism,”\(^785\) which “result in the subjugation of life”\(^786\) during this war in Afghanistan. General Zia-ul-Haq as the head of the Pakistan military, traded the lives of Pakistani soldiers to death in Afghanistan in exchange for American capital. This is the political economy of bare life, “the accumulation by dispossession and the creation of”\(^787\) Afghanistan as a death world. As Colonel Shigri tells Ali, “There are people out there fighting the fight and there are people sitting in Islamabad counting their


\(^{786}\) Ibid.

\(^{787}\) Ibid, 4.
money” (263). The twenty-five million dollars in the Samsonite is the price of the life of Colonel Shigri’s officer in Afghanistan.

In Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, Giorgio Agamben theorizes the figure of homo sacer or the sacred man. This is a figure of “bare life,” or human life which “is included in the juridical order solely in the form of its exclusion,” which is “its capacity to be killed.” While Agamben uses the figure of the refugee to illustrate his argument, I am interested in the configuration of bare life through the figure of the soldier.

Let me be clear here: I am not arguing that soldiers are bare life; I am arguing that the figure of the soldier is marked as bare life. This distinction is what I explore in A Case of Exploding Mangoes, in which the protagonist, Ali Shigri, is an Under Officer in the Pakistani Air Force. In some ways, the emotional heart of the novel is centered in those lives lived in the space between soldier and the figure of the soldier precisely because the latter is a category of bare life. Soldiers are explicitly marked for death in the novel. Ali’s father, Colonel Quli Shigri, tells Ali, “A comrade in uniform is potentially the deadweight that you’ll have to carry one day” (261). While a comrade in uniform may be a person, the word deadweight denotes an inert object. It is the potentiality that, “one day you will take a hit in battle,” (ibid) which marks the figure of the soldier or “A comrade in uniform” as bare life because bare life is life included in the polis through its potentiality to be killed.

An important question located in this space is about the politics and mechanics of the production of bare life. How are soldiers produced as bare life? In the context of A Case of

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789 Ibid.
790 Ibid.
Exploding Mangoes, I argue that the figure of the soldier as bare life is produced through the enactment of a hyper-visible form of national masculinity in the military. This is the gendered and sexualized production of bare life through the twin codes of heterosexual fraternity and paternity: soldiers are brothers-in-arms (the former) and obey their commanding officers without question (the latter).

Foucault argues that, “The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed.” 792 One was focused on the individual “body as a machine,” 793 while the other was focused on “the species body.” 794 Foucault terms the first “anatomo-politics of the human body” 795 and the latter “biopolitics of the population.” 796 What we understand as sex through a regime of truth called sexuality is “at the pivot of the two axes along which developed the entire political technology of life.” 797 Therefore, masculinity as part of sexuality as a regime of truth 798 produced through the heterosexual matrix 799 is deployed to construct and manage the “anatomo-politics of the human body” 800 and “biopolitics of the population.” 801

In A Case of Exploding Mangoes, the figure of the soldier is constructed through heterosexual masculinity as a technology of necropower. This is because the military dictatorship of General Zia configured the state as a necropolitical institution. That is to say, necropower deploys national masculinity as heterosexual masculinity to construct human bodies within the

792 Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1 (New York: Random House, 1990), 139.
793 Ibid.
794 Ibid.
795 Ibid.
796 Ibid.
797 Ibid, 145.
800 Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1 (New York: Random House, 1990), 139.
801 Ibid.
silhouette of the figure of the soldier. Like biopower, necropower also functions through an “anatomo-politics of the human body”\textsuperscript{802} and a necropolitics of population, with sex as the pivot between these two poles. Sexuality, then, is as much a matter of necropolitics as biopolitics.

Although \textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes} is a satirical novel and, therefore, one could argue that the depictions of heterosexual masculinity in the military are exaggerated, I contend that the humor is located in the performances\textsuperscript{803} of heterosexual masculinity, which the novel recognizes. In other words, it is not funny because it is exaggerated; it is funny because it is recognizable as accurate.

There are three mechanics of gender and sexuality configured in the production of masculinity in the novel. First, it is that it is aggressively heterosexual; second, it is constructed through homophobia and misogyny; and third, it is legible through a xenophobic nationalism based on the conflation of Pakistani with Muslim.\textsuperscript{804}

The first chapter of the novel is narrated by protagonist Ali Shigri, who is just a few weeks away from receiving his officer’s commission. The book opens with Ali being interrogated by the officer in command of the PAF Academy about the disappearance of his dorm mate, Cadet Obaid, on May 31, 1988. This is because Obaid piloted an MF-seventeen which “disappeared off the radar ten minutes after takeoff” (60). He used Ali’s call sign. Therefore, both Ali and Obaid are suspected of a plot to assassinate President General Zia-ul-Haq.

The commandant’s entire interrogation of Ali is centered on humiliating him as a man, by accusing him of homosexuality and feminization. These are portrayed as the opposites, as lesser

\textsuperscript{802} Ibid, 139.
\textsuperscript{803} Judith Butler, preface to \textit{Gender Trouble} (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006), xv-xvi.
than, or as failures of, heterosexual masculinity. It begins with how the commandant’s generation was “a better breed of officers” because they “slept on thin cotton mattresses, under coarse woolen blankets that felt like a donkey’s ass” (27). Ali is not of such a breed of officer because he is one of “these pansies” who “sleep on nine-inch-thick mattresses under silk bloody duvets and everyone one of them thinks that he is a Mughal bloody princess on her honeymoon” (28). The meaning here, of course, is that the commandant’s generation were a better breed of officers as a better breed of men because of their toughness and fortitude, signified by “thin cotton mattresses” and “coarse woolen blankets that felt like a donkey’s ass.” Obaid and Ali are juxtaposed through a gendered comparison with such hardened and rugged officers as a generation of soft, sensitive, decadent women, signified by the figure of “a Mughal bloody princess on her honeymoon.”

This is followed with a sexual and homophobic insult upon the discovery by the commandant that Obaid had given Ali poetry for his birthday, which Ali hid in his mattress. The fact that Ali hid it in his mattress is connected with the discursive collation the commandant now makes between poetry and homosexuality:

I have seen all kinds of buggers in this business,” the commandant begins slowly. “But one pansy giving poetry to another pansy, and then the other pansystuffing it in the hole in his mattress is a perversion beyond me.”

The words “bugger” and “pansy” are popular slurs for gay men so that the dialogue is instantly imbued with homophobia. Ali and Obaid are marked as buggers and pansies through the exchange of poetry as a gift between them. Ali himself has already marked poetry as not something soldiers, as the epitome of heterosexual masculinity, engage in through his marking of Obaid as not heterosexual and therefore not masculine: “Baby O, the whisperer of ancient

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couplets, the singer of golden oldies," who wore “silk briefs with the little embroidered hearts on the waistband” (23). Poetry and Obaid, therefore, are co-imbricated as not heterosexual and not masculine.

That homosexuality signifies sexual deviancy from heterosexual masculinity is not only marked abstractly through the gendered term of pansy and a gendered practice of “giving poetry.” The thoroughly sexual nature of this deviancy is marked through the term bugger and the connotations of the words “stuffing it in the hole in his mattress.” It is not just that Ali is a pansy for receiving poetry but the gift is imbued with a sexual intimacy between Ali and Obaid in terms made impossible by heterosexual masculinity through “the hole in the mattress” as a euphemism for male masturbation and ejaculation. The exchange of poetry as a gift between Ali and Obaid, then, is marked as an explicitly sexual exchange and, because it is through poetry and between two men, it is homosexual.

It is important to note that Ali’s heterosexual masculinity is being questioned in the context of Ali being under suspicion of treason. Specifically, he has been accused of plotting to assassinate General Zia as the head of the state and the head of army. The commandant’s comment that this “is a perversion beyond me” speaks specifically to how the treason is sexualized as a “perversion beyond” heterosexual masculinity. This is because General Zia-ul-Haq is the father of the nation-state through the epistemological organization of the nation-state as heterosexual and masculine. Treason is sexualized because the good son, meaning the heterosexual masculine son, would not betray the father; the bad, or homosexual and therefore not masculine, son is marked as the traitor.

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The heterosexual masculinity of the Pakistani military is constructed through a xenophobic nationalism based on the conflation of Pakistani with Muslim. This is illustrated in the story of Sir Tony Singh who was drummed out of the PAF. While the official reason was that, “they found a transistor radio in his dorm and charged him with spying” (22), the real reason is not about the transistor radio as a sign of spying, but the identity of its owner as a potential spy. This is because Tony Singh is not a Muslim name; Singh is a Punjabi Sikh name, while Tony is a Christian name. Neither Sikhs nor Christians (or Hindus) can be epistemologically admitted into the brotherhood of the air force of the Islamic Republic. This is because of the affixation of Muslim to Pakistan and the consequent and constitutive affixing of all other religions with Indian as the basis for the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan. This is why Ali doesn’t understand “what the hell Tony Singh was doing in the air force of the Islamic Republic anyway” because he thought, “the partition took care of all the Tonys and the Singhs” (21). Non-Muslims cannot be imagined as citizens of Pakistan precisely because of the epistemology of the creation of Pakistan. This is why Ali, as a Pakistani Muslim soldier, thinks that Tony Singh “didn’t get the message” (ibid) of the partition of India which “took care of all the Tonys and the Singhs.”

This remark by Ali about Tony Singh echoes his thoughts about Obaid. He marks Obaid as not heterosexual through not masculine because Baby O is “the whisperer of ancient couplets, the singer of golden oldies,” who wears “silk briefs with the little embroidered hearts on the waistband.” It is because of this nonconformity to heterosexual masculinity that Ali also wonders how Obaid became part of the heterosexual brotherhood of the air force of the Islamic Republic. Obaid’s ancient couplets, golden oldies, and silk briefs with the little embroidered hearts on the

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waistband contravene the performance\textsuperscript{808} of heterosexual masculinity required by the heteronormativity of the military. This is why Ali wonders:

How did he make it through the selection process? How did he pass the Officer-like Qualities Test? How did he lead his fellow candidates through the mock jungle-survival scenarios? How did he bluff his way through the psychological profiles?\textsuperscript{809}

This echo between Tony Singh and Obaid triangulated through Ali is not a coincidence because xenophobia and homophobia are referents of each other within the imagination of a heterosexual nation-state. Both speak to a profound anxiety that someone will transgress the borders of an already constituted and coherent self.\textsuperscript{810} It is not just that the futurity of the nation-state is imagined as heterosexual.\textsuperscript{811} Rather, sovereignty, nation-state and heterosexual masculinity are imagined through each other. Therefore, both homophobia and xenophobia are constitutive for the production and maintenance of the sovereignty of a heterosexual masculine nation-state.\textsuperscript{812}

The Necropolitics of Heterosexual Masculinity

The excesses Tony Singh and Obaid embody are triangulated around and in contrast to Ali. In this section, I discuss the masculinities of both Obaid and Ali in more detail to explore the figure of the monster-traitor, drawing on Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai’s discussion of the monster-terrorist in “Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots.” I’m interested in how gender and sexuality configure into nationalist narratives of treason so that traitors are monstrous because they are not heterosexual and not masculine. However, if Tony

\textsuperscript{808} Judith Butler, preface to \textit{Gender Trouble} (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006), xv-xvi.

\textsuperscript{809} Mohammed Hanif, \textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes} (New York: Random House, 2008), 23.

\textsuperscript{810} Ashis Nandy, \textit{An Ambiguous Journey to the City: The Village and Some Other Odd Ruins of the Self in the Indian Imagination} (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 129.


Singh and Obaid are easily distinguishable outlaws to the heterosexual masculine nation-state of Pakistan, then Ali represents the threat of treason from within. Moreover, it is Ali who enacts this threat, this treason, against the nation-state by executing his plan to assassinate President General Zia.

In “Monsters, Terrorists, Fags: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots,” Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai explore how “gender and sexuality are central to the current ‘war on terrorism’” and how sexuality “is central to the creation of a certain knowledge of terrorism.” The figure of the terrorist, they argue, is tied to “a much older figure, the racial and sexual monsters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.” Drawing on Foucault, Puar and Rai discuss how the figure terrorist is constructed through the notion of “sexual perversity.” The idea of sexual perversity is based in a racialized colonial and settler colonial genealogy of “the West’s family of abnormals.” If Foucault’s “monsters and abnormals have always also been sexual deviants,” then Puar and Rai contest that, “monstrosity as a regulatory construct of modernity imbricates not only sexuality, but also culture and race.” The figure of the terrorist in the “war on terrorism” therefore, is a figure of racialized sexual monstrosity. It has been deployed in the war on terror to as both a way to “otherize and quarantine subjects” and to normalize and discipline a population into becoming docile patriots.

814 Ibid.
815 Ibid.
816 Ibid.
817 Ibid, 119.
818 Ibid.
819 Ibid.
820 Ibid, 117.
821 Ibid, 139-140.
822 Ibid, 126.
823 Ibid, 126-128.
I follow Puar and Rai to ask how gender and sexuality are central to narratives and knowledges of treason in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. I discuss the emphasis of the production of heterosexual masculinity in the military through a physical immediacy precisely because the figure of the soldier is bare life. In other words, since the body of the soldier is potential deadweight (261), it must be necropolitically produced through and as a certain kind of physical body, which can then and therefore be marked for death. The meanings of these bodies as bare life are configured through the emotions and fantasies of heterosexual masculinity, or emotions and fantasies with which heterosexual masculinity, as a straightening device holding these bodies in place, is sticky.

I have discussed the heterosexual masculinity produced by and through the Pakistani military. Junior Under Officer Ali Shigri of the Pakistan Air Force Academy, just weeks away from the president’s inspection and becoming a commissioned officer is the perfect embodiment of this aggressive masculinity.

Ali is the son of the illustrious Colonel Shigri, and has won Best Short-Range Shooting Shigri Memorial Trophy. A hazing ritual at the PAF Academy is called the Shigri treatment, which involves yelling at new arrivals at strength 5. Ali is immune to this because “Any good soldier learns to shut out the noise” (54). This is a sign of psychological strength and strategy: “As a soldier, noise is the first thing you learn to defend yourself against, and as an officer, noise is the first weapon of attack you learn to use” (ibid). He “spent his sixth birthday in a dorm” (55) like the one at the Academy and does not cry.

He is also already an accomplished pilot. This is illustrated in the scene in which Ali questions Lieutenant Bannon about who ordered the murder of Colonel Shigri while flying a twin-seater MF-17 at six thousand feet and executing maneuvers over the Black Mountains. It is
also during this scene that Ali is depicted as strategic and single-minded because he uses Bannon’s fear and the element of surprise through the maneuvers, as a threat to extract information from him.

Ali knows how to stand at attention perfectly: “I put my heels together, puffed my chest out, pulled my shoulders back, locked my arms at my sides” (53). This is the embodiment of the masculine physicality, the bodily presence, of a soldier. This is why he leads the Fury Squadron’s Silent Drill Squad. This requires practicing “for 110 days, seven days a week,” (57) razor-sharp precision, and full concentration. He is excellent with a knife, and can wield a sword with expert ease because he has discipline, muscle coordination, and determination to practice.

Ali’s self-awareness is based on his body as a soldier’s body and through that as a masculine body:

My arm and the sword needed to become one. The muscles in my tendon had to merge with the molecules that made up the sword. I needed to wield it as if it were an extension of my own arm.824

This is how Ali psychologically protects himself when he is imprisoned in an underground cell by the ISI. The underground cell has “the kind of the darkness that is ancient, manufactured by the sadistic imagination of the Mughals” (138). It is the kind of dark in which Ali “can’t even muster any imaginary shadows” (ibid). The darkness makes him panic: “Minutes pass; hours pass. How should I know how long I have been here? If I stay still, I’ll lose my eyesight or parts of my brain and probably the use of my limbs” (ibid). Ali’s defense against this panic is his soldier’s body:

I put my hands behind my neck and sit on my toes and start doing frantic squats. I do five hundred and, without a pause, jump in the air and land with my hands on the sand, body parallel to the

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ground. One hundred push-ups; a thin film of perspiration is covering my body, and an inner glow brings a smile to my face.

This immediate grounding in pure physicality is also configured as masculine through the fact that Ali doesn’t read poetry. As I have discussed earlier, poetry is already marked as not proper to heterosexual masculinity produced within the military. The heterosexual masculinity through the soldier is, therefore, produced through the discursive polarization of marking poetry as feminine and bodily immediacy as masculine. If you are a man, therefore, and you like poetry, you are not properly heterosexual as the code for properly masculine.

That it is poetry marked as not proper to heterosexual masculinity deployed to produce the figure of the soldier is significant because of the historical context of the novel. Some of the most memorable opposition and criticism of General Zia-ul-Haq’s military dictatorship came from poets such as Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib. Therefore, this lack of interest in poetry, where poetry signifies resistance and rebellion to the military in power, marks Ali as a good soldier, or to follow Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai, a docile soldier. I use the word docile here ironically precisely because of the deployment of emotions sticky with cultural signifiers and discourses in the production of the figure of the soldier. If the word docile means submissive, then the submissiveness produced in the military is coded as arrogance precisely through heterosexual masculinity, and precisely because the military is a necropolitical institution. Necropower, legible through a state military, deploys a certain set of emotions to anchor the required conformity from those it has marked for death.

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825 Ibid.
Ali also has no knowledge (or interest) in civilians and dutifully believes in the following:

the songs on the radio, and dramas on television and special editions of newspapers, celebrating this uniform. There are hundreds of ladies out there waiting to hand out their phone numbers to someone in uniform.\(^{828}\)

Ali watches Pakistan National Television where “they are always singing our praises” (144). He reads the “only newspaper we get in the Academy,” the Pakistan Times “which on any given day has a dozen pictures of General Zia, and the only civilians that figure in it are the ones lining up to pay their respects to him” (145). He doesn’t know who the Maoists on the Left in Pakistan are; the only Mao Ali knows “is that Chinese guy with the cap, and I have no clue what his people are doing in Pakistan, let alone in the Sweepers Union” (157). This belief in the military is inflected with an arrogance coded as patriotism.

Ali’s notion of how the Pakistani public perceives the military is produced through how the military narrates itself to soldiers—and more often that not, to Pakistani citizens. Although this narration is certainly not particular to the Pakistani military, there are specific inflections of Pakistani history that produce the intensity of this arrogance. The “narrative-mythological constellation”\(^{829}\) of Pakistan is anchored in the notion of a persecuted and endangered people,\(^{830}\) the Muslims of India. Both this mythology and the stories of the trauma of the partition have produced a paranoia in the public culture of Pakistan of India as a perpetual threat. This paranoia has in turn been used to narrate the Pakistan military as guardians and defenders of the very existence of Pakistan.

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These emotions have been structurally anchored through the majority of Pakistan’s GDP being spent on the armed forces, through the distribution of land to the army, and through influential government posts for retired military officers. This narrative has been perpetuated almost as an art by successive military coups and governments. The story of the nation-state in crisis has been deployed by the Pakistani military constantly throughout Pakistan’s history to justify these military regimes, and Pakistan has experienced more decades of military rule than civilian government.

General Zia’s regime also had the good fortune of occurring during the Cold War and the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan, for which Pakistan became a vital location and for which the Pakistani military’s cooperation was, of course, necessary. The international context provided for political and economic support for General Zia’s regime through the powerful nation-states of the USA, the UK, and Saudi Arabia. General Zia was “one of the ten men standing between the Free World and the Red Army” (4).

Ali’s bewilderment about Leftist resistances and challenges to General Zia’s regime and his arrogance towards civilians speaks to the discursive and ideological production of heterosexual masculinity by the military. While the control of access to television and newspapers represent a control over discourse (the hallmark of every efficient dictatorship), it is the anchoring of masculinity in the military in heterosexuality which marks the construction of the figure of the soldier through heterosexual masculinity. It is amusing when Ali thinks, “There are hundreds of ladies out there waiting to hand out their phone numbers to someone in uniform” because it reads as the wishful thinking of a naive boy—but it also has a darker undertone, precisely of the construction of the figure of the soldier through heterosexual masculinity with the rewards of heterosexuality as an exchange. The hundreds of ladies as signifiers of
heterosexual masculinity are not coincidental to the construction of the figure of the soldier, they are pivotal. The heterosexual matrix of the military is located precisely in the production of the fantasy of “hundreds of ladies out there waiting to hand their phone numbers to someone in uniform.” The “someone in uniform” is marked heterosexual and masculine through the “hundreds of ladies out there waiting to hand out their phone numbers” to him.

Moreover, that twinge of sadness configured within the amusement at Ali is because the image of “hundreds of ladies out there waiting to hand out their phone numbers to someone in uniform” is a necropolitical fantasy used as a straightening device to hold the figure of the soldier in place, in line. It is necropolitical because the figure of the soldier is marked for death, and it is a fantasy because it is the potentiality of death, rather than a life in which “There are hundreds of ladies out there waiting to hand out their phone numbers to someone in uniform,” which imbues the figure of the soldier.

In sharp contrast to Ali is Cadet Obaid-ul-Allah. It is important to clarify though, that the sharp contrast is only a sharp contrast because of the collation of practices, “bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures”831 that assembles something legible as heterosexual masculinity. As the work of Judith Butler makes clear, this assemblage is only legible as heterosexual masculinity through all the things it is not.832

Ali is marked as properly masculine through the contrast between his body and Obaid’s: Obaid’s “splash of Poison” (23) is not Ali’s “sentiment of steel” (140). Ali stands to attention with his heels together, chest puffed out, shoulders pulled back, arms locked to his side (53). Obaid’s arrival at the PAF Academy is memorable because of how he doesn’t stand to attention: “all his weight on one leg, right thumb tucked in his jeans, left arm hanging aimlessly, ass

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cocked” (53). It is emphasized in Ali’s description of Obaid’s “beautiful calligrapher’s handwriting, all little curves and elegant dashes” (26). This description, through the words “calligrapher,” “curves” and “elegant,” contains beauty, grace, and delicacy as embodied qualities, especially and precisely because it is handwriting, a physical act. The beauty of Obaid’s “calligrapher’s handwriting, all little curves and elegant dashes” transfers those qualities to Obaid, as qualities of his body. None of these are dynamics located within the soldier’s body as a heterosexual masculine body.

There is a simultaneity here through which Ali is marked as embodying heterosexual masculinity and Obaid as feminine and therefore homosexual masculinity. The simultaneity is of, one, the narration of Obaid through Ali’s as the protagonist-narrator who marks himself as the son of a soldier and as a good soldier through his masculinity; and second, of the epistemological alignment known to both Ali and the reader of the performativity of male bodies as either heterosexual or homosexual, the former as properly masculine and the latter as either a not, or as a failure.  

For Obaid, this difference is marked as failure. His first day at the PAF Academy involves being humiliated for precisely how he performs masculinity, and again, it is through Ali’s memory that this scene occurs:

When I first saw him, he was wearing fake Levi’s, a very shiny pair of oxford shoes, and a black silk shirt with a logo on its pocket that read AVANTI. His blow-dried jet black hair covered his ears. And if his city-boy civilian dress wasn’t enough to make him stand out amid a formation of khaki-clad jarheads, he was also wearing a rose-patterned handkerchief carefully folded and tucked under his collar.

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The black silk shirt, the too long blow-dried jet black hair, and the “rose-patterned handkerchief” all represent embodiments unacceptable and impossible to heterosexual masculinity. That Ali calls this “city-boy civilian dress” marks these as impossible to the heterosexual masculinity of the soldier explicitly.

It is because of this impossibility that Obaid is humiliated by Tony Singh as an officer, on the day he arrives at the PAF Academy: “His belt whiplashed in front my eyes, making me blink. I heard it strike Obaid’s cocked ass” (53). How much of a soldier Obaid is not, is contained in the fact that, “So unexpected was the attack that Obaid could only whimper” as “His knees buckled and he fell on the ground” (ibid). The production of an aggressive heterosexual masculinity in the military is depicted through the nature of Obaid’s humiliation: Tony Singh “shoved the hankie in Obaid’s mouth, extended his right leg, and waved his shoe in Obaid’s face” (ibid). With the hankie in his mouth, “Obaid started polishing the shoe, his face making little circles around the toe” (ibid).

When both shoes have been “polished to perfection,” Tony Singh “busied himself with the rest of Obaid’s outfit” (ibid). This meant tearing his clothes off, leaving him standing “at attention now,” naked “except for his briefs and oxfords” (ibid). The act of tearing off Obaid’s clothes serves as a destruction of the sartorial markers of his failure to properly inhabit heterosexual masculinity. The act of forcing Obaid to polish shoes with the handkerchief “shoved in Obaid’s mouth” while on his knees marks the set of emotions deployed in the aggressive construction of heterosexual masculinity in the military: humiliation, shame, docility, enforced through a structural collective of the brotherhood-in-arms, which the military is symbolized as.
Obaid’s failure is also marked in his inability to master the physicality of a soldier, depicted through Lieutenant Bannon and Ali’s decision to not include him in the Silent Drill Squad for the president’s inspection. Bannon tells Ali, “Baby O ain’t going stay in the Silent Drill Squad. As soon as the parade begins, he starts to sweat like a whore in church. He just hasn’t got the aptitude” (178). Obaid’s lack of aptitude for the silent drill is marked as a failure of masculinity not only in contrast to Ali, who has already been configured as the good soldier through his masculinity, but also through the word “whore” (ibid). It connotes a discursive and material economy in which sex work is marked as a gendered occupation and women are produced are objects for sexual gratification and ownership. Obaid as a “whore” aligns him with femaleness and femininity. Obaid as “a whore in church” as a metaphor for his lack of aptitude for the silent drill marks him as not belonging in the military as the church because he is a whore. Therefore, the expression, “sweat like a whore in church” signifies Obaid’s failed heterosexuality and masculinity.

That Obaid “just hasn’t got the aptitude” for the bodily immediacy and precision of the silent drill squad is twinned with and legible through Obaid’s intellectual prowess. This is why Ali states:

You could score top marks in war history, you could simulate your drill movements all night long, but when the silent drill zone kicked in, you couldn’t look at your manuals to find out what to do and how to do it. Obaid did all my studying for me. He drew my navigation maps, he took care of my inability to concentrate on any textbook for more than two paragraphs, and he prepared my notes for me.835

It is because the necropolitics of heterosexual masculinity in the military for the production of the figure of the soldier as potential deadweight and therefore as a body that can be marked as

such, that, “Despite the lack of an academic bone in my body, or maybe because of it,” (179) it is Ali who is “soaring ahead in the drill department, already commanding the squad” while Obaid “still loitered in the reserve pool” (ibid).

The emotions\textsuperscript{836} deployed by the military infuse the differences between Ali and Obaid with the definition of successful or failed heterosexual masculinity. This deployment obscures just what success represents: an inclusion in the polis through one’s capacity to be killed.\textsuperscript{837}

This is emphasized in the resonance between Ali’s unwittingly accurate remark that, “Anyone who could sit down and read a book outside the classroom for ten minutes straight would never make a good officer, let alone a coherent pair of military boots on the parade square” (179), and Brigadier T.M’s methods for selecting General Zia’s personal security commandos: “Any man who has the ability to read a newspaper cannot have the will to throw himself between you and your assassin’s bullet” (67). His method for training these soldiers is a direct application of this notion:

Brigadier T.M’s boys were recruited from remote villages and trained so strenuously that by the time they finished their training—if they finished at all, as more than two-thirds begged to be returned to their villages—they had a vacant look on their faces. Unquestioning obedience was drilled into them by making them dig holes in the earth all day, only to fill other holes the following day. They were kept away from civilians for so long that they considered anyone in civvies a legitimate target\textsuperscript{838}

Ali may not be a part of Brigadier T.M’s boys but as a soldier, he is constructed by the same necropolitical structure which produces them.

\textsuperscript{838} Mohammed Hanif, \textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes} (New York: Random House, 2008), 67-68.
Treason: Monstrosity as Queerness and Queerness as Excess

Puar and Rai argue that the figure of the terrorist is genealogically aligned with the figure of the monster through “a knowledge of sexual perversity.” In other words, the terrorist as the genealogical descendant and transformation of the monster is always already marked through a “failed heterosexuality” and “a certain queer monstrosity.” This is for the quarantining of figures of threat to the “aggressive heterosexual patriotism” of the nation-state and for the production of “docile patriots.”

In *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, the reader is introduced to both Ali and Obaid as figures of treason, as traitors, suspected of plotting to assassinate President General Zia-ul-Haq. While it is Obaid who is marked as the figure of sexual perversity through a “failed heterosexuality,” it is Ali who wants to assassinate General Zia because he believes General Zia ordered the death of his father, Colonel Quli Shigri.

It is important to note that Obaid is arrested, imprisoned, and tortured by the ISI as a potential assassin of the president. Ali is picked up by Major Kiyani, imprisoned, and threatened with torture as a suspected collaborator. Ali does not admit to his plan to assassinate General Zia. He effectively puts the onus of an assassination attempt on Obaid: “I signed the fucking statement because I thought you were dead. I cut a bloody deal because you were supposed to have been blown to bits because of your own stupidity” (224). Obaid is released after he is

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840 Ibid, 117.
841 Ibid.
842 Ibid, 139.
843 Ibid.
844 Ibid, 117.
845 Ibid.
“neutralized” as a “security risk” (ibid), which means his attempt to assassinate the president was foiled, and he was tortured.

The ISI had already been informed by Lieutenant Bannon, not only of Obaid’s attempt to “cause a security alert” (257), but also about Ali’s plan. Obaid told Lieutenant Bannon about his own plan to have the president’s inspection of the silent drill squad cancelled by causing a security alert, because it was during the inspection that Ali planned to kill General Zia. Obaid tells Ali, “I wasn’t going anywhere, I was only interested in saving your life” (256) by “providing a diversion” so that he could “at least have the time to drill sense into Ali’s head” (ibid). He is also released because Ali is released by General Akhtar who wants Ali to carry out the real plan to assassinate General Zia. Therefore, it was always Ali who was the traitor, not Obaid.

Queerness is monstrosity to the heterosexual nation-state. Monstrosity also denotes an excess. I argue that Obaid and Ali both represent an excess “that cannot be contained by the categorical structure of the nation-state.” While Obaid embodies a type of masculinity in excess of the categories of the heterosexual nation-state, Ali embodies an excess of the narrative of father and son precisely he wants to kill the father of the nation in the name of vengeance for his father.

The monstrosity of treason is produced in part through queerness as “sexual perversity” or “a failed heterosexuality.” This is part of the sexual politics of treason. Queerness is what marks Obaid as a traitor.

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848 Ibid.
This queerness exceeds heterosexual masculinity. It is concretely marked on Obaid’s body and makes him “stand out amid a formation of khaki-clad jarheads” (53), to which Ali properly belongs. It is Obaid who initiates sexual contact between himself and Ali, often experienced as too much sensation and pleasure by Ali: “His cardamom breath raged like the waves of a sweet sea in my ears” (142).

Obaid is also produced as queer through a class-based line of paternal lineage. This is evident in why Colonel Shigri had tried to persuade Ali not to join the officer corps:

“The officer corps is not what it used to be,” he said, pouring himself the first whisky of the evening after returning from his umpteenth trip to Afghanistan.
“People who served me with me were all from good families. No, I don’t mean wealthy families. I mean respectable people, good people. When you asked them where they were from, you knew their fathers and grandfathers were distinguished people. And now you’ve got shopkeepers’ sons, milkmen’s boys, people who are not good at anything else. I don’t want those half-breeds fucking up my son’s life”

The phrase “fucking up” is evocative of the sexually active relationship between Obaid and Ali. However, there is a double meaning here because Obaid would be the example of one the “half-breeds” Colonel Shigri did not want “fucking up [his] son’s life.” Obaid’s queerness here is what fucks up the code of heterosexual brotherhood deployed in the military. However, Obaid is also marked as queer and therefore as someone capable of “fucking up” Ali’s life because he is one of “those half-breeds” so that queerness is produced through both class and paternal lineage—or rather, Obaid is queer not only because he is not straight but also because and through the difference of class and lineage between him and Ali.

Heterosexual masculinity is refracted through the politics of respectability here, based on class, social capital, aspiration, and paternal lineage. “Half-breed” is a derogatory slur commonly used for those who are mixed race, which means that they are not the descendants of a singular, linear genealogy of race, nationality, or religion.

These lineages as lines of the nation-state collapse notions of blood, nation, and citizenship into moral and political categories. Within the epistemology of a heteropaternal nation-state, these are patriarchal lines of descent: “you knew their fathers and grandfathers were distinguished people.” These lines hold very real necropolitical consequences: when Obaid is disappeared by the ISI as a suspected assassin, he is imprisoned in secret cells beneath the Lahore Fort and tortured for information. When Ali is picked up by the head of ISI, Major Kiyani, he is imprisoned in a secret cell as well, but he is threatened with torture with the qualification that there be no marks. This is because Ali is “from a good family” (74) signifying his lineage through Colonel Shigri as General Zia’s “right-hand man” (160) and respected figure of authority in the military. Ali is afforded a certain level of protection within the necropolitical structures of the military through his lineage, through his father, because when you ask him where he is from, you know his father. Obaid as one of “those half-breeds” has no such lineage to protect him.

The term half-breed also contains the notion of class. Although he states, “No, I don’t mean wealthy people,” Colonel Shigri’s notion of respectable people is about class because of whom he identifies as not respectable people: “shopkeepers’ sons, milkmen’s boys.” Both of these may be socioeconomically classified as occupations amongst lower-middle-class, working-class, and poor communities. Therefore, Colonel Shigri’s statement that, “I don’t mean wealthy families” may not mean how much money someone has in the bank, but it can (and often does)
mean a history, and present and future aspiration of class mobility refracted through respectability.

That Colonel Shigri would consider Obaid, as the son of the owner of a factory that manufactures fake Levis, one of “those half-breeds” couples heteropaternal lineage with class privilege and the social capital of respectability. Obaid’s father may be economically secure as the owner of a factory but nothing about Obaid’s “fake Levis” (20) or “Fake fucking Poison” (23) suggests social capital or class privilege. Therefore, Obaid is marked as queer, as excess, as monstrous to the categories of heterosexual masculinity through sexuality and class. His sexual perversity is marked by class, and the fact that he fucks up Ali’s life by fucking him is this sexual perversity as what exceeds the heterosexual code of brotherhood in the military.

There is a sad irony in the context in which Colonel Shigri makes these remarks. This is because if Obaid embodies a sexual excess, Colonel Shigri embodies an emotional excess. This marks him as queer because his emotional excess is an unlivable excess that the necropolitical nation-state cannot manage—except through death. Colonel Shigri’s betrayal of the father figure of the nation-state is based on this unlivable excess. Therefore, Colonel Shigri can be marked as queer through his treason because he betrayed the father figure of the nation-state. His emotional excess turned him towards the lives of the soldiers he had to exchange for necrocapitalist profit accumulated by the top echelons of the Pakistani military.

Colonel Shigri’s emotional excess is manifested most visibly through his excessive drinking. Ali remembers, “He was a three-whiskies-an-evening man, but he felt unusually thirsty when he returned from his Afghan trips” (89). Ali also remembers that, “the colonel did go through a hectic spiritual phase, during which he terminated his whisky sessions at midnight and spent the rest of his night reciting the Quran” (47). Colonel Shigri “sought forgiveness from his
sins over the Quran during the day, then plotted his next foray into Afghanistan over scotch in the evenings” (140) It is the word “hectic” here which signifies excess, as chaos, as too much, too fast. This is also implied through the image of Colonel Shigri drinking whisky until midnight, and then staying awake “the rest of his night reciting the Quran.” The urgency connoted by the excessive consumption of alcohol, the lack of sleep, the fervor with which Colonel Shigri recites the Quran through the night, marks the emotional excess he carries within his body. It is also marked through Colonel Shigri’s turning toward both alcohol and the Quran when alcohol is forbidden to Muslims in the teachings of the Quran. In other words, Colonel Shigri embodies excess through his hectic and contradictory turning towards both alcohol and the Quran.

This image is repeated through the urgency contained in the visual juxtaposition of Colonel Shigri seeking “forgiveness for his sins over the Quran during the day” and plotting “his next foray into Afghanistan over scotch in the evenings.” The repetition of this image is itself an emphasis, but within this second visual, there is excess again in the juxtaposition. This is because both the Quran and scotch signify ways Colonel Shigri tried to contain the emotional excess, but both are also signifiers of that excess precisely through the zeal with which Colonel Shigri turned towards each of them.

The night before Colonel Shigri was found hanging from the ceiling fan, Ali remembers that, “He called me again when he was pouring his last whisky, his seventh probably” (89). Ali remembers his “bloodshot and blurry eyes” and how “He kept twirling whisky glass in his fingers and kept repeating the word *pimp* over and over again” (ibid).

The seventh whisky and the repetition, “over and over again,” signifies excess, consequently manifested in “the bitterness in his voice” which would “become permanent”
This permanence is also an excess because it is a permanence of bitterness, an emotion which consumes Colonel Shigri’s days and nights. This permanence as excess builds through the Colonel Shigri’s trips to Afghanistan as an accumulation. The word “pimp” represents the cause of this emotional excess, which was the necrocapitalist circuit that Colonel Shigri was located within during the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan. As Ali discovers throughout the novel, this involved more “running the logistics of a guerrilla war in Afghanistan for General Zia,” more than “liaising between the Americans, who were funding the war, and the ISI, which was responsible for distributing these funds to the mujahideen” (125). It involved building and managing secret prisons and torture chambers underneath the Lahore Fort. It also involved and torturing those considered threats to the nation-state, as the secretary-general of the All-Pakistan Sweepers Union reveals to Ali during his imprisonment: “They sent in their best man to interrogate me. Zia’s right-hand man. Colonel Shigri. On the very first day, he had electrical wires put on my privates” (160).

This excess is why Colonel Shigri burns twenty-five million US dollars, which he exchanged in a “coffin-sized Samsonite” (261) in Afghanistan for the life of one of his officers “who’d lost a leg planting antipersonnel mines” (263). This is made explicit by Colonel Shigri himself: “This was my mission. To retrieve this money from someone who was dead. And I buried my man there and brought this here” (264).

Colonel Shigri embodies the emotional excess of the “categorical structure of the nation-state,” which govern this global necrocapitalist circuit. This emotional excess is marked by not only the excessive consumption of alcohol and the telling of secrets; it is also present in Colonel Shigri’s tears, in his “bloodshot and blurry eyes,” which mark his mourning for the figure of a

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soldier as a soldier, rather than as bare life. Colonel Shigri’s death as a murder ordered by General Zia-ul-Haq for the burnt twenty-five million US dollars is the necropolitical management of that emotional excess, precisely because it is too much for this “categorical structure.”

This excess represents his betrayal of the necropolitical nation-state. This excess is what marks Colonel Shigri as a traitor. Interestingly, it is possible to argue that Colonel Shigri’s excess as treason can be marked by sexual perversity. In Lieutenant Bannon’s story about the necrocapitalist circuit about the USA’s proxy war in Afghanistan, he tells Ali, “Twenty-five mil is a lot of money to your folks. You knew your dad better than I did. I knew he had his flash uniforms and rigid principles, but the man liked his scotch, and he liked his female companions” (165-166). The phrase “he liked his female companions” is a euphemism—Colonel Shigri was “screwing hookers in Geneva” (166).

Now, I am not arguing that the gendered production of prostitution and the derogatory discourses around that production represent a form of queerness as sexual perversity for the heterosexual men who participate in the gendered sexual and political economy of prostitution. Sexual perversity can be marked as sexual perversity through the figure of the individual to be corrected, instead of the figure of the monster who is queer. However, it is still sexual perversity because it is not contained within the “aggressive heterosexual patriotism” of the nation-state.

I am thus arguing that, within the specific context of the moral economy of heterosexual masculinicity produced by the Pakistani military, Colonel Shigri “screwing hookers in Geneva” marks the sexualized of Colonel Shigri as the figure of the traitor. Prostitution is not part of the

851 ibid.
fantasy of “hundreds of ladies waiting to hand out their numbers to someone in uniform,” (144) who are marked as embodying respectable heterosexual femininity through precisely this contrast. It also cannot be part of the figure of the father produced through the categorical structure\textsuperscript{853} of the Pakistani military because of that moral economy at the head of which is the father. This is why Ali reacts with offended disbelief at this revelation about his father:

Dad was screwing hookers in Geneva while I was waking up every day at five in the morning to justify his investment in my public-school education and spending my summer vacations inventing physical exercises for myself? Bannon was a bullshit artist\textsuperscript{854}

Ali’s outrage and disbelief is predicated precisely on his hero worship of his father. Ali wants to be a soldier like his father because of this hero worship. The gratitude and sense of indebtedness between father and son in the heterosexual line of inheritance is represented through Ali “waking up every day at five in the morning to justify his investment in my public-school education” and Ali “spending summer vacations inventing physical exercises for myself” represents Ali training his body to become a soldier’s body like his father’s. As an embodiment of the “rigid principles” (165) for which he is admired by numerous characters throughout the novel, Colonel Shigri is undone for Ali as his son. This undoing is located in the possibility of truth in the “hookers in Geneva” precisely because of the deployment of sexuality in the emotional and moral economy of heterosexual masculinity through the figures of father and son in the military. This is also evident in Ali’s defensive reaction to the revelation by the secretary-general of the All-Pakistan Sweepers Union that Colonel Shigri had tortured him. It is not incidental that this torture took a


\textsuperscript{854} Mohammed Hanif, \textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes} (New York: Random House, 2008), 166.
sexualized form: “On the very first day, he had electrical wires put on my privates.” This is because sexuality is pivotal in the necropolitics of power.

Ali, however, is not aware of this precisely because he is the son of Colonel Shigri as not just a father but as a figure of the father. This explains Ali’s reaction to this information:

To think that the hands that cradled you also put electrical wires to someone’s testicles is not a very appetizing thought. A shudder of loathing runs through my body. My stomach feels bloateed.\textsuperscript{855}

The physical immediacy of Ali’s reaction to this revelation about his father speaks not only to the horror of torture as a physical horror, but also to the sexual specificity of this bodily horror: “electrical wires on someone’s testicles.” This torture is directed to the male body, to the parts of a body configured as that which make that body legible as male in the most visceral of ways. Parts of the anatomy that are pivotal to sexuality as power embodied by male bodies are used mark bodies, which lack this anatomy, as less than. Ali himself is subjected to the threat of torture as a sexualized horror when he is ordered to strip in anticipation of being tortured by the ISI.

So much of torture is sexual precisely because sex is at the pivot of the two poles of necropower, the individual body and the body of the population. Sexuality is integral to sovereignty as necropolitical. It is the moment when Ali realizes that, “the hands that cradled you also put electrical wires to someone’s testicles” which marks the sovereignty of Pakistan during General Zia’s military dictatorship as necropolitical. Colonel Shigri as the torturer embodied this necropolitical sovereignty through sexuality. Ali’s reaction is the reaction of the son who now has knowledge of the figure of the father as the embodiment of “sovereignty, predominantly

\textsuperscript{855} Ibid.
expressed as the right to kill.”

It is fitting, therefore, that it is Ali as Colonel Shigri’s son, who embodies death from within the narration of Pakistan as a heterosexual nation-state. It may be argued that Ali is a traitor through his embodiment of both the excesses configured in Obaid and Colonel Shigri. Ali is a traitor because he is not heterosexual; he is also a traitor because he wants to kill the father of the nation in the name of his father.

Ali is marked as a traitor through “a certain queer monstrosity” that he shares with Obaid. Obaid may initiate sexual contact between them but Ali reciprocates:

Obaid came and stood in front of me, flipping his eye patch, and extended his tongue, offering me the half-chewed cardamom shell: a green fly on the red velvety tip of his tongue. I took it and put it in my mouth, savoring its sweet smell. The bitter seeds had already been eaten by him.

Obaid may have offered Ali “the half-chewed cardamom shell” but Ali willingly chooses to take it. Moreover, that he savored “its sweet smell” represents Ali remaining within that space of sexual contact between himself and Obaid.

Ali is marked as a traitor through his desire for vengeance against General Zia for ordering the death of Colonel Shigri. He uses the poison of a krait on the tip of his sword to scratch General Zia through the cover of a feigned mistake during the president’s inspection of the Silent Drill Squad on August 17, 1988. Ali does, therefore, carry out his plan to kill President General Zia-ul-Haq as the head of the army and the head of the state through his military dictatorship. This is the treason of a son against the father figure of the nation-state.

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858 Mohammed Hanif, A Case of Exploding Mangoes (New York: Random House, 2008), 141.
Ali as queer and Ali as traitor and therefore Ali as a monster is threatening to the nation-state precisely because he is located within the “categorical structure of the nation-state.”859 In other words, he is not the excess embodied by Obaid as more than heterosexual masculinity, and he is not the excess of Colonel Shigri through seven whiskies a night. Ali embodies the excess produced by and within the epistemologies of the heterosexual nation-state. Ali is the son through a heterosexual line of inheritance from Colonel Shigri. His body conforms to the physicality of the figure of the soldier. He performs heterosexual masculinity in ways Obaid does not (and cannot).860

Yet Ali has sex with Obaid, and Ali kills the president. The first configures queerness within the body of the figure of the soldier—and queerness is located between the soldier and the figure of the soldier. This is where Ali is located in his relationship with Obaid. The second configures treason within the body of the figure of the soldier as the son, and it is precisely in the name of the father, in the name of his father, that Ali as the son commits treason against the nation-state. Excess, therefore, is built into the epistemological narratives of the nation-state.

Conclusion

Monstrosity is the sexualized narration of excess. The nation-state deploys sexuality as a regime of truth through which it can manage these excesses. The nation-state configured through military dictatorships center this management through necropower, through death. However, as A

Case of Exploding Mangoes illustrates, necropower cannot contain these excesses of life within “the categorical structure of the nation-state.”\textsuperscript{861} This is illustrated in a key passage from A Case of Exploding Mangoes:

A comrade in uniform is potentially the deadweight that you’ll have to carry one day.” Colonel Shigri had sipped slowly at his whisky, twelve hours before he was found hanging from the ceiling fan. He had returned from another of his duty trips with a coffin-size Samsonite and was teaching me Pakistan’s military history through its falling fitness standards. “You owe it to your fellow soldiers to stay fit, to keep your weight down, because one day you’ll take a hit in battle and someone will have to carry you on their back. That’s what one soldier owes to another—the dignity of being carried back to one’s own bunker even if near dead. Hell, even if dead.” His voice rose and then he went quiet for a moment. “But look at them now, look at their bloated bodies. Do you know why they let themselves go?’”

I stared at him. I stared at the suitcase and wondered what he had brought home this time.

“Because they know they are not going to be fighting battles anymore. No, sir, they are drawing room soldiers, sitting on their comfy sofas and getting fat. That is the first thing they think of—that they will never have to be in a battle again. But they also know in their heart of hearts that even if they were to end up in a battle, even if they got hit, nobody is going to carry them back to their bunkers. Do you understand?”

I didn’t understand. “Why wouldn’t anyone carry them back?”

“Because they are too goddamn fat to carry.”

I had carried Obaid on my back during jungle-survival course after a mock ambush. He’d dug his heels into my thighs; his arms around my neck kept getting tighter. I flung him down to the ground when he nibbled at my earlobe.

“Cadet Obaid. The first rule of survival is that you shall not screw your savior.”

“Not even if it feels so good?” he had asked with his eyes half closed.\textsuperscript{862}

First, there is Colonel Shigri as the embodiment of emotional excess produced by the necrocapitalist context within which he is located. The word “deadweight” is an efficient


\textsuperscript{862} Mohammed Hanif, \textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes} (New York: Random House, 2008), 261.
evocation of the figure of the soldier as bare life, as a body that is nothing but weight, no longer a person. The word ‘potentially’ is what constructs the figure of the soldier as bare life because it is through the potential to become deadweight as “capacity to be killed” that the figure of the soldier is included in the life of the nation-state.\(^863\)

The word ‘dignity’ signifies the emotions within the necropolitical production of the figure of the soldier. The word “dignity” creates meaning within this capacity to be killed. The phrase “fellow soldiers” signifies the sexual code of heterosexual fraternity which governs the figure of the soldier. This code also provides meaning to the capacity to be killed through representing soldiers as brothers-in-arms, as a community that epitomizes nationalist masculinity. It also provides the veneer of equality between these brothers that parallels the veneer of the equality of citizen-subjects of the nation-state.

The failure of both dignity and brotherhood is the excess that Colonel Shigri’s body as the body of the soldier cannot contain. This is marked by both the necrocapitalism represented by the coffin-sized Samsonite and the drawing room soldiers as the hierarchy within the military that produces bare life for this necrocapitalist circuit. The description of the Samsonite as coffin-sized is a succinct indication of the war in Afghanistan as an exchange of the lives of Pakistani soldiers for US and Saudi dollars by the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, who is one of the drawing room soldiers. The coffin-sized Samsonite contains twenty-five million US dollars that Colonel Shigri was commanded to bring back with him for Afghanistan: “This was my mission. To retrieve this money from someone who was dead. And I buried my man there and brought this here” (264). Twenty-five million US dollars is the price of that Pakistani soldier life and dignity. It is the price of Colonel Shigri’s betrayal of “A comrade in uniform” because “the

dignity of being carried back to one’s own bunker even if near dead—Hell, even if dead” is what “one soldier owes to another.” This betrayal is based on the command of the “drawing room soldiers, sitting on their comfy sofas and getting fat” who are the upper echelons of the Pakistani military. They are the necropolitical producers of the figure of the soldier whose death is exchanged for US and Saudi dollars.

This is where excess is visible as built into the categorical structures of Pakistan. The words “fat” and “bloated bodies” denote excess, and they refer to the bodies of the drawing room soldiers who are the men in charge of the Pakistani military and government through a military dictatorship. Their bloated bodies mark the consumption of profit through the necrocapitalist circuit of the war in Afghanistan. The image of these men as “too goddamn fat” signifies this consumption as the excess, with the word “goddamn” and the repetition of the word “fat” pointing precisely to excess. The first five words, “A comrade in uniform is potentially the deadweight that you’ll have to carry one day” are heavy with the story of betrayal, of necrocapitalism, of anticipatory, and certain death. Yet they remind Ali of words, which are exuberant and joyful: “Not even if it feels so good?”

The last four lines of Ali’s memory of Obaid are in stark contrast to Ali’s memory of his father. They embody the excess of life that the necropolitics of the military cannot manage. These four lines contain describe a sweet, playful, sexually charged intimacy between Ali and Obaid, “during jungle-survival course after a mock ambush.” The line, “he nibbled at earlobe” is cute, tender, and playful. It connotes something lovers do; it is intimate. Obviously, it transgresses the codes of heterosexual masculinity dominant in the military. The sexual charge of this intimacy is coded through this touch, and how Obaid had “dug his heels into my thighs,” and

how Obaid’s “arms around my neck kept getting tighter and tighter.” The punctuation of semicolons rather than periods produces the impression of something building up through the sentences as through Ali’s body. This is punctuated with a period as a climax between the word “tighter” and the next sentence, in which Ali “flung him down to the ground when he nibbled at my earlobe.” Obaid nibbling at Ali’s earlobe is the most direct touch containing a sexual charge. This causes Ali to throw him “down to the ground.” While this and Ali’s stop after the address, “Cadet Obaid” might signify that Ali is trying to be firm with Obaid, the playful quality of “The first rule of survival is that you shall not screw your savior,” reveals Ali’s participation in this intimacy. This is confirmed by the fact that in other moments in the novel, which are temporally located after this moment between them, Ali and Obaid do have sex. Obaid is depicted as a failed heterosexuality through being marked as feminine next to Ali through both class and gender dynamics.865 What these four lines contain, however, is not a lack, but an excess that Obaid embodies. It is Obaid who is the initiator of intimacy and sexual contact between him and Ali, who is confident enough to nibble Ali’s earlobe. Obaid is playful and flirtatious with an almost defiant joy. Obaid’s “eyes half-closed” after Ali “had flung him down to the ground” and his teasing question, “Not even if it feels so good?” is a vivid image precisely because it is an image of Obaid reclining playfully and seductively on the ground. It is an image of Obaid enjoying the physical and erotic intimacy between him and Ali, maybe even the force with which Ali “flung him down to the ground” because it’s part of their intimacy. This is where “feels so good” may be read as not physical affection and playful pleasure, but also as a sexual charge because it is both sexual contact, and it contains a promise more sexual contact to come.

However, this form of “bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures” is forbidden in the context of Pakistan as an aggressively heterosexual nation-state, and the deployment of heterosexual masculinity in the production of the figure of the soldier as bare life. Obaid and Ali share this moment “during a jungle-survival course after a mock ambush,” a simulation of the death their bodies are both marked for. Touches that are tender, playful, and erotic are not allowed within this context as signs of life that is in excess of these codes of heterosexual masculinity. These codes mark Obaid as a failed heterosexuality, but Obaid’s body and words are not a failure so much as an excess that cannot be contained the gendered and sexual “categorical structure of the nation-state.”

It is a narrative fact that Obaid dies on board Pak One. It is a legal and social fact that homosexuality is punishable by death in Pakistan. It is an epistemological fact that the figure of the soldier is produced as bare life. It is a temporal fact that the time of the nation-state is linear according to heterosexuality. It is therefore a fact that futurity is impossible for Ali and Obaid. Their moments of intimacy, sexual contact, and affection are foreclosed by narrations of the heterosexual nation-state. They are, therefore, just that—moments.

Nonetheless, these moments are bursting with life and that life is queer because it exceeds the “terms of legibility” of the heterosexual nation-state. This excess as a burst of life

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cannot be contained in the space between the soldier and the figure of the soldier as a figure of bare life.

That excess is embodied in the novel as a whole by Colonel Shigri and Obaid, then triangulated through Ali. That excess is an impression made on Ali’s body through his contact with both his father and his lover. This excess as feeling, as felt, therefore, is a continuous threat to the linear temporality of the nation-state. This is what the novel’s lack of narration of Ali’s future marks: the possibility of an excess as a challenge to the nation-state. Ali “is the one who got away” (6) but the point is precisely what gets away from the “categorical structure of the nation-state.” What gets marked as a failure may often contain too much rather than nothing or too little.

It’s His Fault

A Case of Exploding Mangoes was published in 2008 to international acclaim. The New York Observer, The Washington Post, The Village Voice, and Newsweek all praised the novel for being witty, smart, well written, and imaginative. A Case of Exploding Mangoes was not published in Pakistan. Instead, it was published in India and imported into Pakistan. As Mohammed Hanif explained in an interview with The Guardian in October 2008, he could not find a publisher in Pakistan. They all considered the novel to be controversial because it is about the Pakistan military and ISI, and paints a less than flattering portrait of both. When Hanif finally did find a small publisher, the printers refused to print the book for the same reasons.

The reasons why the novel was not published in Pakistan seem to be the stuff of Hollywood films: fear of the Inter-Intelligence Services (ISI), a shadowy, deadly intelligence agency operating with impunity beyond the law.\(^{874}\) Indeed, there is evidence of how deadly the ISI can be. This has been demonstrated graphically in recent years, for example, in what has happened to those who have challenged the nationalist version of the resistance movement in Balochistan since the early 2000s.\(^{875}\) Thousands of Baloch and non-Baloch activists and journalists have been disappeared, imprisoned,\(^{876}\) tortured, murdered,\(^{877}\) and intimidated by the Pakistan military and military intelligence.\(^{878}\) The murder of journalist Saleem Shahzad in 2011 is another gruesome example,\(^{879}\) as is the attempted assassination of popular television anchor Hamid Mir in 2014.\(^{880}\)

Contrary to the ominous implications of the publishers’ objections, however, no harm has come to Mohammed Hanif. In the aforementioned interview with The Guardian in October 2008, Hanif also said that he had received nothing but praise: “I’ve had scarily good reviews in the Pakistani press. Nobody has said anything negative at all, and I’ve had no problems at all because of the book.”\(^{881}\)

\(^{874}\) Ibid.
There was one person who said something negative. In her review of *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* in The Guardian, Cambridge scholar Priyamvada Gopal assessed the novel as “a story about a few bad men rather than a far-reaching and complicated political alliance whose global legacy shapes our lives.”\(^882\) While I disagree with Dr. Gopal’s assessment of the novel, I think it may contain an accurate reflection of how the circulation of the novel was enabled by certain fictions configured within nationalist narrations of the failures, crises, and broken promises of Pakistan.\(^883\) I argue that failure and crisis in Pakistan is culturally narrated through characters like in a novel, rather than institutions and structures. The readability of the novel through this cultural lens enabled it to circulate in Pakistan. It was the veneer of fiction and satire which allowed the circulation of the novel. It was this disguise which produced the novel as the “story about a few bad men,”\(^884\) in an ironic mirror of nationalist fictions of Pakistan’s failures, crises, and broken promises as the stories of a few bad men.\(^885\)

### A Few Bad Men

If, as Naveeda Khan observes, “state sovereignty is not so much chimera as a negotiated deal,”\(^886\) in Pakistan, then so is being able to say what you want about those negotiations. Balochistan, for example, was not a topic of major conversation in 2008 and 2009, nor was the ISI in the news as

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the subject of open accusations of intimidation. The focus of 2007 and 2008 was the downfall of the government of President Pervez Musharraf, who came to power in 1999 through a military coup. His popularity from 1999 to 2006 was based in part on the ineptitude and corruption of his predecessor, Nawaz Sharif. However, that was not enough to sustain support for President Musharraf after he allowed US and Pakistan military operations against militant organizations in the northwestern regions of Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan in 2004. To gain political legitimacy and shore up support, President Musharraf appointed a new Chief of Army Staff in 2007, General Ashfaq Kayani. Under his command, the Pakistan military distanced itself discursively, for appearances’ sake, from President Musharraf and matters of state.

Agitations led by lawyers against Musharraf’s decision to fire Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, the declaration of a state of emergency by Musharraf, and the return and assassination of Benazir Bhutto—all these stories provided figures, rather than institutions or histories, as the focus in narratives of change in Pakistan. Furthermore, citizens began to notice a resurgence of what Mbembe has described as war machines, such as the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, during this time. The siege of the Lal Masjid in Islamabad in summer 2007 became a graphic illustration of the complicated histories and dynamics of the Pakistan military’s operations in 2004 in the northwestern regions against militant organizations. However, this debate was directed at President Musharraf rather than the Pakistan military as an organization, and the temporal limit of this debate was drawn at 2004. Musharraf and his government were also blamed for the assassination of Pakistan’s People’s Party (PPP) leader Benazir Bhutto in December 2007, which was claimed by the TTP.

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Bhutto’s death signaled the end of President Musharraf’s government, no matter how many deals he negotiated with any number of political parties (including the PPP) in attempt to save it. Bhutto’s husband, Asif Ali Zadari, appointed himself chairperson of the PPP, and became president of Pakistan in 2008 after the PPP won in the general elections held in February. It was widely believed that both Musharraf’s unpopularity and the signification of Benazir Bhutto as a martyr propelled the PPP to victory.

It is not surprising that a novel satirizing General Zia-ul-Haq was popular in Pakistan during a PPP government. The PPP is a dynastic political party led by the Bhutto family. The most prominent figures of this dynasty are Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his daughter Benazir. General Zia ordered Zulfikar Ali Bhutto hanged for murder in 1979. It was not unexpected, then, that his daughter, Benazir, declared General Zia’s death an act of God and closed the investigation into the mystery during her prime ministership after his death.888

Benazir Bhutto’s declaration of General Zia’s death as an act of God points to her narration of Pakistan as “a story about a few bad men.”889 This description of General Zia functions to produce him as a bad man acting in isolation, who was punished by God.

Such a cultural representation of General Zia-ul-Haq erases the geopolitical complexities of the war in Afghanistan during the 1980s, of which the war machines now active in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and Kashmir are direct legacies. Furthermore, the idea that God punished General Zia with the finality of death produces a closure of his eleven-year regime. This erases the ways in which the epistemological, social, demographic, and economic landscapes of

Pakistan were irrevocably marked by his dictatorship. These are addressed in the novel. For example, the story of Colonel Shigri’s murder on General Zia’s orders encapsulates how this war established a point of necrocapitalism in South Asia, which continues to provide political and economic power to the Pakistan military. The story of blind Zainab illustrates the enactment of violent laws around female sexuality, which are in practice today. The story of General Zia’s close friendship with the Saudi Prince Naif represents the political and economic influence of the Saudi government in Pakistan. This influence has meant the entrenchment of Wahhabism in Islam, contrary to Pakistan as part of a specifically South Asian cartography of Islam, which has roots in India, Afghanistan, Iran, and Central Asia.

As this metaphor makes clear, Pakistan is narrated through a constant negotiation of fact and fiction, of figures and institutions. It is apt, therefore, that a novel provides structural criticism through that very method of narration, that is, of figures rather than institutions. This also means that the form of criticism chosen by Mohammed Hanif, the novel, afforded him protection as it circulated in Pakistan as a work of fiction. Hanif’s use of satire also constructs a veil of safety through humor and exaggeration. Yet it contains the possibility of subversion and critique precisely because figures as caricatures are deployed as ciphers of structures and institutions. This is one reason why storytelling is a political act: representation as a mode of metaphor, symbolism, and reference contain the possibility of figures as embodiments and representations of institutions and structures. In A Case of Exploding Mangoes, satire produces larger than life figures of General Zia, Major Kiyani, and General Akhtar—and it is precisely this larger-than-life quality that points to these figures as representative of institutions and structures. Thus satire subversively maintains the link between these figures and the structures that enabled them to do the things for which they have gained historical notoriety.
A Land of Too Many Stories

In a 2012 interview with National Public Radio (NPR) in the USA, Hanif told an amusing story of having been approached at evening soirees by former heads of intelligence agencies who praised the novel and then asked who his sources were. Hanif said, “I used to find it a bit scary at the beginning, that, my God, these people are running my country and they actually believe all the lies that I've written.”

This anecdote is amusing precisely because it’s about the possibility of truth in a work of fiction about the cause of the crash and explosion of Pak One. While what is disturbing about this possibility is masked by the humor, the humor does not blunt the possibility of truth. Rather, the humor enables the articulation of this possibility. It lends a certain veil of absurdity as a disguise for the presence of the possibility of truth. Satire is effective precisely because it produces the possibility of truth through fusing accuracy with absurdity. Satire also has a long history in the subcontinent as a method of protest and resistance, within which Hanif’s novel can be situated.

Contemporary examples in Pakistan include a 2005 fictitious news show called the 4 Man Show; the English language music videos of Beyghairat Brigade released on YouTube in 2011 and 2013 (one of which, “Dhinak Dhinak,” is a direct commentary on the Pakistan

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891 Ibid.
Army); and Ali Gul Pir and Adil Omar’s English language protest, “Kholo BC,”⁸⁹⁵ against the ban on YouTube in 2014.

The origin story of the novel is also an example of satire functioning in narrations of Pakistan as a place where fact and fiction are blurred. Hanif has noted that the idea for the novel came from the failure of his attempts as a journalist to solve “the perfect murder mystery” of the death of General Zia. Therefore, he decided that “If I can’t solve it as a journalist, why don’t I work it out in fiction?”

The figure of the journalist functions within the same discourses of truth as history, science, anthropology, and sociology.⁸⁹⁶ All of these discourses are marked as much by what they are as what they are not — which is fiction. On first glance, then, there is something of the absurd in a journalist as a figure within the discourse of truth as fact, deciding to solve a real mystery of something as serious as the assassination of a president in fiction, in particular, in a work of satire. Nevertheless, Hanif’s reason, that “there were cover-ups and cover-ups of cover-ups”⁸⁹⁷ point to an excess of ways in which this mystery could not be solved in fact.

Solving the mystery in a work of fiction, however, meant that Hanif could bring together all the possibilities of the crash and explosion of Pak One. The power of the novel lies precisely in possibility and multiplicity. Fiction is a way of telling not only a truth, in Pakistan, but also pointing out the multiplicity of truths, the ways in which this multiplicity is part of what Pakistan means, and how this multiplicity means that Pakistan cannot be narrated in singularity. Fiction is also a way to contain possibility under a veil of representation, partly because fiction only ever

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presents a fragment. Fragments, though, may be more reliable locations of truth, than something claiming to be the whole picture. 898

Both possibility and multiplicity anchor what is so difficult in attempts to explain Pakistan: there are too many possibilities, too many facts, an excess which “cannot be contained within the categorical structure of the nation-state.” 899 The transnational tropes and metonyms through which Pakistan is often narrated—such as crisis, Third World, jihad, Islam, militancy, failure, cricket, biryani, and mangoes—are excesses precisely because they are fragments deployed as autonomous and complete categories to explain Pakistan in its entirety. 900

Mohammed Hanif and A Case of Exploding Mangoes have remained in news about Pakistan post 2008 in several modes. One mode was the location of contemporary Pakistani Anglophone literature in global literary circulation. A Case of Exploding Mangoes was published in 2008. It followed high-profile publications of Mohsin Hamid’s The Reluctant Fundamentalist in 2007, Kamila Shamsie’s Broken Verses in 2005, and Nadeem Aslam’s Maps for Lost Lovers in 2004. All of these came before Daniyal Mueenuddin’s collection of short stories, In Other Rooms, Other Wonders in 2009. The literary magazine Granta published a special issue on Pakistani writing in English in 2010.

By this time, there was a conversation in British, American, and English-language circles in Pakistan about an international spotlight on Pakistani Anglophone novels similar to the moment in the 1980s of Indian Anglophone novel. One set of conversations hailed the renaissance of the Pakistani Anglophone novel, and imbued it with celebratory emotions.

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Pakistani Anglophone literature as an object became suffused with resistance to religion-based violence and conservatism, a challenge to the image of Pakistan as one of the world’s most dangerous countries for journalists, a refusal of stereotypes of Pakistan as a land populated only by burka-clad women and gun-toting men, an illustration that creative talent in South Asia was not just located in India. Simultaneously, there was a discourse about how Pakistani Anglophone literature was written mostly by diasporic Pakistanis living in the USA and the UK. This diasporic position is what marked the reception of Pakistani Anglophone literature as clichéd, reproducing the binaries of tradition versus modernity, west versus east, mangoes, and the Taliban.\textsuperscript{901}

Through both discourses, Pakistan Anglophone literature became a self-contained and ahistorical object which circulated through contradictory conversations: it was accused of not addressing geopolitical contexts, terrorism, poverty, and corruption by some, and praised by others for illustrating the courage of ordinary Pakistanis in the face of terrorism, poverty, and corruption.

For his part, Mohammed Hanif dismissed media representations of an apparent renaissance of Pakistani Anglophone literature as a marketing tool by international publishers for the American and British markets. Kamila Shamsie insisted that Pakistani Anglophone writers had always been writing, and that they were telling stories just like everyone else.

Both conversations and the point of contention in between are signs of excess within and of Pakistan as both \textquotedblleft a place insufficiently imagined\textquotedblright\textsuperscript{902} and a place imagined too much, as it were. The discourses Pakistani Anglophone literature as an object became sticky with


\textsuperscript{902} Naveeda Khan, introduction to \textit{Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan} (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 4.
representative tropes in transnational conversations about Pakistan. The Pakistanis who participated in these conversations were those with the social and economic privilege to be transnationally mobile and English-speaking, those who have access to these conversations. The reactions of Hanif and Shamsie represent different emotional negotiations of these tropes as modes through which their writing is received.

However, while Hanif’s reaction touches on the transnational political economy in which Pakistani Anglophone literature circulates, Shamsie’s is problematic precisely because it ignores this political economy. The idea that Pakistani writers are telling stories just like everyone else rings somewhat hollow because of the universalism it implies. While the sentiment behind it makes sense as a resistance to the abundance of signs with which Pakistani Anglophone novels are imbued, there is a difference between universalism and resonance. The deployment of “just like everyone else” speaks to colonial metropoles as locations of universal ideas, structures, sentiments, and goals with the colony or margins, therefore, as locations of the particular and the aspiration to such universalism, and of the interpretation of creative production from places such as Pakistan through categories already constructed by the UK and the USA and colonial and neocolonial metropoles. The term “just like everyone else” undoes precisely the resistance of these categories found in the irritation of Mohammed Hanif in being asked about the renaissance of Pakistani Anglophone writing.

It is not coincidental, of course, that this hype about Pakistani Anglophone writers manifests as a defense against what is popularly marked as Islam-based violence and conservatism happened between 2007 and 2010. 2007 marked the beginning of the downfall of President Musharraf, who was a staunch ally of the USA in the war on terror, and manifestations of the efficiency and efficacy of the war machines of different armed groups in the northwestern
regions and Afghanistan, of which the siege at Lal Masjid was an example. 2008 saw these manifestations continue, including the attack on the Islamabad Marriott Hotel. 2010 saw the escalation of US drone attacks in the northwestern regions of Pakistan followed by retaliatory violence in Pakistan by various armed groups in these areas.

Therefore, I argue that the transnational hype about Pakistani Anglophone literature was located in old and new colonial metropoles as part of the discursive project of explaining and redeeming Pakistan. This project narrates Pakistan through reinvigorated Orientalist tropes. This narration produces not only the failure of nationalism, the failure of the state, and the failure of sovereignty; it also determines who resists these failures and what that resistance looks like. In other words, the project of explaining and redeeming Pakistan produces both the good guys and the bad guys.

It is the transnational politics of class and language, in which this project is anchored, that determines who these good guys and bad guys are. The good guys are the English-speaking, socially and economically affluent, transnationally mobile Pakistani writers and readers of Pakistani Anglophone literature. The bad guys are those who are not—and it is the immediate recognition of whom this “not” that marks the politics privilege of the good guys.

It is the discursive production of Pakistan as the land of good guys and bad guys which A Case of Exploding Mangoes refuses by being a novel that seems to barely contain an excess of stories, an excess of anger, an excess of memory, and an excess of imagination.


This dissertation pivots on the notion of excess as those lives, histories, communities, and futures which the nation-state, as the “autonomous historical subject par excellence”\textsuperscript{903} cannot manage, contain, or incorporate. It is these peoples and the spaces they make, the spaces they demand for their lives, which challenge the nation-state as the modern form of political identity and community.\textsuperscript{904}

Pakistan was created through the ways in which British colonialism remapped South Asia. Pakistan, “as an experiment in Muslim modernity tied to national territory,”\textsuperscript{905} is trying to grapple with the excesses produced through this remapping. Indeed, excess is located in the very moment Pakistan is named—because the what, whom, where, and when that is named is always already more than that name can connote.

The three texts I analyze in this dissertation focus on different political iterations of excess and the ways in which Pakistani nationalism has attempted to manage the moments in which it is challenged by these excesses. My analysis of the film “Jinnah” examines the excess in the origin story of Pakistan that nationalist narratives cannot erase. “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” attempts to manage this excess through the deployment of a transnational philic Orientalism in the post-9/11 moment. \textit{A Case of Exploding Mangoes} does neither. Instead, the novel interrogates the technologies of power deployed by the Pakistani nation-state during the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq to erase, elide, and destroy the excesses that

\textsuperscript{904} Aamir Mufti, \textit{Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture} (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1-34.
\textsuperscript{905} Veena Das, foreword to \textit{Beyond Crisis: Re-evaluating Pakistan} edited by Naveeda Khan (London, New York, New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), xvi.
challenged the nation-state. This is how *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* resists the nationalist narrations of both “Jinnah” and “The Reluctant Fundamentalist. General Zia-ul-Haq’s regime was the consequence of the excesses in the origin story of Pakistan which “Jinnah” erases and ignores. General Zia-ul-Haq’s regime was simultaneously the legacy which has produced the political, social, and economic violences Pakistan faces today that “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” elides and disappears through the deployment of a philic Orientalism.

I want to stress here, as I did in the introduction, that the word excess as I foreground it in this dissertation, is not a celebration or an affirmation, the way the word plenitude may be. My use of the term excess is my commitment to being honest about what is too much for, and in, Pakistan. This commitment is based on my position of social and economic privilege in Pakistan, which enables me to live in Pakistan without too much violence, too much grief, too much fear, too much poverty. This privilege is not available to too many Pakistanis.

This dissertation is marked by this privilege. The texts I use have been produced by people who occupy the same circuits of social and economic privilege as I do. These circuits are transnational, both in terms of the political economies which anchor them, and through the subjects they produce and are signified by. These circuits locate Pakistanis like me within wider transnational South Asian spaces, be they marked as diasporic, immigrant, or tourist. It is the political economies or the transnational politics of class which mark the differences between how different South Asians inhabit these spaces. It is the social, political, and economic power of this transnational demographic of Pakistanis which enable the production and circulation of the texts I explore in this dissertation as representations of Pakistan. In other words, transnationally located Pakistanis like me often have access to transnational modes of representation, such as

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English language films and novels. The transnational mobility of these particular modes of representation marks not only an access to resources for the production and circulation of these cultural products, but also access to wider audiences. This access is not available to most Pakistanis. It is based on the positions of privilege Pakistanis such as myself, occupy in global political, social, and economic circuits. However, as I argue in my analysis of “The Reluctant Fundamentalist,” this access does not equal ownership on the idea or space of Pakistan.

My self-identification as a transnational and queer of color feminist signals my commitment to exploring the dynamics of gender, sexuality, class, race, and religion in the production of national space, in the production of those who can claim to be legitimate subject-citizens. It is these politics of class, gender, sexuality, and religion which determine the space of Pakistan. My exploration of excess is an exploration of the politics of identity where excess is located. “Jinnah” and “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” affirm Pakistan as a heterosexual and masculine space. Those lives, practices, and communities that would challenge such a national space are erased from these representations of Pakistan. A Case of Exploding Mangoes resists this affirmation by deconstructing the technologies of power through which heterosexuality and masculinity in Pakistan are produced. The novel’s narration of the love story between Ali Shigri and Obaid-ul-Allah refuses an exclusive claim on the idea or spaces of Pakistan by those who are legible through the heterosexual matrix.\footnote{Judith Butler, \textit{Gender Trouble} (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006).}

I draw on the work of Sara Ahmed, Jack Halberstam, and Mishuana Goeman in my chapters to show how the idea and space of Pakistan is produced through linear temporality as national temporality. Linear temporality is heteronormative temporality, the straight line of
“bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance.” It is heteronormative temporality which constructs the inheritance of the nation from father to son. It is linear temporality which holds bodies in place to produce the state as a teleological certainty. It is heteronormative temporality which produces the sexual, economic, and social politics of respectability that determine who is a legitimate subject-citizen and who is not. It is linear temporality which produces the past, present, and future as distinct and complete epistemological categories. The excess of lives, communities, and places that resists national temporality as heteronormative and linear is found on surfaces of bodies and places, in what Sara Ahmed describes as impressions—feelings and memories which press down on surfaces, which linear time cannot transcend.

One might visualize the linear temporality of Pakistani nationalism as a black thread, running straight through a seam. Yet this thread is wearing thin through the force of what is beneath and around the seam—the excess which this thread cannot contain, cannot seal, cannot bind. This excess is the ninety-names of God and the hundreds more His people have devised. This excess is the lives of the Ahmadiyya, and the force with which the state enacts violence on these communities. This excess is the lives of Hijras who resist social and economic disenfranchisement by creating their own families. This excess is in the sharp satire of

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910 Ibid.
Beyghairat Brigade’s YouTube videos, “Aalu Andey” and “Dhinak Dhinak,” which are banned in Pakistan. This excess is in the hidden carving of the Star of David in the stone of Karachi’s architecture. This excess is in multiplicity of war machines which are based in Pakistan and active across South Asia. Excess is also located in the very fact that it cannot be contained with a moral economy of a transnational politics of respectability deployed to produce proper kinds of Pakistani subject-citizens. This moral economy is deployed to contain and manage those modes of identity and community which are neither easy to compartmentalize according to singular genealogies, nor easy to make legible according to a transnational Orientalism marked by capital.

Excess marks the moment in which it may be possible to imagine Pakistan differently. However, it is not that imagination. This imagination must be what we do with excess, which possibility we turn towards and away from in that moment of excess. I have learned what some of these turns towards and turns away from might look like from the poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Adrienne Rich, and Qwo-Li Driskill. I have learned what these doings might look like from the writings of Edward Said, Audre Lorde, Sara Ahmed, and Avery Gordon, and the intersectional political resistance of Jewish Voice for Peace. My commitment is to participate in finding ways to imagine community across historical, epistemological, and cartographic boundaries. This does not mean an elision and erasure of context or difference. Rather, it is a commitment to an acknowledgement of differentials of powers, and the social, political, and economic structures in

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which these inequalities are located. Imagining community through place and practice,\textsuperscript{920} rather than through a temporal transcendence of the differences between us, offers a chance to do something different and something better with the possibility that the moment of excess contains.

Bibliography


