

دل نا اُمید تو نہیں نا کام ہی تو ہے
 لمبی ہے غم کی شام مگر شام ہی تو ہے

میں زندگی کا ساتھ نبھاتا چلا گیا
 ہر فکر کو دھوئیں میں اڑاتا چلا گیا

جیسا ہیں اپنی خالی کیوں دیتا درد گالی
 وہ سنٹری ہمارا وہ پاسباں ہمارا

ہم بھنت کش اس دُنیا سے جب اپنا حصہ مانگیں گے
 اک بار نہیں اک کھیت نہیں ہم ساری دنیا مانگیں گے

کئی یادوں کے چہرے ہیں کئی قصے پڑانے ہیں
 تری سو داستانیں ہیں تیرے کتنے فسانے ہیں
 مگر اک وہ کہانی ہے جو اب مجھ کو ستاتی ہے
 زندگی آ رہا ہوں میں

میری ہاتھوں کی گرمی سے پگھل جائیں گی زنجیریں
 میرے قدموں کی آہٹ سے بدل جائیں گی تقدیریں
 اُمیدوں کے دیسے لے کر یہ سب تیرے لیے لے کر
 زندگی آ رہا ہوں میں

ENDNOTES

- 1 Our account of the formation and the history of the Progressive Writers' Association has drawn from a variety of sources, foremost among them being Carlo Coppola's magisterial 1975 dissertation (Carlo Coppola, 1975, *Urdu Poetry, 1935-1970: The Progressive Episode*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago). In addition, see Ali Sardar Jafri, 1959, *Taraqqi Pasand Adab*, Aligarh: Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu; Sajjad Zaheer, 1959, *Raushnai*, New Delhi: Azad Kitaab Ghar; Ali Sardar Jafri, 1984, *Taraqqi Pasand Tehrik ki Nisf Sadi*, New Delhi: Delhi University Press; Amar Amiri, 1991, *Taraqqi Pasand Adab: Ek Tanqeedi Jaayez*, Calcutta: Osmania Book Depot; Ralph Russell, 1999, 'Leadership in the All-India Progressive Writers' Movement, 1935-1947,' in Ralph Russell, *How Not to Write the History of Urdu Literature and Other Essays on Urdu and Islam*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 69-93. Russell's essay was originally published in 1977.
- 2 Carlo Coppola, *ibid*, p. 76.
- 3 'Nirala' was an enthusiastic supporter of the movement, a staunch opponent of the caste system and an advocate of solidarity among various caste and religious groups; his poem 'Kukurmutta' (Mushroom) exemplifies these sentiments in a very economical fashion:

*Khaansaama, baavarchi aur chobdaar
 Sipahi, saees, bhishhti, ghudsavaar
 Tamjan vaale kuch desi kahaar*

Naaee, dhobi, teli, tamboli, kumhaar
Feelwaan, oontwaan, gadeewaan
Ek khaasa Hindu-Muslim khaandaan

Chefs, cooks and doormen
 Foot soldiers, stable-hands, water-carriers, horsemen
 Bearing their equipment, some native palanquin-bearers
 Barbers, washermen, oilers, betel-sellers, potters
 Elephant-mahouts, camel-riders, cart-drivers
 What a full Hindu-Muslim family.

- 4 See Ali Sardar Jafri, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-42.
- 5 Reprinted in *Bisvin Sadi Mein Jan Kala*, edited by Jan Natya Manch, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 74-88.
- 6 Except perhaps its predecessors Sir Sayyid/Hali/Azad.
- 7 Henceforth, we use the term Progressives as a shorthand to refer to the Urdu poets of this tradition.
- 8 *In the Mirror of Urdu: Recompositions of Nation and Community 1947-1965* by Aijaz Ahmad, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, p. 28.
- 9 As Aijaz Ahmad (*ibid*, p. 11) puts it 'the bulk of the writers of Urdu at the time of the Partition constituted, regardless of religious or regional origin, an identifiable social group, that is, a community with a dense and shared structure of feeling, which lasted far beyond the Partition itself, despite the massive demographic dislocations in the ensuing years; that a secularist belief in the composite culture of Hindus and Muslims in India was the predominant ideological position in this community.'
- 10 Although formally issued during the conference establishing the All Pakistan Progressive Writers' Association, the manifesto of the APPWA had already been 'in effect' since the change in the line of the CPI after its 1948 Congress. The new, more militant party-line, called the Ranadive doctrine after the new Secretary General of the CPI, officially declared the end of the strategy of the United Front. The peasant struggles in Telangana and elsewhere, and their brutal suppression by the new 'socialist' government of post-colonial India, had resulted in the changed strategy as well as the changed analysis of the Indian national bourgeoisie and its political leadership represented by Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The new line was a shift from the old United Front line of anti-imperialism to one

- of anti-capitalism and anti-feudalism, the two poles around which communist strategy in the colonial and post-colonial countries has historically revolved.
- 11 As the secretary of APPWA, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi argued in a report on these years to the association, and as many Pakistani communists have variously admitted, the new strategy was one of Left adventurism, and was based on a misconception that Pakistan was now a capitalist state, and that the communist movement in India and Pakistan had entered a new stage – one of militant revolution. Ranadive admitted this in his self-criticism before the CPI in 1950 when he was replaced as the General Secretary.
 - 12 See, for instance, the issue titled *People's Art in the Twentieth Century: Theory and Practice* brought out by the Jan Natya Manch, July 1999-September 2000; *On Whose Side Are You, Masters of Culture*, 1987, Progressive Publishers; 'Questions of Culture' by Antonio Gramsci, in *Selections from Cultural Writings*, 1985, Lawrence and Wishart.
 - 13 Speakers at the Conference for the Reform of Urdu Literature and Poets who put together a collection titled *Madaava* (edited by Furqat Kakorwi) deployed satire and parodies to critique, among other things, the free verse employed by the progressive writers, their quotidian themes, and their use of unconventional tropes.
 - 14 p. 67.
 - 15 Sonagachi is the red-light district of Calcutta, Chowringee, its wealthy neighbourhood.
 - 16 This thought was given voice by C.M. Naim at a conference presentation.
 - 17 Many of the poems quoted in this book, including this one, are fragments of longer poems. We have tried to use representative verses that minimize losses in narrative continuity.
 - 18 The iconic betrayer in Indian history, who sided with the British in the battle of Plassey in 1757, the site of the East India Company's first military triumph, which formally inaugurated colonial rule in India. Clive defeated Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah, who is referred to as 'Siraj' in the same line of the poem.
 - 19 Maharani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi fought the British in India's first battle of independence in 1857, and was killed in the conflict.
 - 20 After the 1857 revolt was suppressed, Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal king, was exiled to Burma.
 - 21 Tipu Sultan, who was the ruler of Mysore, in the late eighteenth

- century, fought a series of battles with the British before being killed in the battle of Srirangapatna in 1799.
- 22 The heads of Bahadur Shah Zafar's two sons were reportedly presented to him on a tray during his exile in Burma.
- 23 *Savera*, Lahore, No. 4, p. 4, 1947.
- 24 1948 *Ka She'ri Adab*, *Savera*, Lahore, No. 5 and No. 6, 1948.
- 25 The date when India constituted itself as a republic.
- 26 Ali Sardar Jafri, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-22.
- 27 See, for instance, Faiz's translation of 'A Letter from Prison' (*Zindaan Se Ek Khat*) in Faiz, 1981, *Sham-e Shehr-e Yaaraan*, Lahore: Karwan Press, p. 109.
- 28 Carlo Coppola, *op. cit.*, p. 641.
- 29 The reference here is to the United Nations.
- 30 This couplet is 'borrowed' from a poem by the Persian classical poet, Hafiz.
- 31 The 'night of the wretched' refers to the night that followed the martyrdom of Imam Husain at Karbala in 61 AH. This event is often used as a metaphor for idealism, personal courage and great grief.
- 32 A battle in Islamic history known for heavy casualties.
- 33 For a comprehensive and empathic treatment of the representation of the Palestinian struggle in Urdu poetry, see Shahab Ahmed, 1998, 'The Poetics of Solidarity: Palestine in Modern Urdu Poetry,' *Alif*, 18, pp. 29-64.
- 34 Marshall Berman, 1987, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Hammondsworth: Penguin, p. 311.
- 35 Referring, no doubt, to other markers of progress, such as hydroelectric dams and nuclear power.
- 36 Of course, it is important to note that it is not just any random 'foreign' achievement which is so appropriated; it is a Soviet one.
- 37 See Altaf Husain Hali, 1948, *Muqaddama-e Sher-o Shaa'iri* (Ed. Rafiq Hasan). Allahabad: Rai Sahib Lala Ram Dayal Agarwal. For a more detailed discussion on Hali's *Muqaddama*, see Carlo Coppola, 1975, pp. 4-12.
- 38 See, for example, the treatment of the PWA in Ralph Russell, 1992, *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature*, London: Zed Books, pp. 34-48.
- 39 For a detailed discussion of this trend, see Harbans Mukhia, 1999, 'The Celebration of Failure as Dissent in Urdu Ghazal', *Modern Asian Studies*, 33:4, pp. 861-881.
- 40 Chengiz Khan and Nadir Shah are notorious in Indian history as raiders and despoilers of local wealth.
- 41 A gathering of kings in Hindu mythology. Serves here as a metaphor for an assembly of the elite.
- 42 Eeshwar being one of the ways Hindus refer to God; Allah is the Muslims' name for God.
- 43 Yves Thoraval, 2000, *The Cinemas of India (1896-2000)*, New Delhi: MacMillan, p. 55.
- 44 Nasreen Munni Kabir, 1999, *Talking Films: Conversations on Hindi Cinema with Javed Akhtar*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 51.
- 45 *ibid* p. 51.
- 46 As an aside, it is interesting to note that Hindi film comedians often chose to take on Christian names such as Johnny Walker, Polson, Charlie, Johnny Lever; but that is another story.
- 47 Yogendra Malik, 1988, 'Socialist Realism and Hindi Novels' in *Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature*, edited by Carlo Coppola, New Delhi: Chanakya Publications, p. 115.
- 48 See Yogendra Malik, *ibid*, p. 115 and Mukul Kesavan, 1994, 'Urdu, Awadh and the Tawaif: The Islamicate Roots of Indian Cinema', in *Forging Identities* edited by Zoya Hasan, New Delhi: Kali for Women, pp 244-257. Kesavan also talks about the influence of Hindi literary stalwarts such as Bharatendu Harishchandra, Pramath Nath Mitra and Thibo Babu in the role Hindi writers played in the domain of popular culture.
- 49 See the entry on Guru Dutt in Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen, 1994, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 93.
- 50 Quoted in Yves Thoraval, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
- 51 Peter Manuel, 1993, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- 52 The instructions given to these lyricists included ones like 'write this verse without using the "m" sound' since saying anything with "m" in it required the lips to come together and would interfere with the lip-synch of the song'.
- 53 In Nasreen Munni Kabir, *op. cit.*, p. 123. This logic presumably leads Akhtar (in our opinion, an outstanding lyricist) to write songs like: *Aap hitne sweet hitne nek ho; Birthday ka jaise koi cake ho* (You are so sweet and virtuous; Just like a birthday cake). Sweet, OK. But a virtuous cake?!
- 54 Manuel, *op.cit*, p. 9.
- 55 See, for example, Jyotindra Das Gupta, 1970, *Language, Conflict and*

- National Development: Group Politics and National Language Policy in India*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 56 Mushirul Hasan, 1997, *Legacy of a Divided Nation: Indian Muslims Since Independence*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Hasan also recalls Mohsinul Mulik's poignant verse that symbolized Urdu's plight, *Chal saath, ke hasrat dil-e mahroom se nikle, Aashiq ka janaaza hai, zara dhoom se nikle* (Walk along, that the defeated heart may fulfil its [last] desire, After all, it is a lover's corpse, give it a flamboyant burial), p. 160.
- 57 One of the best sources is probably Christopher R. King, 1994, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- 58 Aijaz Ahmed, 1996, 'In the Mirror of Urdu: Recompositions of Nation and Community 1947-65'. In *Lineages of the Present*, New Delhi: Tulika, pp. 205-208.
- 59 For example, Sadhvi Rithambara uses words like *naarebaazi*, *naam-o-nishaañ*, *lalkaar*, *shaitaan*, *dushman*, etc. routinely in her speeches, while her poetry is littered with words that would conventionally be seen as Urdu.
- 60 While we use Urdu in the fashion that is commonly accepted, we subscribe to the view that the linguistic distinctions between Hindi and Urdu are arbitrary.
- 61 An interesting instance of this is offered by Javed Akhtar, who says that Majrooh Sultanpuri was the poet who first used the term *sanam* (literally: idol) to refer to a beloved. Now, it is a staple form of addressing a lover in Hindi film songs.
- 62 For purposes of economy, we have only included a single sample for each poet. For a more comprehensive listing, see <http://www.cs.wisc.edu/~navin/india/songs/>.
- 63 See the searchable database of Hindi film songs at <http://www.cs.wisc.edu/~navin/india/songs/>, where it is possible to retrieve the songs by lyricist. An interesting exercise would be to compare the 300+ lyricists found at this site with another very detailed database available at <http://www.urdupoetry.com>. This website maintained by Nita Awatramani cites around 350 poets, and at least 100 names are common across both these databases, yet another piece of empirical evidence of the depth of relationship between Urdu poetry and Hindi cinema.
- 64 For a brief history of the linkage between the PWA and Indian cinema, see Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Wilemen, 1998, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
- 65 This song is adapted from Kaifi's poem 'Andeshe' (Premonitions).
- 66 While this ghazal has traditionally been attributed to Zafar, Javed Akhtar

informs us that this was actually written by his grandfather Muzter Khairabadi. See Nasreen Munni Kabir, 2005, *Talking Songs: Javed Akhtar in Conversation with Nasreen Munni Kabir*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 36.

- 67 In a lighter vein, Kaifi Azmi once compared this practice to digging a grave ahead of time and demanding a corpse of the right dimension!
- 68 Even Ghalib was not beyond such sycophancy. In the last ghazal of his *divaan*, he makes obsequious references to a financial patron, *Diya hai khalq ko bhi ta use nazar na lage, bana hai aish Tajammul Husain Khaañ ke liye* (God has bestowed riches on the world to protect him from envy, Otherwise, all wealth was meant for Tajammul Husain Khan).
- 69 The ghazal is structured relatively strictly and is made up of five to twenty autonomous couplets. Each line of the ghazal has an identical meter and rhythm. The couplets follow a rhyme scheme that goes aa, ba, ca, da, etc. The first two lines and the second line of every other couplet typically have a common end-rhyme called the *radeef* which is preceded by the rhyming *qaafiya*. As an example, here are two couplets from a ghazal written by Hasrat Mohani and used in the film *Nikaah* (Marriage, 1981):

*Chupke chupke raat din aansoo bahaana yaad hai
Hum ko ab tak aashiqi ka woh zamaana yaad hai
Khainch lena woh mera parde ka kona daf'atan
Aur dupatte meiñ tera woh moonh chhupaana yaad hai*

Those nights and days of tear shedding, I still remember
Yes, that era of intense loving, I still remember
Me suddenly pulling away the curtain between us
And you behind your *dupatta* hiding, I still remember.

The *radeef* in this ghazal is the phrase 'yaad hai' which is found at the end of the first two lines and is repeated at the end of every second line of the succeeding couplets. The rhyming *qaafiyas* are *bahaana*, *zamaana* and *chhupaana*.

- 70 Akhtar Husain Raipuri, a socialist literary critic, had written a landmark essay in 1935 titled 'Adab Aur Zindagi' (Literature and Life) in which he had criticized the format of ghazal for being nothing more than the plaything of the rich and the indolent. The Progressives endorsed this view.

- 71 Peter Manuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-152. Also see an instructive table in the same book on pp. 297-298, that lists examples of songs in the 1980s and early 1990s based on Western tunes.
- 72 The song is very similar in rhyme and meter to an older communist organizing song that includes the line *Hum har ek desh ke jhande pe ek laal sitaara maangenge* (On every country's flag, we will demand a red star).
- 73 See, for instance, his commentary in Nasreen Munni Kabir, 1999, *op. cit.*
- 74 The poet's nom de plume, usually inserted in the last verse of a ghazal as a mark of authorship. Most poets become known by their *takhallus* such as Kaifi (Athar Hussain Rizvi), Firaq (Raghupati Sahai), Sahar (Mahendar Singh Bedi), etc.
- 75 Sahir's conflicted relationship with Pakistan is reflected in the following ironic verse: *Chalo us kufr ke ghar se salaamat aa gaye lekin; Khuda ki mamlekat mein sokhta khaanon pe kya guzri* (Thank God we arrived safe from the land of infidels; But in God's own kingdom, what happened to the broken-hearted?).
- 76 Carlo Coppola, *op. cit.*, p. 611.
- 77 *Ibid*, p. 40-41.
- 78 Nikolai Bukharin, 1934, 'Poetry, Poetics, and the Problems of Poetry in the USSR.' <http://www.marxists.org/archive/bukharin/works/1934/poetry/1.htm>
- 79 Christopher Caudwell, 1955, *Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry*. New York: International Publishers, p. 68.
- 80 George Thomson, 1945, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*. New York: International Publishers, p. 27.
- 81 This refers to the Quranic verse about creation (Maryam: 35), where it is said of God: '... he merely says to it 'Be' and it is.' 'Kun' translates to 'be' in Arabic.
- 82 We are grateful to our friends, particularly Saadia Toor (who should, in all honesty, be listed here as a co-author), for their help with this chapter. We also want to point out that feminist poetry and an analysis of these works has a vibrant history in Pakistan. See, for instance, Neelam Hussain, Samiya Mumtaz, and Rubina Saigol (eds.), 1997, *Engendering the Nation State, Volumes I and II*, Lahore: Simorgh Publications; and Jawaria Khalid and Samina Rahman (ed.), 1995, *Apni Nigaah: Auraton Ki Likki Takhleeqaat Aur Tanqeedi Jayeza*, Lahore: ASR Publications.
- 83 Admittedly, some might dispute this claim, citing the example of the ghazal in which both the lover and the beloved are referred to in male terms. However, the themes of these poems and the actions of

- its protagonists, particularly in the context of the times, leave us with little doubt about the gender of the subjects/objects of the poet's voice.
- 84 Rukhsana Ahmad (editor and translator), 1990, *Beyond Belief*, Lahore: ASR Publications, p. iii.
- 85 *ibid*, p. ii.
- 86 The charge of masculinity was most often thrown at Kishwar Naheed because of her blunt personality and her even more blunt poetry.
- 87 Both Fehmida Riyaz and Kishwar Naheed were targeted repeatedly by the state. Fourteen cases of sedition were filed against the magazine edited by Fehmida Riyaz, one of which carried the death sentence. Riyaz had to go into exile to India along with her family. Naheed was constantly harassed in her job as a civil servant and frequently threatened. Cases were filed against her as well. Clearly, both were seen as threats to the state.
- 88 A standard way of beginning an address to the prince or emperor.
- 89 This poem can be interestingly juxtaposed against Ishrat Afreen's 'Adhoore Aadmi se Guftagu' (Dialogue with an Incomplete Man) in which the poet declares:

*Main tumheñ apna idraak-o-ehsaas kis taraah dooñ?
Fikr ke is safar mein tumheñ saath hiss taraah looñ?*

How can I share my thoughts and feelings with you?
How can I take you along on this journey of the intellect?

Despite his 'artistic skills ... stature ... personality', the man being addressed by Afreen is seen by her as no more mature than a callow boy see:

*Sirf ek ladke ho tum
Jo ke roti hui ladkiyoñ
Ya udaanoñ se mahroom zakhmi-badan titliyoñ
Saahil se bandhi kishtiyon
Fakhtaon ke toote paron mein sisakti hui lazzat-aazaarion mein
panaaheñ talaashe
Jo khilandari si khwahish ke peeche lapakte hue,
Apne aadarsh bhi tod de*

You are a mere boy

Who is attracted to
Weeping girls
Wounded and flightless butterflies
Boats anchored at the shore
And who seeks sanctuary in the simpering pleasures found in the
broken wings of a dove
Who for the sake of immature desires
Will sacrifice his principles

- 90 Section 144 in the Penal Code is used to restrict assembly of people in public spaces, a common law deployed to prevent public gatherings and therefore, pre-empt dissent.
- 91 Samir Amin's term.
- 92 Rukhsana Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. iv.
- 93 Jafri's commitment to the nation-state, was formally articulated in his address to the 1936 PWA convention. His speech titled 'On the Formation of the Hindustani Nation and the Problem of its National Language' is available in Sudhi Pradhan (Ed.), 1985, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India; Chronicles and Documents (Vol. III)*, Calcutta: Pustak Bipani, pp. 156-214.7.
- 94 This poem is obviously inspired by a ghazal by Mirza Ghalib, which begins *Gulshan mein bandobast ba rang-e digar hai aaj* (The arrangement in the garden is different today).
- 95 The imagery is derived from Karbala, when the martyred Imam Husain's head was paraded impaled on a spear, and his family imprisoned.