The Crisis of Representation in Pakistani Literature and a Plea for a Linguistic Liberation

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Abstract

Today one of the most disconcerting questions confronting the postcolonial world is whether *its political liberation led to its linguistic liberation as well, and, if not, why not? This larger concern, however, with reference to Pakistani literature, leads to two subsidiary questions: first, how to define Pakistani literature and, second, who stands for it. This is the question which this paper has tried to explore because, unlike other literatures, Pakistani literature, at present, is being presented by those who write mostly in English, not Urdu. To make things thornier, many of them are not even Pakistani citizens, some not even of Pakistani origin and quite a few have never been to Pakistan. Above all, they write in English — still an elitist language in Pakistan which continues to have crippling effects on education, economy, social psychology and history of the country. Call it an irony of history or an outcome of contemporary linguistic imperialism of English, that whenever the phrase Pakistani literature is used it mostly evokes the idea of the writings available in English by such writers as Hanif Kureshi, Aamir Hussain, Nadeem Aslam, Zulfikar Ghose, Kamila Shamsie, Mohsin Hamid, etc. This is an interesting oddity which we usually do not find with regard to other literatures e.g. American literature, German literature or French literature .As a result, for a vast majority of Pakistani writers, this dominance of English implies a new reign of silence and a perpetual marginalization.*

Keywords: Pakistani literature, representation, linguistic imperialism, English, Urdu.

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1. Introduction

For a literary tradition to survive and achieve acceptance at a larger level, one of the most decisive factors is its representation both at home as well as abroad—who speaks/stands for it? Every literary tradition can boast of some names who impart it a sense of reassurance and timeless pride and who represent it. These names secure its place in the world literature and they remain a source of inspirational exultation for legions of readers as well as writers across languages and cultures. On hearing the phrase *English literature*, one is promptly led to evoke in his or her mind such names as Milton, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Woolf, Orwell, to mention just a few. On coming across the designation French literature, one is effortlessly reminded of Voltaire, Proust, Zola, Balzac, again to mention just a few.

The same is true of every literature of the world—Spanish literature will take Cervantes as its flagship introduction and Bengali literature will always consider Tagore as a testament to its glory. That is the power of representation which furnishes literary traditions with their introductions and extends their influence beyond their birthplaces. All such names, over centuries and decades, have got so closely wedded to their respective literary traditions that it has become well neigh impossible to separate the one from the other or to mention these traditions without getting these names evoked in listeners' minds.

This is the backdrop against with this paper has been conceptualized. As it deals with the question of representation vis-à-vis Pakistani literature; therefore, the overarching concerns for the present study are: Who represents Pakistani literature? Who speaks for it? These questions, of late, have taken the centre stage and a growing number of critics and theorists are dealing with them in their own ways. In fact the increasing attention currently being paid to such questions is the corollary of an unprecedented criticality and urgency which the issue of identity, more specifically national identity, has assumed in the in the wake of 20th-century anti-colonial liberations of the African and Asian nations (Tsu, 2005). Despite all the talk of transnationalism, and globalization, national identities are still strong enough to be taken as viable modes of our collective recognitions.

Benedict Anderson (2006, p. 128) contends that nations are more like "imagined communities" in the sense that mostly the members living in a

nation (even in small nations) hardly know most of their fellow members. They even do not meet most of them or hear from them. However, in their minds exists an image of their relatedness. They collectively trace their origin back to limited linguistic and cultural zones. In our own day, British historical sociologist Anthony D. Smith expresses the continuing relevance of national identity in these words:

> Of all the collective identities in which human beings share today, national identity is perhaps the most fundamental and inclusive. Not only has nationalism, the ideological movement, penetrated every corner of the globe; the world is divided, first and foremost, into 'nation states' – states claiming to be nations – and national identity everywhere underpins the recurrent drive for popular sovereignty and democracy, as well as the exclusive tyranny that it sometimes breeds. Other types of collective identity – class, gender, race, religion – may overlap or combine with national identity but they rarely succeed in undermining its hold, though they may influence its direction (2000, p. 143).

These national identities have been expressed in different ways and one of the most effective and most widely employed modes is literature. It has been one of the most robust voices to articulate nationalist discourses and indigenous conceptual priorities. While grappling with perilous collective challenges, nations have been bringing literary narratives to bear on nationalist motifs and characters.

When, in the wake of the Revolution, America needed to come to terms with the daunting challenges of independence and national identity, Washington Irving's collection of essays and short stories, *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon* (1819), appeared on the scene only to textualize the trauma and complexity of the Revolution. The stories portrayed different characters dealing with the same challenges. In one of his most notable stories *Rip Van Winkle*, the protagonist sleeps for twenty years and wakes up in an altogether alien world. What used to be a delightful and snug society now appears to be a relentless and turbulent space plagued by contentions and violent strife. Winkle realizes that while he was sleeping, the Revolution had taken its toll (Corse, 1997). However, instead of paying attention to pressing political questions, he focuses on the changes which have taken place in the day-to-day life. Such early readings helped an average American reader appreciate the transformations which were

redefining the nationalist character at some of its most fundamental levels (Mason, 2001).

In the same way, in W. B. Yeats, metaphors and symbols expressing national character and illustrating struggle for freedom proliferate. In such poems as *Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea*, *Who Goes with Fergus?*,*The Stolen Child* and *The Wanderings of Oisin*, Yeats seeks to evoke an old Ireland thoroughly mystical and Celtic in spirit as well as character (Nally, 2010). The kind of nationalism Yeats is celebrating has also been a romance and a wistful lore of many writers in Pakistan and, to them, the course of decolonization should have resulted into a decisive initiation of a linguistic liberation—a setting free of cultural as well as literary imaginings at home. The longings of these writers were altogether genuine as independence is as much political as linguistics, discursive, cultural and psychological. We had better bear in mind that for postcolonial writers, political independence should have meant "a possible alternative to the European cultural tradition which has been imposed on us and which we have more or less absorbed, for obvious historical reasons, as the only way of doing our business" (cited in Mair, 2003, p. 189). In this larger framework of nation, identity, representation and postcoloniality, the researchers want to explore the following questions:

1. What are the elements which go into the composition of a literary tradition?
2. How can Pakistani literature be defined vis-à-vis these elements?
3. To which extent is the representation of Pakistani literature by the Anglophone diasporic Pakistani writers is warranted?

2. Literary Imaginings and the Linguistic Hegemony of English

It is arguably due to this continuing relevance of national identities that presently every literary tradition here and there appears to articulate nationalist aspirations by employing a wide range of folklores, symbols, rituals, histories and traditions. Carl Gustav Jung has also presented his view of national literature in which myths, poetries and stories express the collective and archetypal unconscious of a particular nation (2014).This is one of those facts which our traditional literary criticism has failed to take into adequate consideration. It is due to this neglect that it has failed to explain as to how literature as a body is created by institutional forces backed by a plethora of ideological constructs and material structures.

Within the larger frame of a literary tradition, these constructs and structures determine the canonical status of writers and their works.

Every nation needs to have its own literature which would speak to the conditions, identities and experiences of its people. It was this yawning 'literary-national' void mourned by Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinsky in these words:

> As a nation we have no literature. With storytelling comes a sense of identity. But national literatures evolve in stages, and the need for a literature of one's own changes according to the political situation of the nation in question. A new nation, or a nation struggling to declare its independence, will be driven to create something that is theirs, a literature that tells their national story. But the flux of modern history makes this a more or less impossible task (cited in Boampong, 2012, p. 138).

In fact, Belinsky's lamenting sounds quasi-existential and natural. Humans, by nature, seek to relate to the socio-historical and folklorish essence of their collective identity represented largely by long-standing storytelling traditions which, in time, consummate in its literary expressions (Garry, 2017). Literature, by its very vocation, captures, at least in part, the shared imaginationof a people and almost every literary tradition when qualified by a nationality adjective (i.e. Brazilian, Austrian or Portuguese) finds its most characteristic expressions in its national language. This is how a literature becomes a 'national' literature: "When the inner voice of a nation speaks through the unconscious creative spirit of its artists for generation after generation—then you have a national literature" (Fusso 2017, p. 78). To appreciate this point, let us look at the ways in which different literary traditions are defined:

- *Spanish literature:* The body of literary works produced in Spain. Such works fall into three major language divisions: Castilian, Catalan, and Galician (Labanyi, 2010, p. 12).
- *French literature:* The body of written works in the French language produced within the geographic and political boundaries of France (Coward, 2008, p. 32).
- *American literature:* The body of written works produced in the English language in the United States (Gray, 2011, p. 27).

All these definitions explicitly foreground the need for the literature to be written in its own respective national language. This is true of all literary

traditions including Urdu literature, or, for that matter, Punjabi or Sindhi literature. However, of late, Pakistani literature seems to have fallen into what appears to be a crisis of representation (Ahmad, 2000, 2004). Pakistan like other commonwealth countries is heir to a colonial past and its literary landscape, instead of embracing its own language at a wider global scale as its distinctive expression, seems to have succumbed to what people like Robert Phillips on has termed as the linguistic imperialism of English[1]. This is how Phillips on defined it: "…the dominance asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (1992, p. 47).A conscientious study of linguistic imperialism can assist us to discover the answer to the question: Did achieving political independence led to a linguistic liberation as well? And if not, why not? This is how Timothy Reagon has conceptualized this issue:

> The rejection of the linguistic legitimacy of a language—any language used by any linguistic community—in short, amounts to little more than an example of the tyranny of the majority. Such a rejection reinforces the long tradition and history of linguistic imperialism in our society. The harm, though, is done not only to those whose languages we reject, but in fact to all of us, as we are made poorer by an unnecessary narrowing of our cultural and linguistic universe (2009, p. 76).

Other scholars, borrowing an ecological metaphor, have advanced the notion of *linguicide* which postulates that wherever a dominant and 'big' language such as English appears on the scene, it tends to obliterate small indigenous languages (Blommaert, 2010).At the same time, the US cultural and military supremacy connotes that all over the world the writers in order to succeed have to feel compelled either to write directly in the English language or to get their works translated into this tongue. In

[1] For the sake of larger contextual clarity it is important to mention here that the crisis which surrounds Pakistani literature also surrounds Indian literature as both the literary traditions share a colonial history. Notable Indian writer Rasipuram Narayanaswami once lamented analienation which one comes across in one's own land: "…from the Sanskrit alphabet we passed on directly to the first lesson in the glossy primer which began with 'A was an Apple Pie'…and went on to explain, 'B bit it' and 'C cut it'. The activities of B and C were understandable, but the opening line itself was mystifying. What was an Apple Pie?" (See Chew, 1990, p. 98).

the contemporary world, to be introduced and marketed in the United States is often deemed as passport to international success and global recognition which in turn ensures a writer's reception at home as well (Bassnett & Trivedi, 2012).

This present day hegemony of English in Pakistan dates back to the colonial linguistic policy which Britain adopted in its colonies. The repression of the 'vernaculars' (as the native languages of the colonies were disparagingly called) was a well-defined policy of the Empire. At the height of the colonial era, English enjoyed an unrivalled and privileged position and there was no analogous introduction of other languages and their cultures into English (Bassnett, 2010).

This is the weight of history which has been persistently pressing on our postcolonial official imagination and a tiny minority has always been in the forefront of privileging English over local languages including Urdu. Such people, over decades, have been successful in creating a sphere of influence to which literature written in English is as much 'Pakistani' as the literature written in Urdu and any other regional language of Pakistan. One argument which is routinely advanced to bring such writings under the rubric of Pakistani literature runs like this:

> *English is no more a language of Britain or, for that matter, of the United States of America. It is very much our own language. It is part of our history and its presence in this part of the world dates back to the pre-Independence era.*

However, this argument is more rhetorical than logical and seems to be the result of a falsified thinking. It fails to take into account the actual state of affair we are facing in our social settings in general and in education in particular—i.e., the hardcore realities which are staring into our eyes. No matter for how long has English been present in this part of the world or what de facto or official status does it enjoy at present, what actually matters is the pragmatic and practical proficiency level which at the mass scale the people have. For a literature to be owned and claimed as "Pakistani", it is paramount to be read and understood widely in Pakistan. According to an extremely detailed survey conducted by one of the leading educational research organizations Education First (EF) in 2015, Pakistan is ranked as a low English proficiency level country with 48.78% of people proficient in English. Pakistan is ranked even lower than such countries as Vietnam (54.06%), Taiwan (52.82%) and Macau (51.36%).

The scale devised for the survey had five levels: very high, high, moderate, low, very low. Next to Pakistan are only such countries as Lao, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, etc. Overall, Pakistan stood at 48th out of a total number of 72 countries.

However, what is arguably the most pertinent fact about this survey is its population. The findings of this survey do not show the proficiency of a country's total population. Instead, these findings are based on candidates who volunteered for the EF Standard English Test (EFSET). To be more precise, the English Proficiency Index (EPI) is based upon the test scores of 950,000 adults from 72 countries (Education First, 2015). This means the people with actual English proficiency in Pakistan is far lower. Moreover, to appreciate and enjoy great literary works[1], one needs an extremely advanced language proficiency level. In a country like Pakistan, where the culture of reading could not strike deep roots, even Urdu language proficiency is very superficial, let alone English language proficiency.

In 2002, renowned language scholar Tom McArthur reported that the English language is used as a second language "by a national minority of c.3 million in a population of c.133 million" (p. 285). Ever since the years which have gone by have just served to widen this gap as the steps taken to promote education are not in proportion to population growth rate.

3. Pakistani Literature, Urdu Literature and the Loss of Representation

Keeping in view this hegemonic position of English in the world in general and in the former colonies in particular, let us explore the question of the representation of Pakistani literature at the world level. Look again at the definitions of various literatures given above. The definitions clearly state that the respective literary traditions are enshrined in their own national languages and, as a matter of inference, their flagship representation lies in the hands of those who write in those very languages. But Pakistani literature, at present, is in a state of deep crisis with reference to this question of representation.

[1] The kind of literary prose written by Mohsin Hamid, Daniyal Mueenuddin, Zulfikar Ghose, Nadeem Aslam, Muhammad Hanif and other such writers is complex as it deals with discursive, fractured diasporic experiences. Sometimes such works have been called 'stricken compositions' (See Chew, 1991, p. 67). To appreciate such composition, one needs a sufficiently advanced comprehension level.

Today, in ways which sound exceedingly imperceptible and surreptitious, Pakistani literature has come to be represented by those writers who write in English, not Urdu. This is something which is being increasingly felt, however, it will be some time before we can appreciate its true immensity. Snehal Shingavi, an associate professor of South Asian literature at the University of Texas, gave an extremely perceptive answer when he was asked what he understood by Pakistani literature:

> In popular culture, "Pakistani literature" means stuff available in English written by people in the diaspora who appear in the media, such as Hanif, Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie. Inside academia there are Urdu programs that understand the importance of Pakistani Urdu literature, but generally it is exclusively the material produced in English which is accessible (2013, p. 97).

Professor Shingavi's assessment is very precise and one can corroborate it by taking into account the perceptions and opinions of other scholars, critics and writers. Cultural Trip, for example, is one of the leading blogs dedicated to exploring the cultural and creative values the world over. When it comes to discuss the "Rise of Pakistani Literature", it chronicles Saadat Hassan Manto and then, spanning decades, jumps to all the Anglophone writers such as Mohsin Hamid, Mohammed Hanif, Kamila Shamsie and Daniyal Mueenuddin (Samantara, 2016). One wonders at this selection of Pakistani literature and the way its representation delivered into the hands of such writers except, of course, for Manto.

This perception of Pakistani literature is not limited to blogs and journals. It has also found its way to some of the largest literary directories of the web. Curlie, for instance, is, as per its own claim, the largest human-edited directory of the Web. It is maintained by well-credentialed literary and cultural editors. However, when it comes to enlist websites/pages related to Pakistani literature, it just takes into consideration eight Anglophone writers: Almgir Hashmi, Bapsi Sidwa, Kamila Shamsie, Mohsin Hamid, Moniza Alvi, Nadeem Aslam, Suhayl Saadi and Tariq Ali (Curlie, 2018).

This state of affairs is indeed alarming as it points to a crisis of representation which forces us to take into consideration the question of national literature. The definitions of different literary traditions given above clearly postulate that only that literature will be called American, French or Spanish literature which is usually (but, obviously, not always) written inside these countries—i.e. America, France, or Spain. Or, it is

written by those writers who are the citizens of these countries (no matter whether currently they are residing at home or abroad). Above all, it is written in the national language of the country. In order not to be dogmatically insistent, we should take other possibilities into consideration as well. Sometimes even the non-citizens can contribute to the national literature of a country just by writing in its language as is evidenced by numerous non-English writers who produced some of the finest pieces of English literature. George Bernard Shaw, Joseph Conrad and W. B. Yeats are some such examples.

We think the buck finally stops here and if, to be more precise, an American writer produces a piece of literature in German or French, it will not be considered American literature as such, not matter how closely it deals with American way of life. Similarly, an American writer writing something about American culture or values in Urdu will not be given the status of American literature for his or her writing. This is true of all literary tradition. If Pakistani writers settled in Latin America writes something in Spanish, we will never call it Pakistani literature. A Norwegian writer producing a literary masterpiece in the Chinese language will not be discussed under the rubric of Norwegian literature. Yes, one possibility still lurks and that is that of translation—if that Chinese piece of literature is translated into one of the languages of Norway, it may qualify as a piece of Norwegian literature. There are instances of this phenomenon too.

It is due to these reasons and agreed-upon, albeit undeclared, conventions, Shakespeare and Milton despite all their reverence and literary caliber are not considered the representatives of American literature just as Hemingway and Twain are not considered the representatives of British literature. This is in spite of the fact that all these writers wrote in English. Such is the strength of nationalist feelings and sentiments!

It is very crucial here to draw a distinction between Pakistani literature and Urdu literature. The whole argument built above establishes, in principle, that the term Pakistani literature (when we use it without any qualifier such as “English” or “Anglophone”), means only that literature which fulfills this condition:

1. Literature written inside Pakistan in its national or regional languages.

2. Literature written by some expatriate Pakistani in any of the languages of Pakistani.

As per this criterion, if an Indian writer writes an Urdu novel, we may call it a piece of Urdu literature but not Pakistani literature. Such a writer, similarly, can be called an Urdu writer but not a Pakistani writer. Ghalib and Hali are just two examples.More or less every national literature will be judged as per these conditionalities. You may look at the definition of any literature qualified by a nationality adjective, you will find these conditionalities clearly laid down.

So what linguistic, ancestral, geographical relation does the writers like Mohsin Hamid, Zulfikar Ghose and Hanif Kureishi bear to Pakistan? By which token have they become the gatekeepers of Pakistani literature the world over. Why do we not follow, when it comes to Pakistani literature, the same principles and conditionalities which are followed while defining other literary traditions? Why this oddity?

Let us discusses of some of these writers and assess their right to represent Pakistani literature. Zulfiqar Ghose was born in Sialkot and his family migrated to India even before Pakistan came into existence. In the 1960s he went to Britain where he married a Brazilian lady and at present he is settled in America. This raises some questions. If by getting born in some region of pre-Independence India which is now part of Pakistan and writing something about Pakistan make someone a Pakistani writer, then there are a large number of Indian writers too which should be, as per this principle, considered Pakistani writers. At the top of the list comes Khushwant Singh who was born in the pre-Independence Khushab (which is now in Pakistan) and who accorded special place to Pakistan in his writings. This is evidenced by his debut novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956). He spent considerable part of his life in Lahore even after 1947. But all over the world, he is known as an Indian writer and Pakistani literature, so to speak, has not been his reference[1].

[1] This is despite the fact that, unlike some of these Pakistani expatriate writers, Singh always maintained a very fond relation with Pakistan and its culture. In one of his interviews, he expressed the intensity of this relation to Pakistan in these words:
Whenever I planned a trip to Pakistan my mother would say don't go there… these Muslims are very cruel… they will kill you and I would reply Mother, until now they have been killing me by feeding me very delicious meals and lots of Scotch! But in the same breath she would say please give my salaams to sister Asghari, do go to the

Ghoses's placement in Pakistani literature is further complicated when we consider the example of Saadat Hasan Manto. Manto was born in Ludhiana in the pre-Independence India. Later, he migrated to Pakistan. All over the world, Manto is considered to be a Pakistani writer. Now if we apply the same principle to Ghose, then he should be categorized, instead, as an Indian writer. This is, however, an interesting anomaly, that we apply two different principles to Manto and Ghose in order to classify their writings. Before winding up our discussion on Zulfikar Ghose we should raise one question as a food for thought: Did Ghose ever accept his writings to be classified as Pakistani literature? How many times did he disown not just any such classification but also his relation to Pakistan? In spite of these hard facts, Paksitani Anglophone writers place him at the epicenter of Pakistani literature—an interesting case of you scratch my back and I will scratch yours. This is how Muniza Shamsi (another Anglophone Pakistani writer) assesses Ghose:

> Zulfikar Ghose occupies a unique place in Pakistani letters. He is the only writer of Pakistani origin[1] to have produced such an extensive, varied and accomplished body of English language poetry, fiction and criticism. His one novel about Pakistan *The Murder of Aziz Khan* had such a powerful impact, that a Pakistani readership of the 1960's still remember him for that one book (2006).

Another writer who has been given big share in this gate keeping of Pakistani literature at international level is Hanif Kureishi. Kureishi was born and raised in Britain. Even his father was not a Pakistani. He was born in Madras in the pre-Independence India. True, his family did migrate to Pakistan after 1947 but after a few years his father moved to Britain. He began his writing career in the 1970s from pornography under the pen name Antonio French (McCrum, 2014). Kureishi last visited Pakistan about thirty five years ago. In one of his columns he wrote that the only hope left for Pakistan was to join India (Yusuf, 2012).Kureishi has attempted to prove his Britishness by consciously writing in favor of white culture till a time came when he became, in Ahmed's words, "more English than the English" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 168). His views about Islam are also pertinent to mention here. Islam, to him, is a retrograde religion. It

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house of so and so and give them my regards and don't forget to take some gifts for them" (See Awan, August 3, 2010).

[1] If that is the case then Khushwant Singh is also of Pakistani origin.

is "a very, very unpleasant religion in all sorts of ways" (Kureishi, 1999, p. 52), and, to him, it preaches an ideology which "is deeply abhorrent" (Kureishi, 2006, p. 8). He goes on:

> …if Islam is incapable of making any significant contribution to culture and knowledge, it is because extreme Puritanism and censoriousness can only lead to a paranoia which will cause it to become more violent and unable to speak for those it is intended to serve(2005a, p. 11).

The purpose of putting Kureshi's diatribes against Islam is by no means to necessitate a devout portrayal of religion in order to be qualified as a representative figure of a literary tradition. This is to show how Kureishi's writings appear riddled with clichés, platitudes, stereotypes and fanatically preserved myths—all smacking of Orientalist scholarship (Morey & Yaqin, 2011).

Similar questions arise when we discuss other such writers. Nadeem Aslam left Pakistan at the age of fourteen and got settled in Britain for good. Amir Hussain moved to Britain when he was fifteen to spend the rest of his life there. Similarly other such writers were either born in Britain and America or moved there at an early age.

As regards the content of these writers and the literary/discursive canons they tend to reinforce, a growing number of critics and authors are raising genuine concerns. To which extent are the works of these writers representative of Pakistani culture and society? How intensely have they felt and voiced apprehensions, hopes and dreams of an average Pakistani? To which extent does the literary canon they seek to foreground actually align with the motifs they intend to articulate? Most of these writers look at Pakistan from the binoculars of Euro-American media. A considerable number of them have part touristic, part voyeuristic acquaintance with Pakistan and what it stands for. This point is effectively made by novelist and short story writer Maniza Naqvi (2018):

> Our English writers speak to each other and, for now, to a small readership within the country, though they have a larger market abroad and among the diaspora…they write from places far away from Pakistan or from cocooned places within Pakistan where the elite congregate, walled away from the country's reality. Much like Christiane Amanpour reporting about the American invasion of Afghanistan from the rooftop of Islamabad's Marriot Hotel. And

> their novels tell the same story one way or the other as if processing, re-enacting and litigating the many complexities encapsulated in the moment of Partition and displacement—or the moment leading to that moment or the moment after that. At this moment, they cannot seem to dissociate their writing from the vantage point of a passenger in flight out of the country.

Therefore, it is not for nothing that the writing of such writers, most of the time, does not seem to reflect the experiences and lives of the wretched of this part of the earth. Their foibles, frolics, complexities, sorrows, triumphs and expectations do not find adequate way to the works of such writers.

4. Conclusion

In this research, within the larger framework of nation, identity, representation and postcoloniality, we have explored the elements which constitute a literary tradition and have tried to problematize the contemporary conceptualizations of Pakistani literature which tend to foreground its Anglophonic aspect and entrust its representation to the Anglophone diasporic writers. Our central aim in this whole discussion is not to trivialize the literary worth or the artistic caliber of such writers. These are indeed great writers and their works have gained worldwide readership. However, just for the sake of their literary greatness, should we invent a definition for Pakistani literature, different from the definitions of other national literatures the world over? Just because these writers are 'good', should we entrust the representation of a national literature (in whose language they never wrote) to them? If this entrusting is to be done, then what about those writers who wrote in the very languages of Pakistan such as Intizar Hussain, Ishfaq Ahmad, Shaukat Siddiqui, Abdullah Hussain, Ghulam Abbas, Wazir Agha, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, Sheikh Ayaz, Imad Ali Kazi, Hamza Shinwari, Gul Khan Nasir, Atta Shad, Najm Hossein Syed, Fakhar Zaman, to mention just a few? Is such a notion of representation likely to be acceptable in the context of the representation of American or French literature? These are the question presently facing us with sharp urgency and the extent to which we are able to work out viable answers to them will be the measure of our success in reclaiming our literary identity. If Spanish literature is represented in Spanish language by Spanish writers, if French literature is represented in French by French writers and Italian literature is represented in Italy by Italian writers, then Pakistani literature should also be, in the main,

represented in its own language and by the writes who write in that language. True, English writings by the writers of Pakistani origin constitute an important contribution, yet they should not be made coextensive with the entirety of the representativeness of Pakistani literature as such. This is what the present study wants to bring home to its readers.

What Khwaja Haider Ali Aatish said about two hundred years ago in the context of his unexpressed love equally relates to the present day voicelessness of the countless millions of people inhabiting the postcolonial lands from Morocco to Bengal and Maldives to Mozambique, whose literary traditions have been taken over by those who write in English (Aatish, 2013, p. 149):

پیامبر نہ میسر ہوا تو خوب ہوا
زبان غیر سے کیا شرح آرزو کرتے

Good indeed it was as not to have a messenger
How with an alien tongue the longing could have been expressed?
(Translation ours)

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