

Fictionalizing a Feminist Self: Kishwar Naheed's *Buri Aurat ki Katha*

A Thesis submitted by

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“Kishwar Naheed”

Kishwar Naheed

A pearl oyster with sealed lips

Women of the past,

Woman of today,

Afflicted

You speak from the shore

To the winds of life's ocean

To move the feet of mountains.

Kishwar Naheed,

None speaks here.

No one wants to know

The words of speaking glances.

The fish slipping from the hand,

Turns fear into hate.

Kishwar Naheed,

The desire to see you silent

Billows up even from the grace.

But speech is urgent

When listening is a crime.

Now I can see

Expressions which daunted me,

Strike fear everywhere.¹

¹ Self titled poem. Kishwar Naheed, *The Price of Looking Back: Poems of Kishwar Naheed*, trans. Baidar Bakht and Derek M. Cohn (Lahore: Mustafa Waheed Book Traders, 1987), 16-17. Bakht and Cohen won a Translation Centre Award of Columbia University in 1985 for excellence in literary translation for this collection of poems.

Introduction

In 1977, Kishwar Naheed's translation of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* was banned by the Pakistani government for three reasons: first, she had translated and published the book without government permission, second, she had violated copyright (although Pakistan does not honor copyright laws) and third, the translation was considered pornographic and vulgar.² The English version of *The Second Sex* was not banned anywhere in Pakistan. Naheed was then ousted from her government position, arrested, released on bail and watched by the Criminal Investigation Department from 1977 through 1979 because of her controversial poetry and politics. In an interview in 2009, Naheed responded to the charge that her translation was pornographic and vulgar by noting that one obstacle to writing about women's bodies and sexualities in Urdu is that "many words in prose don't even exist... My translation of *The Second Sex* was banned because of the use of words describing a woman's private parts in actual language."³

Kishwar Naheed was born to a sayyid family in Uttar Pradesh, India in 1940 and moved to Lahore, Pakistan in 1949, just two years after Partition.⁴ Naheed is a poet, prose writer, translator, wife (now widowed), mother, daughter, daughter-in-law, civil servant, journalist and activist. She completed a Master's degree in Economics from Punjab University in the late 1950s and has published many volumes of Urdu poetry, collections

² Shahla Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 287.

³ Mahwash Shoaib, "Vocabulary of Resistance: A Conversation with Kishwar Naheed," *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 1, no. 2 (2009): 175-176.

⁴ Sayyid is an honorific title for males (and by extension, their families) who are descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. Naheed uses the word "Buri" as the foil to sayyid throughout *Buri Aurat ki Katha*. For example, when offered a job at a newspaper in 1960 which included 75 rupees a month and a cycle, Naheed recalls how "hell broke loose at home" because how could a girl wearing a burqa ride a cycle? "A friend of mine who had rode a bike had divorced her husband during her college days. She was a bad woman. How could a sayyid girl behave like this?" Kishwar Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story* trans. Durdana Soomro (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), 62.

of essays and original translations since the late 1960s through today. Her works have been translated into Spanish and English. She won the Adamjee Prize for Literature for her book of poetry titled *Lab-e-Goya*⁵ in 1969 in addition the Mandela Prize in 1997 and the Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2000. Naheed also started her own non-governmental organization in Pakistan, Hawwa (Eve), in the early 1990s in order to teach women to embroider textiles, market their products for maximum profit and earn independent incomes.⁶

Naheed's writing career, which began approximately in the late 1960s, is based on themes that critique the relationship between women and patriarchy (defined both as state and society). She was sent as a government servant to Bangladesh in 1971 to write about the West Pakistani's government's successes and witnessed the immense violence and devastation Bengali women suffered at the hands of the West Pakistani army. Her report was censored at the highest level. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Naheed attended various conferences on women's issues abroad and traveled widely, meeting writers and activists from all over the world. Naheed continued to write during 1977-1988, although she was individually targeted by Zia-ul-Haq's military regime.

In addition to her government roles, Naheed spent much of her life reading, absorbing, translating and transforming second wave feminist discourse. One of her biggest self-proclaimed influences is Simone de Beauvoir, a second wave French feminist who wrote *The Second Sex*, a seminal text in feminist theory. *The Second Sex* was crucial to the development of feminist literature in the second wave because of Beauvoir's focus

⁵ Translated as Lips That Speak or Speaking Lips. Kishwar Naheed, *Lab-e-Goya* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1968).

⁶ Kishwar Naheed and Mushir Anwar, *Potential Embroideries of Pakistan* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006). Naheed's development work is focused on women in rural areas of Pakistan, as opposed to the industrialized urban cities. Women's economic power and prowess in Pakistan is one of the state's best-kept secrets.

on bodily similarity as a means for mass female organizing across lines of difference, such as class, race, gender, etc.

It took Naheed two years to write her Urdu autobiography *Buri Aurat ki Katha*. Originally published in 1995, *Buri Aurat ki Katha* is Naheed's first publication that is not a collection of poetry, a translation or a compilation of essays. The text was reprinted in Lahore through Sang-e-Meel publications in 1997, 2003 and 2008 in hardcover without any revisions or additions. There were approximately 1,500 copies sold in Pakistan between 1995 and 2000. An Urdu version of the text was published in Delhi in 1995 and Oxford University Press published an English translation in London and Karachi in 2009. The translated version of *Buri Aurat ki Katha*, *A Bad Woman's Story*, was translated by Durdana Soomro and mirrors the language and rhythm of the original Urdu text almost exactly.⁷

While an autobiography is typically an account of a person's life written by that person in an orderly sequence of events, Naheed notes in the introduction to *Buri Aurat ki Katha*, "This narrative is not tied to any calendar nor is it the charting of a journey up the ladder of life... This story too is not that of an individual but of our whole society where important issues are overlooked but small meannesses remembered. As Saint-John Perse says, this is the story of the streetwalker who says a prayer in her grief, challenges those who are on the road, and walks with a prince or a dagger in her arms."⁸ A chronological narrative of Naheed's life is woven into historical instances of female oppression on the

⁷ Buri literally means bad, but can also be translated in this context as rotten or wretched. Durdana Soomro is a Karachi-based female writer and journalist who has worked for Dawn, The News and the Friday Times in Pakistan. She writes mainly about travel, art and women's issues. She completed her MBA from Punjab University and an MA from SOAS in London and has translated the work of prominent Pakistani authors from Urdu to English. Her own publications include *Karachi: Pleasure Gardens of a Raj City* and *Bengali Raag*.

⁸ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, x.

subcontinent, her critiques of the Pakistani state, particularly Zia's Islamization policies and morality directives.

Naheed is most widely known in Pakistan and the global community for her feminist poetry. She has also been the subject of feminist inquiry in academia since the early 1990s and the focus of recent dissertations and books.⁹ Rukhsana Ahmad's book of Pakistani feminist poetry, aptly titled *We Sinful Women* after one of Naheed's most well known poems, "Hum Ghunahgar Aurtain," introduces Naheed as follows:

"If there is a Pakistani feminist who poses a serious threat to men through her work, her lifestyle, her manner and through ceaseless verbal challenge, it is Kishwar Naheed. She does this with a professional dedication which either endears or enrages, there are no half-measures. At forty-seven, widowed, mother of two grown sons, completely independent financially, she is above many strictures that other women in Pakistan would have to observe, those which remain she flouts with relish."¹⁰

Indeed, Naheed has been painted by many as "a beacon of enthusiasm and belief, an affirmative spirit, a powerful voice"¹¹ and a staunch advocate for women's rights in Pakistan. Yunus Ahmar extols, "Never before did an Eastern woman speak in such a voice and never before were such sentiments expressed by anyone... Though a woman, she has even surpassed her menfolks in giving expression to the emotions which are not even felt easily."¹² While Ahmar is sincerely trying to compliment Naheed, this praise is couched in a language of oppression, extolling her outspoken nature and critical writing style in spite of the fact that she is an Eastern woman. Naheed herself thrives off of the

⁹ See Amina Yaqin, "The Intertextuality of Women in Urdu Literature: A Study of Fahmida Riaz and Kishwar Naheed" (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 2001) and Anita Anantharam, *Bodies That Remember: Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Cosmopolitanism in South Asian Poetry* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Rukhsana Ahmad, ed. and trans., *We Sinful Women: Contemporary Urdu Feminist Poetry* (London: The Women's Press, 1991), 20-21.

¹¹ Naomi Shihab Nye, Introduction to *The Price of Looking Back: Poems of Kishwar Naheed*, by Kishwar Naheed (Waheed Book Traders: Lahore, 1987), 112.

¹² Yunus Ahmar, *Modern Urdu Poets* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1995), 63-65.

fact that the public has never resolved their ambivalence towards her, dismissing those that do not agree with her as traditionalists and unrealistic.¹³ Rather than read this statement at face value, Naheed devalues her critics' comments so she doesn't have to engage with them, revealing a much deeper, internal ambivalence.

Ultimately, Anwar Sajjad gets it right when he notes,

“There are two women in her existence who are fighting against each other. One is she who comes out of the house wrapped in a chadar and riding in a tonga and the other is quite different. She wants to talk freely in a free atmosphere. In the quarrel both get drenched in blood and as such the drops of blood are discernible in Kishwar's poetry.”¹⁴

Buri Aurat ki Katha reveals a discernible difference between the temporal and fictionalized Naheed. These are terms I will use to distinguish between the Naheed that exists in the material world and the Naheed that exists within her mind and thus in her text. The temporal Naheed has not led the life of a feminist. Naheed recalls the beginnings of her marriage with fondness, noting that both she and her husband Yusuf Kamran went about as individuals, making their own decisions and living as free spirits. He did not try to restrain her in the least. Of course, it was not long before she discovered her husband's independence was also betrayal.¹⁵

One of the most ironic twists in Naheed's autobiography is her discussion of how much she both loved and loathed her husband.¹⁶ The traditional woman in her would

¹³ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 266.

¹⁴ Ahmar, *Modern Urdu Poets*, 63.

¹⁵ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 96.

¹⁶ Naheed and Kamran's marriage was not a love marriage. When she told her family she did not need their permission to have a male friend and hopes to one day get married, they called her bluff, suggesting she and Kamran get married that very evening. When he told her he was not ready to get married, she said, “Look, they gave me an ultimatum. Now, under these conditions I cannot go to the university. I cannot let myself marry anybody else. So I ask you, just agree to the nikah (marriage contract) for the moment and if you do not want it, then we go out of this house and you can divorce me. Please help me.” She notes that Kamran never let her forget that it was at her insistence that the two were married, holding it over her head as if she owed him something. Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 232-234.

never allow her to cheat on her husband as he had cheated on her or to punish him in a similar manner. The two did not divorce but instead had two sons together. She nursed her wounds inwardly and carried on supporting his family as a ‘good’ Eastern woman would do, the whole time taking their verbal and emotional abuse. Her sons grew into emotionally abusive men who, like her husband’s family, considered her ‘shameful’ and, in Naheed’s words, wanted her to be their slave.¹⁷ She gives up all agency in the way her sons turned out, noting, “my husband and his family influenced my sons against me and I was not able to do much about it.”¹⁸ This twist is just one example of Naheed’s projection of selfhood in *Buri Aurat ki Katha* that refers to overlapping discourses of history, generationality and agency.

This project will explicate the divisions between the temporal and fictional Naheeds in *Buri Aurat ki Katha* in three main ways. First, Naheed’s internationalist gaze has greatly influenced her ideas on women and patriarchy. She is very firmly rooted in second wave feminism, which focused on bodily similarity in order to unite women across traditional lines of difference, such as class, ethnicity, race and national borders.¹⁹ One of Naheed’s biggest self-proclaimed influences was Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), a prolific French feminist author and intellectual who contributed to the theoretical underpinnings of second wave feminism. By comparing Simone de Beauvoir’s *The*

¹⁷ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, 68 and 184-187.

¹⁸ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 237. Naheed also notes the deep pain she felt hearing her sons accuse her of being a bad mother and immediately felt bad for the way she had treated her mother.

¹⁹ Valentine Moghadam, *Globalization and Social Movements: Islam, Feminism and the Global Justice Movement* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 8, 65-75; Essays by Gayatri Spivak, Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler, in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory Vol. 1*, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1977); and Tony Buekers et al., “Scholars and Scholarship on Women in Islamic Cultures,” in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health Vol. 3*, ed. Suad Joseph and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill Publishers, 2003), 471-473. Buekers et al. argue that it was not until the second wave of feminism in the 1960s that research on women in Islamic cultures made a significant appearance and peaked (in terms of the number of doctoral dissertations published on this topic) in the 1990s.

Second Sex and Naheed's *Buri Aurat ki Katha*, one can see how deeply the argument that women are united by bodily similarity impacted Naheed's view of herself and led to her rejection of the feminist label. Ultimately, Naheed struggles to separate her mind from her body as well as her definition of herself from the biological definition of woman projected on her from without. This struggle makes itself known on the pages of her autobiography.

Second, Naheed's autobiography is also rooted in a much longer trajectory of elite²⁰ class discourse created by men in the early nineteenth century and acted out by women for decades. Elite practices were handed down through generations of women in a process identified as generational violence.²¹ Part of Naheed's rebellion was to dissociate herself from the traditional legacy of the women in her family, who bore the children of their sayyid husbands and sought happiness in motherhood. Yet, in a way, she still went on to do the same, although she did work and support her family the entire time. Naheed recognizes that, "in spite of all my revolution, from within I was the daughter of my mother... I could not have taken that revolutionary step to jump from one man to another... So it is better to forget the messiness in your life, accept it, and get involved in

²⁰ I use the term 'elite' in order to distinguish upper-middle and upper class women from lower-middle and lower class women. See Tahmina Rashid, *Contested Representation: Punjabi Women in Feminist Debate in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006). The term, while used in many different ways, is used throughout this thesis rather reductively to indicate a privileged social group. In the case of post-colonial Pakistan social privilege is most often indicated by a family's economic presence, an English-medium and college education and one's social standing. These factors are, admittedly, extremely broad and it is true that social mobility makes it difficult to categorize wealth and social privilege at any point in time. What is crucial to note, however, is the two-way relationship between the state's role in defining elites and the elite classes' role in defining the state. This is complicated by a necessary focus on defining how the domestic and regional factors in Pakistan combined with internationalism to "mold" the structure of the state. For more, see Ayesha Jalal, "The State and Political Privilege in Pakistan" in *The Politics of Social Transformation: Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, ed. Myron Weiner and Ali Bauazizi, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 152-154.

²¹ This theme has been addressed by a vast number of books on South Asia in the postcolonial period. See, for example, Salman Rushdie, *Shame* (New York: Random House, 1983), a novel that uses a discourse of shame to exemplify the various ways generational violence can take place.

other activities so that you do not think about it.”²² Naheed therefore uses the failures of her actual self to nourish her fictionalized self and made “a culture of her own”²³ within which she could be peaceful, free, creative, rebellious and fictionalized, feminist Naheed.

Yet Naheed cannot escape generational violence and the role of elite women as the intermediaries between the female masses and the national and international political spheres. This position was passed down to contemporary elite Pakistani women from the early twentieth century and is violent precisely because elite women cannot fully portray the oppression of lower class women. Therefore, while wary of familial generation violence, Naheed engages in a type of generational violence herself.

Finally, one of the reasons the temporal Naheed has never called herself a feminist²⁴ was because of this inconsistency between her actual and fictionalized self. She neither accepts nor denies the label and most academic research that closely analyzes Naheed’s poetry does not examine this crucial conundrum. While her poetry may contain strong feminist undertones, her autobiography, on the other hand, reveals a woman struggling with this feminist label. As demonstrated by her self-titled poem above, Naheed’s urge to speak when “no one wants to know” and “listening is a crime” has always been her primary motivation as a writer and to this end, she seems unconcerned with the politicized feminist label. However, by situating Naheed’s autobiography in the time period it was released, one can see that she is responding not only to a longer history of female oppression on the subcontinent, but also to the nascent feminist movement of the early 1980s through the mid-1990s in Pakistan.

²² Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 244.

²³ *Ibid.*, 246.

²⁴ Kishwar Naheed, email message to author, March 14, 2012. Please see Appendix A.

Crucial to Naheed's re-construction of time through a gendered lens are the debates regarding Pakistani feminism that took place in academic and literary settings amongst urban, elite and educated women. Modernist Islamic feminists on one hand and secular feminists on the other characterized the debate. Modernist Islamic feminists define their framework as one that sees the Qur'an and Hadith as the ultimate sources of the Islamic tradition. Until the present time, "Islamic tradition and Muslim culture remain overwhelmingly patriarchal, inhibiting the growth of scholarship among women, particularly in the realm of religious thought."²⁵ Secular feminists, while still maintaining their Muslim religious identities, define their struggle for rights outside of an Islamic framework while being careful not to paint themselves as anti-religious.²⁶ These two self-definitions should not be seen as antithetical to one another and thus part of a constructed religious-secular binary.²⁷ Rather, the two groups differ on the issue of whether to use Islam to mobilize Pakistani women from different class, ethnic and linguistic communities.²⁸ Ultimately, both groups of feminists are perceived as "alien" within Pakistan because of their deliberate, self-conscious appropriation of the feminist label.²⁹

²⁵ Riffat Hasan, "Feminism in Islam," in *Feminism and World Religions*, eds. Aravind Sharma and Katherine Young, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 250.

²⁶ Afiya Shehribano Zia, "The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan," *Feminist Review* 91 (2009): 30-33.

²⁷ Feminist scholars have deconstructed the religious-secular feminist binary in Muslim countries who remain open to dialogue about secular and religious frameworks and therefore occupy multiple positions along the religious-secular continuum. See Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Feminism in an Islamic Republic- Years of Hardship, Years of Growth," in *Islam, Gender and Social Change*, eds. Y.H. Haddad and J.L. Esposito, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 59-89, and Minoos Moallem, "Transnationalism, Feminism and Fundamentalism," in *Between Women and Nation: Nationalism, Transnational Feminisms and the State*, eds. Caren Kaplan, N. Alarconand and M. Moallem, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 320-348 for examples of feminist debates in post-Revolution Iran that mirror the current debates about feminism in Pakistan.

²⁸ Anita Anantharam, "Engendering the Nation: Women, Islam and Poetry in Pakistan," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 11, no. 1 (2009): 214.

²⁹ Ibid., 213-214 and Amina Jamal, "Feminist 'Selves' and Feminism's 'Others': Feminist Representations of Jamaat-i-Islami Women in Pakistan," *Feminist Review* 81 (2005): 55.

Thus, Naheed's refusal to acknowledge the feminist label is also a conscious political decision.

The temporal Naheed is not a feminist. Antithetically, her ideas and works, or her textual representation of self, are distinctively feminist. Naheed fictionalizes not only a feminist version of herself, as is discernible in her autobiography, but also fictionalizes feminist politics that can serve to unite women despite class differences and ultimately achieve what Naheed calls "the point of articulation."³⁰ This point of articulation, which is also the definition of feminism I will use for this project, lies in an equitable system of gender relations that is achieved by reinterpreting every system of learning and a reinterpretation of society, culture and ethics.³¹ While the production of dual identities clearly demonstrates Naheed's internal struggle, her decision not to take on the feminist label is ultimately a temporal decision driven by the politics of her day. Her dual identities are not a reconciliation of her struggle but rather a way of dealing with her temporal circumstances. Therefore, the temporal creates the fictionalized, not the other way around.

³⁰ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 252-253.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 252-253.

Chapter 1

The Pakistani Nation-State, Internationalism and the Female Body

Reading Autobiographies

Autobiographies by nature represent a convergence of personal and collective memory, interweaving individual stories with historical events. *Buri Aurat ki Katha*, when examined as a text, is no exception and displays “changing notions of the self, social and political discourses, and the construction of national and gender identities.”³² Indeed, the autobiographical “I” in Naheed’s *Buri Aurat ki Katha* is indicative of “the complex ways in which histories of the subject, discourses of identity, and cultural inscriptions of the body” interact with one another.³³ Autobiographies no longer represent the singular “I” or the practice self-referential writing but rather narrate how the individual negotiates his or her way through various historical and geographic cases and, in some cases, is a textual space for ongoing reflection.³⁴ As Naheed notes, self-narrative is a new form of the novel in which a plot is not necessary because the subtext itself can make a novel.³⁵

It was unusual for Muslim women on the subcontinent to produce autobiographies until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These autobiographies, written by elite women for whom veiling was a class requirement, have garnered special attention because they seem to be a metaphorical and textual ‘unveiling.’ Recent academic

³² “WAIIS About the Project,” Women’s Autobiography in Islamic Studies Project, accessed January 8, 2012, http://waiis.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53.

³³ Sidonie Smith, *Subjectivity, Identity and the Body: Women’s Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 4.

³⁴ Gayatri Spivak, “Lives,” in *Confessions of the Critics: North American Critics’ Autobiographical Moves*, ed. H. Aram Veseer (New York: Routledge, 1996), 205 and Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

³⁵ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, x.

scholarship has made leaps and bounds in uncovering Muslim women in Indian history through the autobiographical medium. The Women's Autobiography in Islamic Society project, for example, is an attempt by current scholars of women's and feminist histories in South Asia and the Middle East to make transnational connections across temporal borders in order to discover women who have been veiled by nationalist and patriarchal narratives.³⁶ At the heart of the project is the question of, "whether writing one's own life in a cultural context that idealises women's public anonymity represents a dramatic revelation of the female self: the ultimate unveiling."³⁷ Naheed's autobiography is not an ultimate unveiling in these terms, because she does not accept that her cultural context is one that idealizes women's public anonymity. Rather, Naheed is challenging the conventional view of woman through a deliberate lack of censorship provoked by her conservative surroundings. She is not writing in spite of women's public anonymity but rather because it, rhetorically questioning, "Has the enigma of existence in this world also changed!"³⁸

Reading Naheed's autobiography is no simple task. The short text she produces interweaves her life story with historical and literary references from all time periods and geographical locations. The flow of the text, while chronological, embodies a stream of consciousness writing style. She moves fluidly between referring to herself in the first and third persons, sometimes using the first person pronoun "I" and other times using women's names and identities to stand in the place of her own.³⁹ The first six chapters of

³⁶ Anantharam, *Bodies That Remember* is a wonderful example of using the similarity of female experiences to question and challenge nationalist discourses that emphasize difference.

³⁷ "WAIIS About the Project," accessed January 8, 2012, http://waiis.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53

³⁸ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, x.

³⁹ The first person "I" is "mein" in Urdu. Mein is spelled using three Urdu letters (meem, ye and noon), thus distinguishing the actual shape of the word from the singular, symmetrical and lone "I" in the English

Buri Aurat ki Katha begin with the word ‘first,’ indicating novelties such as Naheed’s first prostration, first idol and first slip, and the last eight chapters are named after various women, including Yashodhara, wife of Buddha, and Meerabai, one of the most significant figures of the Bhakti movement, and Mahlaqa, a popular Mughal courtesan and Urdu poet. Each woman represents a facet of Naheed’s life while simultaneously remaining characters that are of debatable historical authenticity because of their controversial positions as women who played with conventional ideas of being a wife, mother and woman. Naheed alone bears the burden of destroying the fairy tales constructed about these women, who have left the temporal world but are alive, dancing across the pages of texts in the forms of words, recreated and rejuvenated.⁴⁰

Interwoven with a chronological narrative of Naheed, from a state of girlhood at age five to post-reproduction at age fifty-five, are two representations of Naheed. The first is the self that others see, the individual defined by achievements, personal appearances and social relationships. To this end, Naheed’s autobiography is not surprising because her life as a social, public individual is widely available to any interested party. These are the “real” defining characteristics of an individual living in this world, an individual who is therefore temporal.⁴¹ The second representation is the non-temporal Naheed, the individual who takes ownership of her subjectivity, and is therefore fictionalized.

language, which Sidonie Smith has analyzed as a representative of the singularity of subjectivity. Smith, *Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body*, 2.

⁴⁰ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, 5.

⁴¹ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, 5.

To fictionalize, a derivative of fiction or fictional, refers to the act of fashioning or framing imaginary existences.⁴² While death, for an autobiographical writer, is the end of one's subject matter, creating a fictionalized self that lives on past the temporal self is one way of creating an alternative existence that lives on in the text. Yet, since the autobiographical genre is contingent upon the writer being alive while writing their life story (although publishing is a different matter entirely), Naheed blurs the boundary between autobiography and novel by creating two versions of herself: the temporal and fictionalized.

Naheed uses text as a method of self-expression that celebrates the autonomous individual while also commemorating the universalizing life story.⁴³ Yet, ironically, it is difficult to discern the temporal Naheed from the layers of history, literature and culture that she uses to veil a textual representation of self through her autobiography. Naheed draws on her own life as part of a larger history of female oppression to demonstrate that although she is writing an autobiography, her writing and experiences are not ephemeral. Rather, she sees her autobiography as a part of both women's history in Pakistan and a much broader history of women's oppression on the subcontinent. Naheed "finds both the modern and the traditional woman growing inside her, tearing each other to bits. She advocates the rights of women to be equal but at the same time won't see any man in the house washing the dishes, sewing a button, ironing, polishing his shoes.... She'll kill herself but go on doing all the work."⁴⁴ *Buri Aurat ki Katha* thus presents an unusual and complex demonstration of Naheed's agency. Her resistance to patriarchy is very clear.

⁴² "Fiction, Fictional, Fictionalize," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Accessed 27 April 2012, www.oed.com.

⁴³ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, 3.

⁴⁴ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 76.

Yet her artistic license as a writer allows her text to portray a different version of herself through words.

This is a literary device that is unique to female writers writing in circumstances of oppression. One way to view the temporal and fictionalized Naheed's struggle is to position her agency, "within specific contexts and placed along a continuum where various forms of agency may coexist."⁴⁵ An individual, therefore, can be an agent in myriad ways and through many different representations of self, yet in other situations is devoid of agency. Naheed, for example, defied her family in order to marry a non-sayyid, her classmate and fellow poet Yusuf Kamran, when she was nineteen. While Naheed cast off her sanguinely informed identity and was an active agent in the moment of her rebellion, her glee was short-lived. She soon found her movement restrained, both self-imposed and imposed on her from without, as a result of her defiant decision to marry into a conservative Pakistani family. This example is just one that embodies "resistance from within,"⁴⁶ for while Naheed dreamt of a life of rebellion against the restrictive norms of her childhood, her first rebellion ultimately led to more physical and emotional confinement.

At the same time, however, Naheed notes that even while she was shackled with the "chains of domesticity, shame and modesty around [her] feet" rendering her immobile, she could still think.⁴⁷ Resistance from within is embodied temporally through Naheed's textual representation of self. Thus, her definition of agency relies heavily on the individual and circumstance. Her temporal agency is not wholly separate from her fictionalized agency, in which anything is possible in the realm of imagination. Rather,

⁴⁵ Janaki Nair, "Agency in Indian Feminist Historiography," *Gender and History* 6, no. 1 (1994): 83.

⁴⁶ Anantharam, "Engendering the Nation," 211.

⁴⁷ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 58-59.

she uses her oppressed, temporal self to nourish her fictionalized self. Naheed's ultimate unveiling is her refusal to be relegated to the "imaginary waiting room of [feminist] history."⁴⁸ Rather, she is a "self-actualized subject of history."⁴⁹

The Creation of Pakistan: The Nation-State Project

Kishwar Naheed is a post-colonial Pakistani writer because she writes in the post-colonial period and also because many of her critiques of society are also critiques of the Pakistani state. Coinciding with postcolonial studies in the academy was an era of feminist studies that both peaked in the 1990s,⁵⁰ thus producing a number of tracts on gendered subjects in the age of nation-states.⁵¹ The nation-state project is an ongoing debate as to whether the nation or the nation-state came first.⁵² During the age of nationalism on the subcontinent,⁵³ specifically during the Partition of India in 1947, the idea that Muslim women were symbols of communal strength and integrity was built

⁴⁸ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁰ Buekers et al., "Scholars and Scholarship on Women in Islamic Cultures," 471-473. Postcolonial studies is an ever-expanding field of study and has been a banner under which minority studies, gender, feminism and Third World studies have gathered in order to rework center-periphery dichotomies.

⁵¹ See Gayatri Spivak's discussion of the gendered subject in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Available online at http://www.maldura.unipd.it/dllags/docentianglo/materiali_oboe_lm/2581_001.pdf.

⁵² See, for example, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) in which Anderson argues that nations are simply socially constructed "imagined communities" and people perceive themselves as part of that community. A nation-state implies that both the nation and the state exist within the same territorial and sovereign space. The nation-state structure is a reaction to twentieth century decolonization. Naheed recalls in 1946, in her home town of Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh, India, it felt as if "this place is closing in on us. This is not our home, this is not our country. The mangoes from our orchards and swings gave us solace but an unspoken thought had taken root in every courtyard." Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 19.

⁵³ There are a number of debates regarding nationalism on the subcontinent. Ideas of the Indian nation began to pervade the minds of Indians from as early as the first instances of British presence on the subcontinent and became more formalized in discourse throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. The early twentieth century and the years approaching Partition were characterized by an era of mass anti-colonialism coupled with various discussions about nationalism in which conceptions about a free Indian state addressed topics such as majoritarian and minoritarian politics, extra-territorial and deterritorial nationalisms and federations of faith.

upon: Muslim women also became symbols of the Pakistani nation.⁵⁴ One symbolic meaning that became attached to Muslim women in this period of national uncertainty was “the affirmation of identity against the ‘other’ (for instance, Hindus or the West) and the preservation of group unity and culture in the face of swift and often threatening change.”⁵⁵ A crucial aspect of Pakistani nationalist discourse propagated by the state maintained that women preserved indigenous values and cultural authenticity.⁵⁶

This was not wholly different from other anti-colonial movements. As Algerian feminist activist and scholar Marie-Aimee Helie-Lucas said during the Algerian anti-colonial movement, for example,

“Women are not allowed to fight for women’s rights during wars of liberation, nor are they allowed to immediately before or after. This is because the woman is subsumed by nationalism and fighting for her own interest is a betrayal of the people, the nation, the revolution, religion, national identity, cultural roots...”⁵⁷

Often, women’s rights were seen as imported from the West. Since anti-colonial rhetoric was built upon rejecting Western imperialism, for example by affirming nationalist identity against the Western ‘other,’ the women who fought for women’s rights were

⁵⁴ Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 564-566. Women were just one group of minorities that the post-colonial nation-state that were denied equal rights of citizenship. As Jalal points out, strides made by men in the realm of female equality were amendments to legislation regarding marriage, inheritance, divorce and child guardianship. However, these amendments were community-defined rights for women, not universal rights for women.

⁵⁵ Anita Weiss, “The Slow Yet Steady Path to Women’s Empowerment in Pakistan,” in *Islam, Gender and Social Change*, eds. Y.Y. Haddad and J.L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Weiss use of the term ‘other’ has been challenged by Jalal, who claims that “the notion of the ‘other’ that permeates so much of post-colonial criticism is wholly inadequate in capturing the vexed nature of the relationship among Muslims of South Asia who have become citizens of rival nation-states.” She proposes a condition of ‘elseness’ in which the else is separate from the self and yet also a part of it. Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 570.

⁵⁶ Sadaf Ahmad, ed., *Pakistani Women: Multiple Locations and Competing Narratives* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6.

⁵⁷ Shahnaz Rouse, *Shifting Body Politics: Gender, Nation, State in Pakistan* (Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004), 42.

condemned as anti-nationalist.⁵⁸ Not wanting to be branded as anti-nationalist, many women acquiesced their demands in the nationalist moment. Colonial rule was renamed national rule without any real engagement with the woman's question. Patriarchy endured through periods of nationalism and, in the post-colonial period, has a "deceptive new look" as nationalism, patriotism and post-war reconstruction.⁵⁹ Thus, from a feminist perspective, the post-World War II world characterized by nationalist self-determination⁶⁰ was also a world in which patriarchy remained ubiquitous yet called itself by new names.⁶¹ For the remainder of this thesis, it will be implied that nationalism is, in Salman Rushdie's words, a 'chauvinistic nationalism,' in which the state privileges masculinity.⁶² Naheed prefers to add to chauvinistic nationalism by calling Pakistan a martial-law nation, or an autocratic social structure with a "crazy character" of a nation.⁶³ Pakistan first needs to become a nation, a process that can be achieved through the point of articulation, in which every system of learning, including religion, anthropology, psychology, economics, etc is reinterpreted.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Amina Jamal, "Gender, Citizenship and the Nation-State in Pakistan: Willful Daughters or Free Citizens?" *Signs* 31, no. 2 (2006): 283-304. Jamal argues the enduring concept of a Western women in Pakistan today as a rights claiming individual has a historical presence in the creation of the Pakistani nation-state and discussions about women as citizens.

⁵⁹ Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist- Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 7.

⁶⁰ According to Erez Manela's *The Wilsonian Moment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), Wilson's Fourteen Points shared at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 helped challenge imperial dominance as nationalist movements appropriated Wilsonian language. Anti-colonial agitation eventually erupted into British and French decolonization after the particularly debilitating World War II and gave rise to neo-imperialism. While Manela's book looks specifically at the post-WWI era, it is more fruitful to see anti-colonial agitation as a long process that endured colonialism through WWI and the inter-war period. Global economic imbalances and dollar-sterling diplomacy in the aftermath of WW2 was really the period of nationalism because the British had to physically decolonize a number of their holdings, although they maintained economic relationships with a number of regions and nation-states that were particularly rich in resources, such as Malaya and the Persian Gulf.

⁶¹ Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, 7.

⁶² Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991* (London: Granta Books, 1992), 32.

⁶³ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 252.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 252.

While it is significant that women came out in masses during anti-colonial and nationalist movements, it is also important to note that women agreed to the terms under which their inclusion was made possible.⁶⁵ While it was acceptable to fight with their men during the nationalist struggle, it was not acceptable to fight against their men in the newly formed nation. While patriarchies privilege masculinity, they need women's complicity in order to make the nation-state project legitimate and make the patriarchal state seem like a homogenized, rational whole on the international stage.⁶⁶ The state's need to co-opt women's agency is often expressed by giving women social relevance as the protectors of national culture. This circumstance was all too common for women of newly independent nations that came into existence in the twentieth century.

Anti-colonial nationalism on the subcontinent resulted in the ill-planned Partition of India into two nation-states: India and Pakistan. The partition of Punjab and Bengal along the Radcliffe Line resulted in the creation of West and East Pakistan (respectively). Both Pakistans were initially characterized by masses of displaced peoples making their way over the Radcliffe line in both directions. Thousands, perhaps even millions,⁶⁷ of individuals were massacred. Families were torn apart as women were widowed and abducted and children were lost, kidnapped and killed. Many who lived arrived in Pakistan or India empty-handed and deeply traumatized.

National and familial honor was derived from a woman's sexual purity and as such, rape consisted of stripping the 'other' of their value, authenticity, worth, honor and

⁶⁵ Ayesha Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience," in *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

⁶⁶ Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, 6.

⁶⁷ The estimates range from 200,000 dead to one million dead.

national identity.⁶⁸ The raped Muslim woman became a powerful trope for anti-Hindu, anti-Sikh and anti-India propaganda.⁶⁹ The raped woman's victimization, and by extension the violation of her uterus by the communal 'other,' was used to highlight the Pakistan movement's own plight and the violent birth of the nation. Women's victimization is therefore subsumed within narratives of the state.⁷⁰ Although it would seem that these women's victimizations should be avenged, their own families and communities shamed many women for the loss of their virginity as if rape was a choice.⁷¹ On the individual level, women's voices were silenced.⁷² Naheed, only a young girl during the Pakistan movement of the 1940s and age seven on the eve of Partition, remembers the communal violence of the time: "It was during this period that I used to shriek in my sleep at night. Mother would blow prayers over me; she would read the Ayat-ul-Kursi, walk with me in her lap until the morning's azaan sounded."⁷³

Women did not have a hand in Pakistan's nation-state project. In the early period of state formation, state policies regarding gender were ones of "benign neglect, whereby gender relations continued to be governed by pre-Partition rules of social custom and practice."⁷⁴ Veena Das argues that post-Partition state discourses of recovery of women and children became a matter of national honor.⁷⁵ Her contention is that the state used recovery acts to create social and sexual contracts. The social contract is an agreement

⁶⁸ Kumari Jayawardena and Malathi de Alvis, eds., *Embodied Violence: Communalising Women's Identity in South Asia* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996).

⁶⁹ Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent Into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 21.

⁷⁰ Das, *Life and Words*, 28-29.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁷² These voices have only recently been recuperated through oral histories, such as Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Viking Penguin, 1998).

⁷³ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 22.

⁷⁴ Rouse, *Shifting Body Politics*, 28.

⁷⁵ Das, *Life and Words*, 21-24.

between men to construct a patriarchal nation and, therefore, the sexual contract places women in the home under the protection (read: authority) of the male figure.⁷⁶ The state continued to support the idea that men were the heads of households and women retained their positions in the home as secluded mothers, wives and daughters, in need of protection by the state and the male. Women's rights were community-defined rights, not universal rights for citizens.⁷⁷ The Pakistani state that was formed along these lines maintained a very precarious balance state and civil society, a balance that women could seriously threaten.⁷⁸

There were, of course, contesting narratives to the dominant narrative of the nation-state in Pakistan. Many of these challenges came from the Left, which the state targeted in its attempt to control what they saw as an increasingly unruly populace. The Progressive Writer's Association, for example, was a pre-Partition group of leftist writers that put forth visions of progressive society in their prose and poetry through socialist and communist frameworks.⁷⁹ The PWA tried to challenge the center's legitimacy as a nation-state by questioning the terms nation and state.⁸⁰ This type of literary activism was stymied by Ayub Khan's regime (1958-1969), which charged and jailed intellectuals, writers and academics and instead patronized "establishment writers,"⁸¹ or those that praised Khan's state.

⁷⁶ Das, *Life and Words*, 21.

⁷⁷ Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 567.

⁷⁸ Jalal, "Convenience of Subservience," 86.

⁷⁹ Events such as the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 enabled a number of PWA writers to engage in international connections and political relationships based on communism, for example. See Carlo Coppola [Ed]. *Marxist Influences in South Asian Literature* (South Asia Series Occasional Paper No. 23 Vol. 1, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1974).

⁸⁰ Saadia Toor, *The State of Islam: Culture and Cold War Politics in Pakistan* (London: Pluto Books, 2011), 52-75.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 86-89.

It was under Yahya Khan that Naheed first discusses in *Buri Aurat* how deeply Pakistani politics affected her life and work. Pakistan was racked with instability as Yahya Khan's regime (1969-1971), which replaced civilian infrastructure with military infrastructure. Her husband and father were jailed in 1970 for speaking out against martial law. Their time in jail, while mentioned very briefly in Naheed's autobiography, nevertheless left a bitter taste in the poet's mouth. This bitter taste was not new, however, and Naheed somewhat ironically rejoices at the fact that she had become familiar with the language of jails at the age of six, when her father had been carted off to jail as an important Muslim leader on the eve of Partition. Seeing her father in jail in 1946 "assimilated the full horror" of what went on in the jails under Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan and Zia-ul-Haq, allowing her to become familiarized with the "strange restlessness" of loved ones in jail.⁸² In 1971, Naheed was sent on an official visit to East Pakistan in order to write a booklet favoring the government. The report Naheed submitted was censored at the official level and discarded.⁸³ However, in her autobiography, Naheed remembers,

"You can't feel burning or pain unless you jump into the fire. There was a camp beside the Burhi Ganga River full of women. Can I really call them women? Scrawny girls barely thirteen to fifteen years old, whose breasts had not yet emerged but whose bellies indicated that they were six or seven months pregnant. Where were their families? They had been killed under the cover of night as conspirators and traitors. To sully their bloodline the women had been ravished. Homeless and unprotected, they sad with heads bowed, parched lips, and dry eyes in Burhi Ganga's lap..."⁸⁴

Upon returning to Lahore, Naheed and her friends spoke out against the West Pakistani government on behalf of the Bengalis. Their words, and the women that spoke them,

⁸² Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 20-21. Naheed further notes "during that period every night was a night of torment."

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 23 and Yaqin, "Breaking the Mirror of Urdu Verse," 35.

⁸⁴ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 23.

were deemed traitorous.⁸⁵ For six months after hostilities between East and West Pakistan officially ceased, Naheed could not speak.⁸⁶ Her inability in this six-month period results in her inability to speak about 1971 further in her autobiography as well and these experiences render her temporal and fictionalized forms mute. These are some of the earliest anti-government and anti-male experiences Naheed chronicles in her autobiography that very clearly affected her as a young writer, yet she is unable to find the words to elaborate on martial rule under Yahya Khan and the mass genocide committed by the West Pakistani army in 1971.

By contrast, the Bhutto era from 1971-77 and the popularity of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) were accompanied by large-scale politicization of Pakistanis, particularly women, from all classes.⁸⁷ Bhutto's pursued a state policy based on class rather than gender.⁸⁸ Article 25 of the 1973 Constitution, for example, guaranteed that all citizens are equal under the law and entitled to equal protection of the law and prohibited discrimination based on sex.⁸⁹ Despite this constitutional advancement, however, no other legal changes went into effect that addressed the status of women.⁹⁰ The All-Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) underwent a huge change in the 1970s by consciously pushing for rural women's integration into the development process and giving special attention to the division of labor and the status of rural women in Pakistan. Yet Bhutto's period was largely about international politics. Bhutto remained vigilantly aware that the

⁸⁵ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 23.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸⁷ Khawar Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, ed. Farida Shaheed, (London: Zed Books, 1988), 62.

⁸⁸ Jalal, "Convenience of Subservience," 98.

⁸⁹ 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>. Accessed 28 April 2012.

⁹⁰ Anita Weiss, "The Consequences of State Policies for Women in Pakistan" in *The Politics of Social Transformation: Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, ed. Myron Weiner and Ali Bauazizi, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 417.

international eye was on him and sought to establish his credentials as an “independent” Third World leader outside of the pale of US influence.⁹¹ Yet Bhutto’s image in the international arena did not translate into action in Pakistan. Rather, his focus on the UN’s International Women’s Year in 1975 was a ploy to make Pakistan look like an active, modern participant in the international game.⁹²

Under Bhutto, the Pakistani government officially supported progressive poetry and it was under his tenure that women started attending international women’s conferences in greater numbers than ever before.⁹³ Naheed, for example, represented Pakistan at a female writers’ conference in Iran in 1971, the Afro-Asian Writers Conference in 1973, the Berlin Congress of World Women in 1975, the Egyptian National Conference of Muslim Women in 1976 and a gathering of Muslim women leaders and professionals in Manila in 1981.⁹⁴ During this time, she also attended creative writing workshops in India, the Philippines, Canada and the United States.⁹⁵ Naheed, who was influenced by international literature from a very young age, used traveling and temporal connections with other female writers to nourish her fictionalized self. She found comfort in forums where there was no host and therefore no guest.⁹⁶

The nation-state project in Pakistan from 1947-1977 was characterized largely by military rule and violence.⁹⁷ The dominant nation-state narrative was distinctly

⁹¹ Toor, *The State of Islam*, 121-122

⁹² Rouse, *Shifting Body Politics*, 134-136.

⁹³ Naheed was involved with the PPP and Bhutto upon the party’s creation in 1969 and held various national positions, including working for the Ministry of Information, while he was in power, although she was not very close with his daughter, Benazir Bhutto. Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 270-271.

⁹⁴ Amina Yaqin, “Breaking the Mirror of Urdu Verse: Speech and Silence in the Poetry of Kishwar Naheed,” *Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings* 4, no. 1 (2004): 35.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁹⁶ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, 22.

⁹⁷ Pakistan’s first war with India took place in 1948 and hostilities continue through today. Also, Pakistan has been involved with Afghani politics on both sides of the Durand Line.

patriarchal and critics were jailed or their politics obstructed by the military-backed state. Even Bhutto's period was only ostensibly an era of social politics in Pakistan as he continued to bolster elites.⁹⁸ Women, by and large, were indirectly implicit in the nation-state project and their rights continued to be a question that the state addressed inadequately.

Second Wave Feminism and the International Arena

Pakistan's place as a post-WW2 nation-state meant that it sought legitimacy through international structures and foreign relations. With the founding of the United Nations in 1945, the international arena became the ideal space for women's groups who were reacting to decolonization, nationalism and post-war reconstruction to secure rights in their own states that were backed by international law. The main problems with constructing international human rights for women were two fold. First, many states regarded international standards for women as illegitimate because they challenged national culture, traditions, policies and laws.⁹⁹ International laws regarding women therefore may be ratified by a particular country yet not implemented by that state's legal institutions because of the state's rejection of the laws as against cultural and/or religious practices and structures.¹⁰⁰

Second, the basic inability of the international community to effectively challenge the claims of culture and religion led feminists engaging in international human rights

⁹⁸ Ayesha Jalal, "An Uncertain Trajectory: Islam's Contemporary Globalization 1971-1979" in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson, et. al, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 319-336.

⁹⁹ Hilary Charlesworth, "Martha Nussbaum's Feminist Internationalism," *Ethics* 111, no. 1 (2000), 64.

¹⁰⁰ A number of reservations made by various nations at the first Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979 are available on the United Nation's website at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reservations-country.htm>. Many reservations were made in the name of preserving the state's religious and cultural traditions.

debates to question exactly how a global category of ‘women’ can be used without erasing differences, such as class, race, wealth, nationality, cultural and social positions, etc.? As the four UN conferences on women proved,¹⁰¹ however, international rights forums were effective in bringing women together in spaces where they could focus on commonalities and negotiate across a range of differences by focusing on broad issues, such as violence against women.¹⁰²

Female activism on the international scale became known as second wave feminism. Kishwar Naheed is very much a part of second wave feminism that swept the world in the post-World War II era. While there was no monolithic view about second wave feminism bringing East and West together cohesively,¹⁰³ women continued to be united by the idea of global sisterhood. This sisterhood consisted of recognizing differences and attempting to work past them to achieve meaningful results. Feminist discussions, therefore, were moving from debates about women’s suffrage to a more diverse conversation about the female body, including reproductive rights, sexuality, the family and women in the workplace. These discussions of universal sisterhood and global feminism stood on the shoulders of one main argument: bodily similarity and the common experience of patriarchal oppression shared by women all over the world.¹⁰⁴

Thus, female universalism was constructed in order to confront patriarchal universalism.

¹⁰¹ Mexico 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985 and Beijing 1995.

¹⁰² Charlesworth, “Martha Nussbaum’s Feminist Internationalism,” 72.

¹⁰³ Feminists from the Third World have used the ‘third world label,’ which charges First World feminists as imperialists, to critique development and globalization discourses, for example, and reorient feminist thought back towards key concepts such as “sisterhood” and common experience. One of the major pioneers of this type of argument is Chandra Talpade Mohanty. See Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁴ Mrinalini Sinha, Donna J. Guy and Angela Woollacott, “Why Feminisms and Internationalism?” *Gender & History* 10, no.3 (1998): 346.

Reconstruction in Europe and nationalism elsewhere largely appropriated nationalist discourse that saw women as the “designated embodiment[s] of culture.”¹⁰⁵

The UN’s first International Women’s Year was accompanied by a feminist push for the recognition of women’s rights as part of an international human rights discourse. The politics of nation-state building were realized on an international stage through the inclusion of various states into the UN. While it seems natural to discuss post-WW2 nationalism in terms of recently liberated third world countries, the war left a number of European countries and citizens perplexed. France was a particularly interesting post-War case. When Germany invaded France in 1940, it swallowed France in only six weeks and not only occupied the country but also appropriated French resources, revenue and labor for the entirety of the war, thus smothering the country’s sovereignty for the better part of four years. A full participant in the imperial game, at the height of its empire French power expanded across much of Africa, North America, Indochina (which France regained after World War II, during which time it had fallen to the Japanese) and even parts of the Middle East in the form of mandated territory formerly administered by the Ottoman Empire.

While an imperial power, France also experienced a nationalist resurgence similar to those of nascent nation-states formed in the mid twentieth century as it struggled to recreate the French national imagination after German occupation. Rebuilding French national identity often subordinated other identities, such as gender,¹⁰⁶ and as per all nation-building projects in the anti-colonial world, the end of the war reinforced male

¹⁰⁵ Sinha, “Why Feminisms and Internationalism?” 346.

¹⁰⁶ Simone de Beauvoir’s four-volume memoir emphasizes this theme. See *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1958), *The Prime of Life* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1960), *Force of Circumstance* (New York: Putnam, 1963) and *All Said and Done* (New York: Putnam, 1972).

domination as part of French identity, despite having extended voting rights to women in 1944.¹⁰⁷ Conversations in intellectual literary circles in France, inhabited by the famous French intellectuals Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, were characterized by questions of morality, social justice and the place of the individual in society.¹⁰⁸ Women were part and parcel of the French nationalist revival after the Second World War in a manner that was not so different from the nationalist definition of women prevalent after the Partition of India.

Beauvoir laments that during French post-WW II reconstruction, women were re-inscribed as the designated embodiment of culture and “condemned to the continuation of the species and the care of the home.”¹⁰⁹ Arranged marriage clubs in the post-War era began to flourish almost immediately among the middle and upper classes. While until 1942 French law demanded a wife’s obedience to her husband, custom continued to give him great authority for years to come, even after the law was amended.¹¹⁰ The conjugal sphere was thus emblematic of the womb in which culture is reproduced but not changed and “the woman is not called upon to build a better world: her domain is fixed.”¹¹¹

Discussions about a woman’s place in constructing and regenerating the nation in Pakistan and France affected Kishwar Naheed and Simone de Beauvoir directly. As a

¹⁰⁷ Michael Kelly, “War and Culture: The Lessons of Post-War France,” *Synergies Royaume-UK and Ireland* 1 (2008): 95 and Judith Surkis’ *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France 1870-1920* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), which traces how the French citizen became sexed and male and women were denied full citizenship rights, although men defined women as the moral strength of the nation. Sexual difference was used to imply social difference. Also see Joan Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁸ While each of these individuals were prolific authors, some of their most famous texts dealing with post-WW2 ideas of morality, imperialism and existentialism are Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Mandarins* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1956). Originally published in 1954, the novel is about post-War French intellectuals. Simone de Beauvoir, *Conversations with Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York: Seagull Books, 2006) and Albert Camus’ novel *The Stranger* (New York: Vintage International, 1989).

¹⁰⁹ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 429.

¹¹⁰ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 429.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 451.

result, both women turned to international feminist conversations for models to challenge nationalism. Beauvoir began to conceptualize her magnum opus, *The Second Sex*, around 1935 and published the final manuscript in 1949, when Naheed was 9 years old and moving from Delhi to Lahore in the immediate aftermath of Partition. The book was incredibly controversial in its own time and 22,000 copies were sold in the first week, which the French read with “averted eyes.”¹¹² Francois Mauriac even led a campaign against *The Second Sex*, labeling it as pornography,¹¹³ the same charged leveled against Naheed’s Urdu translation of *The Second Sex* in Pakistan in 1977.

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir argues that women should not be defined by their bodies and idealized for their social positions as wives and mothers. Rather, Beauvoir draws attention to the unlimited potential of a woman outside of male-defined role. It took Naheed twenty-two years of reading and re-reading *The Second Sex*, in addition Beauvoir’s four volume autobiography, before attempting to translate it into Urdu. The translation process itself took her three years, during which time she removed French cultural references and adjusted these examples for a Pakistani audience.¹¹⁴ Beauvoir’s autobiography offers a revealing tale of growing up in an elite French family and rebelling against familial and class expectations, a tale not so different from Naheed’s. For Naheed, reading Beauvoir ultimately brought about the realization that “a woman has her own identity, her own name and her own mind.”¹¹⁵ In 1982, Naheed translated *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, Beauvoir’s memoir, into Urdu.¹¹⁶ In a third attempt to

¹¹² Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, vii.

¹¹³ Elizabeth Fallaize, *Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical Reader* (London: Psychology Press, 1998), 4 and 9-11. Francois Mauriac was a French Catholic writer.

¹¹⁴ Naheed, email message to author, 14 March 2012. Please see Appendix A.

¹¹⁵ Nighat Said Khan, Rubina Saigol and Afiya Shehribano Zia, eds., *A Celebration of Women: Essays and Abstracts from the Women’s Studies Conference March 1994* (Lahore: AR Publications, 1995), 46.

¹¹⁶ Kishwar Naheed, *Baqi Manda Khawab* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1982).

bring Beauvoir to Pakistan, *Aurat Mard ka Rishta*, The Relationship Between Man and Woman, Naheed tried to “absorb all of Beauvoir’s writings and then interpret those thoughts and ideas in the context of [her] social surroundings.”¹¹⁷ Thus, Naheed’s intellectual engagement with Beauvoir was not a flaccid attempt to appropriate European feminism for Pakistani purposes. Rather, Beauvoir’s theory, which emphasized female bodily similarity and attempted to deconstruct historical patriarchy, was useful for a number of women from different backgrounds.

Beauvoir was directly reacting to French imperialism. For example, in 1962 Beauvoir co-authored the story of Djamila Boupacha, an Algerian girl accused of terrorism and tortured by the French government during the French Algerian War. Beauvoir strongly supported the anti-colonial movement in Algeria by exposing realities the French state would rather hide, including the incredible number of women who were tortured, raped and killed during the years upon years of violent hostilities.¹¹⁸ Therefore, by critiquing French reconstruction and imperialism, Beauvoir’s ultimate goal was to expose the patriarchal French state in its local and imperial visions and actions.

Beauvoir, Naheed and the Female Body

Naheed’s engagement with feminist debates on the international level demonstrates her tendency to see women as non-national subjects. As mentioned earlier, women have been inculcated (and inculcate themselves) as the subjects of national discourse. During the second wave, feminists sought to disarticulate ‘woman’ from her

¹¹⁷ “Of poetry & analytical study,” accessed February 2, 2012, <http://www.dawn.com/2011/01/16/column-of-poetry-analytical-study.html>.

¹¹⁸ Simone de Beauvoir and Gisele Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha: The Story of the Torture of a Young Algerian Girl Who Shocked Liberal French Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

position as the designated embodiment of national culture by seeing their subjecthood as a global problem.¹¹⁹ Therefore, the non-national female subject is relieved of her subjecthood by becoming part of a global sisterhood. This view of women as non-national thereby gives Naheed the framework to critique specific cultural predicaments in Pakistan that create a nationalized female subject. This method of viewing women outside national discourse was a common endeavor undertaken by second wave feminists, most notably Beauvoir.

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir draws a distinction between the biological and cultural definitions of a woman. On one hand, woman has been defined by a number of anatomical characteristics, most commonly her uterus and ovaries and thus her ability to procreate. On the other hand, there are cultural definitions (although both Beauvoir and Naheed would consider them constraints) of what a woman is and should be. Men tend to conflate the biological and cultural distinction by constructing a woman's cultural definition in direct relation to her biological definition. Beauvoir further argues that one is not born a woman but rather becomes one. Males construct femininity as being in a constant state of danger and as a result women are exhorted to "be women, remain women, become women" and share in a mysterious yet threatening reality that is femininity.¹²⁰ Rather, Beauvoir suggests that a woman is not the negation of man nor defined in relation to a man but rather, she is an individual and should be defined by this

¹¹⁹ Sinha et al, "Why Feminisms and Internationalism?" 346. In recognizing the arguments in favor of a feminist universalism, Sinha, Guy and Woollacott recognize that the challenge facing feminisms and internationalism today is a critique of this universalism as false based on the fact that the international sphere is inherently elitist.

¹²⁰ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, xix.

individuality. However, in actuality, man is the subject and the absolute, thus ‘othering’ woman.¹²¹

Man’s conflation of the biological definition of a woman and the cultural definition of a woman results in a woman’s ‘othering.’ Beauvoir completely rejects male-defined biological essentialism, the belief that ‘we are who we are’ because of our genetics, saying, “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.”¹²² Beauvoir plays with history by reconstructing it to prove that women today inherited a culture of male domination that began with the most primitive of cultures. Beauvoir concludes that certain female agents, “brilliantly demonstrate that it is not women's inferiority that has determined their historical insignificance: it is their historical insignificance that has doomed them to inferiority.”¹²³ Women’s struggle in the 1950s therefore meant that women sought self-justification through transcendence of historically inherited norms and to give up the practice of subordinating existence to domestic, temporal life and the human being to its animality.¹²⁴ Beauvoir takes this argument a step further by asserting that although women define themselves by their reproductive capacity, this type of self-definition perpetuates an idea originally fashioned by men. Beauvoir ultimately suggests that women need to become agents and actively work against this ‘othering’ process by separating the biological and cultural definitions of woman.

Biological essentialization is a circumstance that woman worldwide have to deal with. Childbirth in South Asia, for example, is constructed as both a religious and cultural imperative and giving birth to a son is “cause for celebration of the power of

¹²¹ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, xxii.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 301.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 151

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

procreation.”¹²⁵ While having a son is a social affirmation of self-worth, giving birth to a daughter is a cue for ambivalence. At some deeper level, the young Naheed, newly married and struggling to find her place as a wife, daughter-in-law and working woman, recalls her inherent discomfort with having her life as defined by her uterus: “Marriage, wedding night, pregnancy, the movements of the baby inside the womb, all these stages came and went without making waves in my life.”¹²⁶ At the end of her reproductive capacity, Naheed somewhat happily recalls that her hysterectomy finally “revealed the story of my internal shrieks,”¹²⁷ which foiled the battle between her uterus and her mind. The cultural pressure to reproduce males and thus affirm one’s social worth was constantly feuding with her assertion as an individual who sought transcendence from her biological definition.

This feud is also eerily reminiscent of the battle the temporal and fictional Naheeds engage in throughout *Buri Aurat ki Katha*. Naheed’s mind and fictional self seems unable to separate from her uterus and thus her temporal self. She cannot exist in this body and in this world without her mind, which is her freedom from the constraints of reality. While she can transcend from this world and retreat to her mental world, where the fictionalized Naheed resides, the world she has created for herself in her mind can never be free from the body it controls and that controls it. For her, transcendence is temporary and temporality weighs down both her body and mind.

Naheed’s recollection of her hysterectomy is not just presented as a personal story. She recalls in *Buri Aurat* and her poem “Farewell to Uterus” that the three weeks

¹²⁵ Neluka Silva, “Shameless Women: Repression and Resistance in We Sinful Women: Contemporary Urdu Feminist Poetry,” *Meridians* 3, no. 2 (2003): 38-39.

¹²⁶ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, 132.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

after her hysterectomy were spent reading menopause and hysterectomy books that warned, “Women become irritable, quick to get angry; they get fat, they lose interest in sex. They become dry, they become like rotten vegetables. They develop beards and moustaches.”¹²⁸ Naheed continues on to lament, “In order to keep a woman enchained even medical principles are devised and the changes in a woman’s body are regarded less with wonder and more with disease.”¹²⁹ This is a clear example of men using medical discourses to perpetuate definitions of womanhood as functions of biology, thus ensuring the uterus defines the woman. Biological essentialism, of course, negates the countless number of ways women past their reproductive primes can contribute to society. Thus, Naheed assimilates Beauvoir’s argument on two levels: the personal and the national.

These two experiences, Naheed’s personal account of her relationship with her uterus and the view of a woman as diseased because she can no longer reproduce, all center around a larger question: Who will invent the female being? The answer, of course, is the individual whose presence and worth in the world is defined not by biology but by their inner nature and character. Therefore, Naheed produces texts as alternatives to the common practice of reading a woman’s body as her only text. Naheed notes that even in the historically intellectual world of mushairas, women’s poems are not always received for their full textual worth, for sometimes the neckline of a woman’s kameez distracts from her intellect.¹³⁰ While Naheed derives immense influence from Beauvoir’s idea of examining the human body, she still cannot reconcile how her body is composed of both her mind and her uterus that are continually at odds with one another. Neither is

¹²⁸ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, 134-135.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 134-135.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

fully liberated in the present, thus explicating on the struggle between the temporal and fictionalized Naheeds.

The second major idea that influenced Naheed is the distinction Beauvoir draws between the idea of woman as myth and woman as reality. While medical texts preach that a post-hysterectomy woman is apt to become mannish, Naheed notes, “many of us women who have been through this stage laugh at how divorced book learning is from reality.”¹³¹ Beauvoir effectively demonstrates that men have historically sought to retain all power by keeping women in a state of dependence by setting up law to disenfranchise women and define the woman as other. While this arrangement initially suited the economic needs of men, it soon grew to define their ontological and moral pretensions.¹³²

The duality drawn earlier between the self and the other forms the basis for man’s creation of the feminine myth:

“A myth always implies a subject who projects his hope and his fears towards a sky of transcendence. Women do not set themselves up as a subject and hence have erected no virile myth in which their projects are reflected; they have no religion or poetry of their own; they still dream through the dreams of men... The asymmetry of the categories- male and female- is made manifest in the unilateral form of sexual myths.”¹³³

Since woman has been constructed as a sexual object, the most rigorous of taboos forbids all sexual relations with a woman in a state of ‘menstrual impurity.’ In defining woman by her reproductive capacity, in essence her uterus, the man seeks to further isolate her by suggesting that the uterus’s dreaded essence, menstrual blood, is morally repugnant. At the same time, she is assured of her fertility and therefore her self-worth. Sometimes menstrual blood signals that she has failed, perhaps again, to conceive a child. A woman

¹³¹ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 135.

¹³² Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 139.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 143.

can be shamed forever without the presence of this “impure” substance on a sheet after the first evening spent in her marital bed.

Blood, which also flows through the veins of men and should not serve to differentiate but rather to unite men and woman as human beings, ultimately prevents woman from temporal transcendence. This is the character of the mythologized female: idealized for her blossoming physical sexuality and imbued with male-constructed “femininity.” The woman as other is a static myth while woman as a feminine and sexual object is a circumstance defined by her culture. Neither static nor fluid myths recognize her outside of subjecthood. This suggestion is a departure from the two previous points. Woman as reality is not woman as uterus, but rather woman as the production of her own imagination and therefore liberated from absolute subjecthood, or a state in which she has no agency.

The Absence of Class

Second wave feminism has to focus on forms of oppression other than class.¹³⁴ In moving away from male-defined biological essentialization and maintaining a stake in feminist cosmopolitanism, both Beauvoir and Naheed struggle between international idealism and local relevance. Therefore, they consciously downplay the importance of class and instead take back the biological essentialization argument and use it to create feminist solidarity. For example, in her chapter on the young girl, Beauvoir argues young women subscribe to the feminine myth upon hitting puberty and avoid bucking any type

¹³⁴ Sumit Sarkar, *Beyond Nationalist Frames: Postmodernism, Hindu Fundamentalism, History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 183.

of norm in this stage because men reward them heavily for their feminine performance. Similarly, in Pakistan, submission to social mores can be rewarding.

By taking back the biological essentialization argument and using it to create feminist solidarity by emphasizing the sameness of women's bodies and experience, women again become wholly passive victims of patriarchy. On the surface, this type of argument does not seem to empower women at all. However, by pointing at biological essentialization as a conceptual landmark, women can exert agency by using biological essentialization argument to organize on a mass scale against patriarchy. As discussed earlier, this idea attempts to unite women across traditional differences, such as class, ethnicity, race, etc. that existed and prevented woman's mass organizing before the second feminist wave went global. While Naheed and Beauvoir are cognizant that women oppress other women because of class differences, they argue that since men generated these class differences, they are insignificant. Of course, this is a reductive argument that blames all of women's problems on men. In reality, the differences between women based on class are much more nuanced and women are active agents in oppressing other women because they "carefully resist challenging their prescribed roles in society."¹³⁵

The most important idea circulating within the cosmopolitan feminist world was the idea of the female body as the primary focal point of feminism. The discourse on the female body as the 'other' of the male self was new and exciting because of two main purposes. First, focus on the female body was equalizing. All females, regardless of creed, race or religious persuasion, were inherently female by virtue of their anatomy. The uterus was therefore an element that bound women together on a global scale. While

¹³⁵ Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience," 79.

this notion is biological essentialization, it also has a more political and pragmatic element to it. Secondly, therefore, biological essentialization was also a discourse that served to unite women regardless of their differences against a definitive common enemy: patriarchy, as it exists in its multiple forms. In a twisted demonstration of feminist agency, by taking back the uterus, women were also taking back biological essentialization and using it to unite women worldwide. In Naheed's view, mass organizing across lines of difference was the first step towards the point of articulation, or an equitable system of gender relations achieved by reinterpreting every system of learning and a reinterpretation of society, culture and ethics.

The first wave of feminist thought, promulgated by upper middle class white women, did not take crucial differences in historical and cultural situations into account. Therefore, the second wave feminist milieu did not focus on oppression between classes of women specifically because it needed to move away from discourses that divided women towards discourses that united them. By emphasizing similarity over difference, Beauvoir sought to create gender solidarity that had historically divided the second sex.

Although Naheed is clearly conscious of the inherent divisiveness of class for women in Pakistan, emphasizing similarity over difference is one way to work towards gender solidarity that could supercede class interests in Pakistan. Naheed herself recalls,

“The feminist movement started in America in the late 1960s, while we were already involved in this process. You know, when Erica Jong's book of poetry came out in 1972, a few of our writers said, ‘Oh, Kishwar Naheed writes like Erica Jong.’ I said, ‘But my book was already printed when she started writing! So you could say she has taken from me!’ But it is not really a matter of who is taking from whom because women's awareness is so alike, so similar that when you talk to women from Siberia or South Africa or Yemen or anywhere else, their attitude and reactions to male domination are exactly the same.”¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 267.

Second wave feminist thought sought to unite women against global patriarchy by intervening in national debates on reproduction, sexuality and cultural representation. While feminist debates were by no means homogenous, with differences emerging between black, lesbian and socialist feminisms, a number of self-consciously feminist texts regarding these various differences entered global circulation. This is precisely the world that Beauvoir and Naheed are situated in. Naheed, for example, draws influence from Margaret Atwood, Anne Sexton and Maya Angelou, American feminist novelists and poets, in addition to Forough Farrokhzad and Sara Shagufta, Iranian and Pakistani feminist poets (respectively), just to name a few examples.¹³⁷ She is neither part of a Western nor an Eastern tradition, but part of a larger world of female and feminist writers fighting patriarchy by use of the pen. Beauvoir's and Naheed's texts belong to different genres: Beauvoir's to philosophy (and, in more recent times, women's studies) and Naheed's to autobiography. Yet, as demonstrated here, *The Second Sex* provides room for feminist conversations across lines of difference.

Conclusion

The autobiographical genre is one way of examining a writer's production of self. *Buri Aurat ki Katha*, however, is not a straightforward narrative of Naheed's life. Instead, Naheed buries herself under layered discourses of history, patriarchy and femininity. To this end, she joins the ranks of second wave feminists worldwide, all of whom are working against dominant discourses of nationalism, defined in this chapter as nationalism that favors masculinity.

¹³⁷ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, x-5.

Naheed's autobiography, published in 1995, was heavily influenced by Beauvoir's ideas, such as biological essentialism and the creation of the feminine myth. Beauvoir, a second wave feminist, was known for focusing on bodily similarity as its main mechanism of organizing women across lines of difference in the international arena. One major line of difference is class. By trying to subsume class narratives into a larger discourse of female solidarity and international sisterhood, one loses sight of the diversity of female experiences that are based on class. Class is an extremely important issue that obstructs women's organizing on a mass scale today. While the second wave attempted to take back essentialism and use it as a tool for strategically organizing women worldwide, this argument is essentially reductive.

While Naheed's poetry has been deemed feminist and Naheed, by extension, has been called a feminist, she does not take on this label. In examining Naheed's autobiography in the context of second wave feminism, her textual production of self is demonstrative of the struggle between her temporal and fictionalized selves. However, one must not give equal weight to each self. Naheed's struggle is not existentialist.¹³⁸ Naheed's temporal self did not become a woman, as Beauvoir suggests, but rather was born one and has acted, more or less, as a woman. Naheed has not led the lifestyle of a feminist and her rebellions, outside of marrying a non-sayyid, have been limited to pen and paper. Therefore, the fragility of Naheed's temporal self needed to create a

¹³⁸ Beauvoir's concept of feminist existentialism was attended to largely in *The Second Sex*. In the book, Beauvoir's creation of the sexed-gendered body drew attention to the importance of a non-biological self-definition, thus allowing the non-biological self to transcend. Freedom from temporal constraints is therefore still achievable in this world. See Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* and Beauvoir et al., *Conversations with Jean-Paul Sartre*. In the first chapter of *Conversations*, Sartre explains how he blends Marxism and existentialism, thus allowing him to examine individuals through the lens of their class affiliations. In the second chapter, which is a conversation with Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre explains his views on women's rights, which feeds into the third chapter and his outright condemnation of imperialism. Sartre and Beauvoir's existentialism was very popular in the post-World War II era.

fictionalized self, in which she could create an alternate, feminist self. While the fictionalized, feminist Naheed exists on paper, she cannot win the struggle between Naheed's body and mind.

Chapter 2

Generational Violence

“A Palace of Wax”

Before I ever married
 my mother
 used to have nightmares.
 Her fearful screams shook me
 I would wake her, ask her
 ‘What happened?’
 Blank-eyed she would stare at me
 she couldn’t remember her dreams.

One day a nightmare woke her
 but she did not scream
 she held me tight in silent fear
 I asked her,
 ‘What happened?’
 she opened her eyes and thanked the heavens
 ‘I dreamt that you were drowning,’
 she said,
 ‘and I jumped into the river to save you.’

That night the lightening
 killed our buffalo and my fiancé.

Then one night my mother slept
 and I stayed up
 watching her open and shut her fist
 she was trying to hold on to something
 failing, and willing herself to hold on again.

I woke her
 but she refused to tell me her dream.

Since that day
 I have not slept soundly
 I moved to the other courtyard.

Now I and my mother both scream
 through our nightmares

And if someone asks us
 we just tell them

we can't remember our dreams.¹³⁹

In “The Palace of Wax,” written in the 1980s, Naheed continues to question how believable dream-like shrieks are in the full light of day when, conversely, shrieks uttered in the daylight are called daydreams?¹⁴⁰ Daylight cannot hide ugly realities by relegating them to semi-conscious states of existence. Naheed’s “A Palace of Wax” touches upon one of the most important themes in women’s literature: female generational violence. *Buri Aurat ki Katha* is a narrative about the first girl in Naheed’s family to break tradition, in this case Naheed herself, who is registered as a ‘bad girl’ thereafter. By addressing history, Naheed defines where she, in different temporal and fictionalized forms, comes from. Her conflicted nature is an anchor point into her present. What has yet to be defined is where the female self is headed. Naheed therefore paints herself as a static entity within the *longue durée*, but with the potential for multidirectional flow that is contingent upon social change. Naheed readily admits, “I am a cowardly woman; I can only walk in the shadow of my own confidence.”¹⁴¹ This shadow reflects how Naheed is held back by her past. Yet there is no shadow to walk in when one is walking towards the light, or, in Naheed’s words, the point of articulation.

The distinction between woman as myth and woman as reality in second wave cosmopolitan feminist thought posed the question: Who will invent the female being? In South Asian history, scholars have argued that *ashraf*¹⁴² discourse from the late nineteenth century did not necessarily create the contemporary South Asian woman, but it did create the social mores she observes. During the late nineteenth century, Muslim

¹³⁹ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 36-39.

¹⁴⁰ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, 22.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁴² *Ashraf* is the plural of *sharif*, which means very noble or most noble. The term refers to the elite classes, although historical context can lend more specific definitions.

men set out to redefine the contours of the Muslim community and fought amongst themselves for the leadership of the Muslim community.¹⁴³ According to the historiography of this period, men did seek to retain power in all realms by keeping women in a state of dependence by using juridical means to disenfranchise women. The colonial state reinforced this dependence through legal initiatives that continued to confine women to the private and out of the legal purview of the colonial state.¹⁴⁴

In order to retain this power, men defined woman as ‘other’ by introducing a set of moral imperatives that dictated that women should remain in purdah, or in seclusion within the four walls of the homestead and heavily veiled outside of the house. During this period, women were “neither subjects, nor objects, but rather the ground of the discourse”¹⁴⁵ and remained marginal to the debates about their public presence. All Muslim women were not to be protected, however, and thus the class distinction between the woman as ornament and woman as prostitute was born.¹⁴⁶

The theme of generational violence in this chapter will be addressed on two levels. First, the social mores on morality, femininity and motherhood created in the late nineteenth century created class performativity. South Asian mothers have passed these mores on to their daughters for generations in a linearly violent process that leaves a young woman little room to exhibit her own agency. Second, as women became more

¹⁴³ For a few of the debates regarding leadership of the Muslim community in the post-1857 period, see Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Kenneth Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and David Lelyveld *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁴⁴ Uma Chakravarti, *Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998) and Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

¹⁴⁵ Mani, *Contentious Traditions*, 79.

¹⁴⁶ Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 69.

involved in the debates about morality, femininity, motherhood and female presence in the public sphere, elite women began to take over as the voices of the Indian female masses in national and international arenas. Over time, elite women continued to act as and be recognized as the female voices of Indian women. Due to class differences, this elite positionality stifles subaltern female voices. Therefore, violence in the mother-daughter relationship and the position of female elites who continue to marginalize subaltern female voices in national and international spheres are two ways in which Naheed addresses the crucial historical theme of generational violence.

Ashraf Discourse: Women as Myth and Women as Reality

The historiography of 1857 through approximately 1910 focuses on what male prescriptions for female practice and femininity entailed. These prescriptions were originally intended for upper class women with the hopes that lower class women would eventually pick them up.¹⁴⁷ Since purdah became performative of class and offered a relatively easy method for upward social mobility, it certainly did trickle down. The model of femininity and class performance, therefore, made a big impact on the status of women on the subcontinent.

Naheed argues that Pakistani women today still emphasize late nineteenth century models of femininity, which to her means male-defined concepts of morality, motherhood and domesticity. To this end, she also examines a longer trajectory of women on the subcontinent in order to bolster the idea that today's woman is the product of historical myth. There is a direct parallel between Naheed's and Beauvoir's

¹⁴⁷ Hanna Papanek, "Purdah: Separate Worlds and Symbolic Shelter," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15, no. 3 (1973): 289-325.

approaches of tracing women's oppression and foils second wave feminists' tactical decision to reclaim biological essentialism. Without reaching into the depths of history to debunk the feminine myth, the second wave argument stressing common female experiences that transcend differences would have a weak basis. Naheed uses ashraf discourse to support her argument that women's class differences today were originally created by men and further argues that through generational violence, females will oppress other females along the lines of male-defined social mores.¹⁴⁸ Naheed, however, does not present herself as the antithetical woman as reality. She, in her temporal form, is caught in a generational struggle between past and present.

Muslim women have always been the "pillars of Muslim social structure"¹⁴⁹ and even under Muslim Mughal rule, Muslim subjects were comforted by the fact that, "the real strength of the Islamic social order lay in the continued stability of the family unit, and more specifically the social control of women."¹⁵⁰ The male Muslim community emphasized the need for cultural regeneration based on perceived attacks on Muslim interests generated from the mutiny-rebellion of 1857. The post-1857 sharif man would be "educated, pious, and restrained in his behavior."¹⁵¹ Muslim women were central to this newly-defined ashraf culture as it was assumed that women provided, "an excellent

¹⁴⁸ It is important to note that in Naheed's post-colonial Pakistan, purdah practice has also fractured along geographical lines. Naheed remembers that village women who did not maintain purdah regularly would cover themselves from urban women and even cleanse the bed on which Naheed had been sitting "as if she was a Christian." Thus, while there are certainly similarities and continuities in Muslim purdah practice, it should not be seen as the same in all areas but rather different depending on class, status, urban-rural divides, etc. Naheed, *Buri Aurat ki Katha*, 87-88.

¹⁴⁹ Jalal, "Convenience of Subservience," 80.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁵¹ Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage: Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam of Bhopal*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 3.

indicator of the ‘health’ and ‘progress’ of Muslim society.”¹⁵² Muslim reformers knew very early on that educating Muslim men also meant educating Muslim women since women played a vital role as the “transmitters of culture.”¹⁵³

The notion that the woman’s place was in the home, or the private sphere, was largely maintained in male discourse and female practice. Outside of the legal sphere, ashraf male writings focused on the need to separate ashraf women temporally and spiritually from ajlaf women. Jalal describes this distinction as the ashraf ‘woman as ornament’ and the ajlaf ‘woman as prostitute’ in which ashraf women were “the obverse of the unprotected and rejected woman as prostitute.”¹⁵⁴ As Imtiaz Ahmad has noted, the categories ‘ashraf’ and ‘ajlaf’ have become part of normative sociological vocabulary when studying North Indian Muslims, as these terms have little or no meaning in Gujarat or Kashmir, for example.¹⁵⁵ While ashraf and ajlaf may not have been defining categories on the ground throughout India, they are important for this project as discursive categories of analysis that, as with any class-based category, are constantly negotiating their identities.

The writings that defined femininity have been divided into two main approaches to reviving Indian Muslim womanhood: reformist and modern. These are not diametrically opposed categories, however. One of the most popular reformist texts was Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi’s *Behishti Zevar*,¹⁵⁶ or Heavenly Ornaments, which outlined

¹⁵² Azra Asghar Ali, *The Emergence of Feminism Among Indian Muslim Women 1920-1947*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), xiii.

¹⁵³ Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, “Out of India: The Journeys of the Begam of Bhopal, 1901-1930,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 21, no. 3 (1998): 264.

¹⁵⁴ Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 69.

¹⁵⁵ Imtiaz Ahmad, “The Ashraf and Ajlaf Categories in Indo-Muslim Society,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 2, no. 19 (1967), 887.

¹⁵⁶ For a partial translation, see Maulana Ashraf Ali Thawani, *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf Ali Thawani’s Bihishti Zewar: A Partial Translation with Commentary*, trans. Barbara Daly Metcalf (Berkeley:

girls and women's education along a religious basis and described everything a woman may need to know, from etiquette to personal healthcare to how to live life as a 'pious' woman. The text is considered a cornerstone of female education because it schools women to become good wives and mothers and continues to be the guidebook given to a new bride as she departs her familial house for her husband's home.¹⁵⁷ While the reformist approach remained an integral part of ashraf discussions on the status and morality of elite women, it more often than not sought to demonstrate Islam's "egalitarian theological position on gender."¹⁵⁸

The modernist approach was based on Nazir Ahmed Dehlvi's fictional writings as well as his more instructive manuals, in addition to Sheikh Abdullah's curriculum at the Aligarh Zenana Madrasa, which prescribed that women receive a conservative education similar to that of the modern middle-class man.¹⁵⁹ Ahmad lauded marriage and insisted that the educated Muslim woman was a "potential source of ethical guidance, discipline and revitalized faith."¹⁶⁰ It was widely acknowledged among modernist Muslim men that, "we wish our women to be educated... but if it means the loss of our honor and the invasion of the privacy of our homes, we prefer our honor to the education of women."¹⁶¹ Therefore, women may receive a modern education but they must be educated in the

University of California Press, 1990). Kishwar Naheed has objected to this particular translation because the text "is not emancipation for women." Shoaib, "Vocabulary of Resistance," 176.

¹⁵⁷ Uma Chakravarti, "South Asia: Early 20th Century to Present," in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Law and Politics Vol. 1*, eds. Suad Joseph and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill Publishers, 2003), 274.

¹⁵⁸ Rouse, *Shifting Body Politics*, 10-11.

¹⁵⁹ Faisal Devji, "Gender and the Politics of Space: The Movements for Women's Reforms 1857-1900," in *Forging Identities: Gender, Community and State*, ed. Zoya Hasan (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994), 22-37.

¹⁶⁰ Mushirul Hasan, *A Moral Reckoning: Muslim Intellectuals in Nineteenth Century Delhi* (New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 161.

¹⁶¹ Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 70.

home or properly administered zenana madrassas, not in government schools. This segregated education idealized motherhood and domesticity.¹⁶²

However, as Ruby Lal argues, Nazir Ahmad's economic background was far more modest than that of a Mughal notable and he took advantage of the 'class anxiety' of his time in order to uplift himself to ashraf status through learning rather than descent.¹⁶³ When the NWP government announced in 1868 that it would award prizes for books best suited for educational use written in "Oordoo or Hindee" and "books most suitable for women of Indian will be especially acceptable and well rewarded," Ahmad completed and won prizes for *Mirat-al-Arus*, The Mirror of the Bride, as well as *Taubat-al-Nasuh*, The Repentance of al-Nasuh, in 1870 and 1874 (respectively).¹⁶⁴ The literature circulating about a woman's prescribed behavior had much to do with constructing and maintaining class distinctiveness, for both the male writers and their female readers.¹⁶⁵

The feminine myth defined in male ashraf discourse, specifically through the reformist and modernist novels and manuals of the late nineteenth century, relegated women to the private sphere and idealized domesticity, motherhood, docility and submissiveness. These were the male-defined notions of morality that ashraf women largely ascribed to. A number of North Indian women supported the idea that women were the designated embodiments of culture and sought to protect ashraf women from the

¹⁶² Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 70-71.

¹⁶³ Ruby Lal, "Gender and Sharafat: Re-reading Nazir Ahmad," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18, no. 1 (2008): 15-30.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶⁵ Sultan Jahan Begum of Bhopal calls Nazir Ahmad "an eminent authori[ty], whose views are unquestioned in the circle of enlightened and educated Muhammadans of today." Sultan Jahan Begum, *Al-Hijab, or why Purdah is Necessary* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1922), iv.

polluting public sphere.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, it was ashraf morality and practice that many ajlaf women strove to achieve.

In the early twentieth century, elite women began contesting male-defined discourses that idealized domesticity. Gail Minault's *Secluded Scholars*, for example, shows women's journals reflected ashraf female voices that created alternative strategies to those strategies ashraf men utilized for creating citizen-subjects in the age of nationalism.¹⁶⁷ While it is significant that elite women were challenging male-defined notions in public journals, class limited the definition of public so that women of elite class backgrounds were speaking to one another. Lower class women did not have a voice in the contestation. Therefore, male-constructed ashraf discourse cemented class differences between women and these class differences deeply penetrated female debates on education, motherhood, piety, etc even when women began questioning male-created discourses.

Additionally, as elite women began challenging patriarchy through vernacular presses, some also began to challenge purdah. Definitions of purdah changed from strict seclusion to the more emancipatory chador or burqa (types of veils) that allowed women freedom of movement in a manner they had never experienced before.¹⁶⁸ This freedom of movement also offered a type of performative upward social mobility for lower class women. That is, the lower class woman, who could not remain in seclusion because she needed to work outside of her home, was offered the chance to perform a higher status in the public sphere by wearing a veil.

¹⁶⁶ Ali, *The Emergence of Feminism*, 39-54.

¹⁶⁷ Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁶⁸ I.M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Naheed refers to class and performative purdah throughout *Buri Aurat Ki Katha* because while the text is written in the first person, it is also the history of Muslim women on the subcontinent. Naheed refers to herself as ‘bad’ in the title because she does not follow traditional definitions of a woman crafted by ashraf males during the late nineteenth century that are still relevant in Naheed’s present. While in Naheed’s present, class differences work against female organizing on a mass scale, she must reach into history to show that men originally fractured gender by class. The traditional definition of a woman as a submissive and docile wife and mother was the origin of woman as myth. Thawani’s *Bihishti Zevar*, for example, is still considered a cornerstone of female education because it schools women to become good wives and mothers and continues to be the guidebook given to a new bride as she departs her familial house for a new home.¹⁶⁹ However, the text is a product of male fantasy as it dictates a model of female perfection that is impossible for women to emulate.¹⁷⁰ This is reminiscent of the medical journals that Naheed remarked were “divorced from reality.”¹⁷¹ Naheed, therefore, sees woman as reality as stuck in this generational struggle between past and present.

Generational Violence

By interweaving aspects of international, national and personal history, Naheed expresses her oppression through others who have been oppressed through history and male-dominated historical writing. *Buri Aurat*, rather than solely expressing Naheed’s own life story, is therefore also about women whose stories, ideas and lives have had

¹⁶⁹ Chakravarti, “South Asia,” 274.

¹⁷⁰ Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 69.

¹⁷¹ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, 135.

historical significance in challenging the feminine myth. This method for storytelling fits in perfectly with her belief in the sameness of women because of bodily similarity:

“Yashordhara was a wife. So were Sita and Nur Jehan. But Qurratulain Tahira and Umrao Jan were no one’s wives. Stories about them were told by many but some remembered them like they do Queen Anne- there it is not only King William’s Glorious Revolution that is talked about... Eve! You have changed your name so many times! Sometimes you called yourself Anne Sexton and announced your real birth at the age of 29. Sometimes you were Forough Farrokhzad or Sara Shagufta. And sometimes my mother!”¹⁷²

Naheed invokes a number of individuals for various reasons. Some women are invoked for more obvious reasons, such as their influential positions as political sovereigns (Queen Anne) or cultural matriarchs (Yashordhara). North Indian courtesan Umrao Jan was invoked specifically because she was not a wife. Her significance is perhaps more pronounced than Naheed lets on. Umrao Jan was the controversial courtesan who danced across the pages of a popular early twentieth century Urdu novel, *Umrao Jan Ada*.¹⁷³ The novel chronicles a period of decline for the now-fabled courtesans when British colonial patriarchy replaced Nawabi court culture. The decline of the courtesan, the original keeper of Urdu culture, meant that this role had to be taken on by the ashraf Muslim wife.

Yet the crescendo of the quote is when Naheed invokes Eve. Historian Denise Spellberg argues that in constructing Eve’s maternity, male scholars in the medieval period fashioned a truly didactic, Islamic figure that they used to construct motherhood as a Muslim woman’s primary role and moral Islamic duty.¹⁷⁴ Beauvoir notes that when man began mythologizing women, he fashioned Eve from the rib of the first male and

¹⁷² Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story* 5.

¹⁷³ Mirza Hadi Ruswa, *Umrao Jan Ada: The Courtesan of Lucknow* (New Delhi: Hind Picket Books, 1970).

¹⁷⁴ Denise A. Spellberg, “History Then, History Now: The Role of Medieval Islamic Religio-Political Sources in Shaping the Modern Debate on Gender,” in *Beyond the Exotic: Women’s Histories in Islamic Societies*, ed. Amira El-Azhary Sonbol (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 3-14.

thus she and all women are inherently othered.¹⁷⁵ Yet Naheed, in a radical gesture of renunciation that is characteristic to her writing, has decided to reclaim Eve for all women. Eve becomes Sexton, Farrokhzad and Shagufta, twenty first century female poets known for their controversial writing and strong feminine voices. All three women reject Eve's inherent submission and their own victimization by demonstrating control over their own lives in the most extreme terms: suicide. Eve's metaphorical suicide is a rejection of woman as the mother of all and of her constructed role and duty as a mother. Moreover, Eve's suicide provides an allegorical method for Naheed to articulate female transcendence of a history that limits her autonomy and agency.

Finally, Eve takes the form of Naheed's mother, changing in just a few words the projection of Eve as the mother of all to the mother of one. The same woman who refused to appear before her sons-in-law and only left the house in a palanquin suddenly started attending mixed pro-Pakistan meetings and rallies wrapped in a thick chador during the age of anti-colonial fervor. She refused to stop educating her children and saw them all through high school even when the purse strings were tightly shut, yet refused to let her daughters pursue college level educations. Growing up seeing purdahnasheen (secluded women) turned political activists almost overnight, Naheed learned to conduct her own battles along the same lines. When she fought to attend college, she recalls, "I couldn't understand how the same mother who had been such a firebrand in front of her own father, was now being so retrogressive in front of us."¹⁷⁶ We are faced with a complicated picture of Naheed's agency. She is a direct product of her mother's

¹⁷⁵ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 141.

¹⁷⁶ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 47.

rebellious and traditional nature yet, because of this inheritance, is also a rebel in her own right.

Naheed's relationship with her mother is incredibly conflicted. On one hand she notes that the scars her mother made in her run very deep, "she did me injustice, and I am not prepared to take tribute. I have made sure that nothing from my mother's house is in my life." On the other hand, her poem *Déjà Vu* indicates understanding:

"I once told my mother
 I hate you.
 I was proud of my courage
 Until today.
 Today, my son told me:
 I hate you.
 My childhood
 flows in my veins
 as mercury."¹⁷⁷

Ironically, Naheed admits that she has inherited her mother's will.¹⁷⁸ Time is a crucial factor in generationality and as a young woman becomes a mother herself, she can slowly grow to understand her mother as a woman, not just as an authority figure. It is this span of time that allowed the young, rebellious woman to become the oppressive mother she once hated.

Beauvoir comes up with an eloquently expressed reasoning for a young woman's transgression. The relationship between mothers and their young daughters on the cusp of puberty is complex because,

"Daughter is... at once her [mother's] double and another person, the mother is at once overweeningly affectionate and hostile toward her daughter; she saddles her child with her own destiny: a way of proudly laying claim to her own femininity and also a way of revenging herself for it... Even a generous mother, who sincerely seeks

¹⁷⁷ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun* 238 footnote 12.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 238 and 249.

her child's welfare, will as a rule think that it is wiser to make a 'true woman' of her, since society will more readily accept her if this is done."¹⁷⁹

Beauvoir continues to deride this type of mother-daughter relationship, essentially an inheritance of the burden of femininity, likening a mother's actions to that of drug addicts and gamblers. It is nonsensical and disruptive, yet for some inherent reason the mother feels it is her duty to reign in her daughter.

This quote is also reflective of Naheed's dual nature in *Buri Aurat*. Naheed, the mother of two sons, does not have a chance to comment on the generationally violent relationship between a mother and her daughter from the vantage point of a mother. Her 2003 publication *Buri Aurat ki Khatoot: Naziada Beti ke Naam, A Bad Woman's Letters: To My Unborn Daughter*, describes Naheed's disappointment at the conditions young women in Pakistan face and expresses her desire to change the language in which women may express themselves, calling Pakistani culture retrogressive.¹⁸⁰ Yet she is deeply ambivalent about her relationship with her sons: "the three lines of a triangle can't meet. If they do it won't be a triangle. If they separate it won't be a triangle either. The three of us- my two sons- and I are like the lines of a triangle."¹⁸¹ While she tried to give her sons a respectable position in society in order to "have the father's image," only to have them resent her, the failures of the temporal Naheed to raise men who treat her with reverence forces her to apologize to women for perpetuating, albeit unwillingly, the patriarchal order.

Both Beauvoir and Naheed acknowledge that their mothers have had a hand in their own repression. One can rationally read Beauvoir's statement above as

¹⁷⁹ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 281.

¹⁸⁰ Shoaib, "Vocabulary of Resistance," 176.

¹⁸¹ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 187.

acknowledging the mother's agency in teaching her daughter to be submissive and feminine. Ultimately, however, generational violence is something that Naheed believes was created when man created the feminine myth during the late nineteenth century. Thanavi's *Bihishti Zewar*, for example, "is not emancipation for women."¹⁸² The feminine myth is perpetuated by women who want their daughters to be rewarded by the temporal bounties a woman receives from men for subscribing to this feminine myth. Oppression, even when doled out by women, is never autonomous from male oppression.

To this end, purdah is not restricted to the subcontinent and is rather exemplary of international female behavior. Simone de Beauvoir, writing in 1950s France, notes that a young woman is required to stay at home and her comings and goings are constantly monitored in a system of public surveillance, stating,

"She is in no way encouraged to take charge of her own amusements and pleasures... Custom makes independence difficult for them [young women] and the self-control that is imposed on women and becomes second nature in 'the well-bred young girl' kills spontaneity; her lively exuberance is beaten down."¹⁸³

A young woman's rebellion is quelled by society and by her own mother. Eve as Naheed's mother, therefore, is a far cry from the rebellious, transcendent and suicidal forms of Sexton, Farrokhzad and Shagufta. Eve returns to her original form, to that of the male constructed mother whose maternity demands that she imposes the same self-control on her daughter that was imposed on her.

Until Eve, or woman, breaks out of the constricting molds of motherhood, femininity and domesticity that force daughters into the myth of submission, society will continue on the same trajectory. The discussion and emphasis on the mother-daughter relationship as explicated here is directly related to women as the keepers of national

¹⁸² Shoaib, "Vocabulary of Resistance," 176.

¹⁸³ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 334-335.

honor as articulated during twentieth century feminist discourse as well as earlier subcontinent discourse about ashraf women. This discourse continues to oppress women and suppress any meaningful pushes for female equality in the cultural sphere. As Naheed herself says, “If we do not write of things we have observed and the pressures that have been forced upon this fragile body, we will not do justice to the next generation.”¹⁸⁴

Interestingly, Naheed sees the female body as fragile, painting it as an entity unable to withstand the innumerable pressures forced upon it. Writing, therefore, is a new production of self that, unlike the body, can withstand temporal pressures and the test of time. Unlike a child, a text is not a production of the uterus and can therefore contest biological essentialism. If we accept that a text, especially an autobiographical, is a non-biological production of self, is it still susceptible to generational violence?

There is another way that generational violence makes itself known in *Buri Aurat ki Katha*. Naheed is in fact part of long tradition of female autobiographical writing. Some of the more popular autobiographies of the late colonial period and through Partition were those written by Sultan Jahan, Atiya Fyzee, Abida Sultaan, Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, Begum Jehanara Shahnawaz and Begum Khurshid Mirza.¹⁸⁵ One of the key methods of writing prevalent in these autobiographies is the quality of writing of life as a lesson. While the stories these women tell are personal anecdotes, the

¹⁸⁴ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 295.

¹⁸⁵ See Sultan Jahan Begam, *An Account of My Life Vol. I, Vol. II and Vol. III* (London: Hazell, Watson and Viney, 1910, Bombay: The Times Press, 1922 and 1927); Atiya Begum Fayzee-Rahamin, [Ed. And Trans]. Siobhan Lambert-Hurley and Sunil Sharma, *Atiya's Journeys* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), Abida Sultaan, *Memoirs of a Rebel Princess* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, *From Purdah to Parliament* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), Begum Jehanara Shahnawaz, *Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Begum Khurshid Mirza, *A Woman of Substance: Memoirs of Begum Khurshid Mirza* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2005).

didactic quality of their writing also demonstrates certain elite perceptions of morality and social justice as they appear in these women's homes and political lives. All of these autobiographies, save Atiya Fyzee's, reveal a deeply seated struggle with notions of elite purdah practice and its limitations on female agency.

Women who emerged into the public sphere in the years preceding Partition did so as "appendages" of their men.¹⁸⁶ Indeed, the mothers, wives, daughters, or sisters of influential Muslim politicians wrote the autobiographies mentioned above. Even Qurratulain Hyder, a prominent Urdu writer who is one of Naheed's biggest influences, was the daughter of a novelist and protégé of Muhammadi Begum, the female editor of *Tehzib-i-Niswan*,¹⁸⁷ one of the first Urdu newspapers to publish women's writings. Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz and Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, came from elite political families and were encouraged to participate in politics. Therefore it is questionable whether such women were really radical when viewed in their generational contexts.

When situated within the generational history of these autobiographies, Naheed exposes the reality that patriarchy and female generational violence have largely succeeded in stifling female voices. By contrast, Naheed is radical because she did not enter the public as an appendage of a man and rebelled against her mother in an attempt to remove herself from generational violence. Indeed, the particular themes addressed in her autobiography represent a radical departure from the political biographies addressed above. *Buri Aurat ki Katha* is not written in a didactic manner, but rather with a tone of

¹⁸⁶ Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience," 84.

¹⁸⁷ *Tehzib-e-Niswan* was one of the first Urdu journals edited and written by Muslim women. Muhammadi Begum as the first woman editor of an Urdu journal and launched *Tehzib-i-Niswan* in 1898 as a joint venture with her husband, Maulvi Sayyid Mumtaz Ali, in Punjab.

urgency. Therefore, an autobiographical text can transcend temporal concerns, such as generational violence, yet that transcendence is only defined in terms of the temporal.

While Naheed is a rebel because she deviated greatly from her familial role as a daughter and sayyid woman, the role that Naheed occupies as an elite, public intellectual is not novel.¹⁸⁸ In fact, elite women throughout the 1910s-1930s expanded their own roles to include debates in the public sphere outside of the vernacular press and women's journals.¹⁸⁹ This type of public social consciousness and political activism was restricted to urban centers and to a certain type of woman, that is, daughters, wives and mothers of elite, urban male intellectuals and politicians.

During these decades, a few thousand upper-middle and upper class urban women were attending English-medium schools and colleges.¹⁹⁰ These were the same women that were fighting for rights in political debates alongside men. At the same time, millions of lower class women remained illiterate and isolated from the elite level of national politics. To this end, elite women stepped in to represent the voices of the female lower class masses on the national level.¹⁹¹ Their negotiations with the colonial state also brought them into the limelight as representative of the Indian female masses in the

¹⁸⁸ The temporal Naheed rejects this label, nothing she did not ever want to be a begum, or a "lackadaisical wealthy woman who only sporadically engaged in charity work." Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 240 and footnote 16.

¹⁸⁹ Ali, *Emergence of Feminism*, 63-71.

¹⁹⁰ Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience," 82.

¹⁹¹ Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). Sinha argues that Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, published in 1927, was a tipping point after which the Indian woman became a topic of global importance. She further argues that in response to the international outcry, elite Indian women stepped in to negotiate with the colonial state on behalf of their downtrodden Indian sisters. The Child-Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, according to Sinha, marked the end of the controversy because it signaled the "reconstitution of the hitherto dominant relationship between women, community and the state" (Sinha, *Specters of Mother India*, 155). Afterward, women were recognized as a legitimate political constituency that continued to be represented by elite Indian women. This is similar to Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" which suggests that one never hears sati-performing women themselves but rather hears about discourse surrounding them, concluding that the subaltern cannot speak.

international arena. Generational violence also exists outside of the family, then, as elite women maintained the role as the interlocutors between lower class women and the national and international realms from the early twentieth century through the present.

International Conversations and Women's Rights

Generational violence in the form of elite repression is yet another issue that Naheed discusses in conflicted terms. Elite women saw themselves as representatives of the poor, illiterate female masses in the early twentieth century when they entered debates with men, the colonial state and other elite Indian women in the early twentieth century.¹⁹² Generations of elite women have spoken for subalterns and this positionality in national and international discourse on women's rights has stifled the female subaltern voice. Naheed herself is a part of the educated, elite and urban milieu of women who are the interlocutors between the masses and the national and international arenas. Thus, woman as myth and woman as reality take on a new meaning. The woman as myth is also the subaltern woman, who has no voice yet is the subject of innumerable discussions. She is recreated in the international domain while she has no tangible place within it. While in Beauvoir's original distinction between the terms women as reality has yet to be defined, in Naheed's world elite women defined themselves as the sole voices for women's issues on the national and international levels. The elite woman, rather than the male, now defines the subaltern woman.

The early twentieth century represented a distinct shift from the secluded late nineteenth century. Muslim women emerged and took an active part in the anti-colonial movement and later found a foothold in the Pakistan movement in the 1940s. Women's

¹⁹² Sinha, *Specters of Mother India*.

movements in the early twentieth century dealt mainly with issues of education and enfranchisement. In 1917, for example, a delegation of various women from all over India met with Secretary of State E.S. Montagu in order to demand equal franchise for women, more schools for women, and better health and maternity services.¹⁹³ Despite this meeting, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 remained silent on the issue of female franchise, simply stating “at this stage” it was inadvisable to widen the electorate.¹⁹⁴ In the same year, the All-India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress announced their support for women’s franchise.¹⁹⁵ Propertied women in India received the vote in 1928, 17 years before French women. At the first round table conference in 1930-31, Begum Ara Shahnawaz and Mrs. Subbaranyan, the only two attendees designated as the representatives of Indian women, submitted a memorandum that demanded rights for all people, regardless of religion, caste, creed or sex.¹⁹⁶ The Muslim League supported these demands publicly in 1932 and in 1935, the Government of India Act enfranchised 6 million women.¹⁹⁷

Begum Ara Shahnawaz is one example of an elite woman whose nationalist and internationalist political career was born in the pre-Partition era of mass politics. She was born in Lahore to a distinguished family and a number of her family members were prominent politicians in the Muslim League. Shahnawaz herself was elected unanimously as the first woman member of the Council of the All India Muslim League and remained the only female member until 1938.¹⁹⁸ Shahnawaz wrote and published voraciously

¹⁹³ Begum Ara Shahnawaz, “Women’s Movement in India,” *Indian Paper 5* (New York: International Secretariat Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942), 4.

¹⁹⁴ Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*, 42.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹⁸ Shahnawaz, “Women’s Movement in India,” 6.

during the twentieth century for an India-wide and international audience. For example, her 1942 publication “Women’s Movement in India” was submitted to the Eighth Conference of the Institute of Foreign Relations held in New York in December 1942. It was during this time that a number of Indian women from prominent social positions across India, such as Muhammadi Begum (founder of Tehzib-e-Niswan in Punjab), Sultan Jahan Begum of Bhopal, Rukamanibai of Bombay, Sohrabvadiya Begum of Bengal, Lady J.C. Bose and her sister Mrs. P.K. Gohale, also stepped into this intermediary position. These women founded national and local women’s organizations, were recognized by national political parties and fought for women’s rights to education, healthcare and suffrage in India-wide political discussions and colonial domains.

Elite Indian women also engaged in transnational conversations with British feminists regarding educational and healthcare reforms.¹⁹⁹ British feminists, defined as women actively engaging in female emancipation in Britain,²⁰⁰ shifted their gaze towards reforming the amorphous “Indian woman” during Crown Raj. More often than not, the Indian woman was defined as a downtrodden victim of both indigenous patriarchy and the colonial state and thus needed the aid of her British “sisters.”²⁰¹

Elite Indian women, allied with British feminists, worked together to win rights reforms from the colonial government on behalf of the Indian female masses since the late nineteenth century²⁰² and continued to do so through the early twentieth century. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a man whose philosophical framework was a guiding light for

¹⁹⁹ Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

²⁰⁰ Burton, *Burdens of History*, 128.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 129.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

Muslims during the age of anti-colonialism, recoiled at transnational feminist attempts at women's suffrage, noting,

“Superfluous women... are compelled to “conceive” ideas instead of children. Recently they have conceived the inspiring idea of “votes for women...” The suffragist movement in Europe is at bottom a cry for husbands rather than votes. To me it is nothing more than a riot of the unemployed.”²⁰³

It is ironic that a man who actively engaged in transnational philosophical texts and discussions²⁰⁴ and privileged khudi, or self-hood, so highly would berate a woman's attempts at achieving her own political self-hood. Iqbal himself is guilty of defining women by their reproductive capacity: unemployment is reduced to a woman's lack of husband and children and fulfillment is couched in terms of marriage and reproduction. Moreover, women are ridiculed for conceiving anything but children, implying the realm of women and the realm of ideas do not (or rather should not) coincide. A woman with ideas instead of children is nonessential, redundant and useless. Even the most enlightened of men by all other standards did not represent a radical disjuncture from the stigma of a woman's place outside of the home.

Middle-upper and upper class women's investment in the nationalist movement and discussions about political rights for women are documented in a number of sources, including newspaper reports, memoirs, essays, papers and records of women's organizations, such as the Anjuman-e-Khawateen-e-Islam (Islamic Women's Association).²⁰⁵ The writings demonstrate that these women conflated female emancipation and the nationalist movement,²⁰⁶ seeing independence as a chance for

²⁰³ Rouse, *Shifting Body Politics*, 18.

²⁰⁴ See Ayesha Jalal, “Iqbal on Nietzsche: A Transcultural Dialogue,” in *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones*, eds. Sugata Bose and Kris Manjappa (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 85-96.

²⁰⁵ Chakravarti, “South Asia: Early 20th Century to Present,” 274.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 274.

female franchise. Sources for writing subaltern women's history during this era are scarce. We know, of course, that the creation of the Women's Central Subcommittee of the Muslim League in 1938 led to an unprecedented number of women attending League meetings.²⁰⁷ The demand for Pakistan sparked mass processions and fundraising campaigns spearheaded by Muslim women and the League's victory in 1946 has been largely attributed to women urging their house bound counterparts in urban constituencies to vote.²⁰⁸ Yet lower-class female involvement in politics during the early twentieth century was so brief that it could not secure a solid foothold for their involvement in nationalist politics in the long term. On the eve of nationalism, elite women could no longer maintain sisterhood across religious and temporal divides.²⁰⁹ Ultimately, these women chose to retain their positions as intermediaries between the female masses and the nationalist and internationalist political realms.

A number of non-legal and unofficial sources produced during the 1930s and 40s, such as the novels and short stories written Sadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai and Rashid Jehan for example, demonstrate how a new generation of Urdu writers challenged established norms.²¹⁰ Communist internationalism in the interwar period, for example, forged transnational anti-colonial connections outside of the citizen-state binary that elite women occupied.²¹¹ These international conversations were often expressed through print culture. The authors associated with the PWA, for example, often rejected traditional styles and methods for writing prose. In direct contrast to female autobiographies written

²⁰⁷ Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, "British Colonial Domains of South Asia," in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Law and Politics Vol. 2*, eds. Suad Joseph and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill Publishers, 2003), 61.

²⁰⁸ Lambert-Hurley, "British Colonial Domains of South Asia," 61.

²⁰⁹ Chakravarti, "South Asia: Early 20th Century to Present," 276.

²¹⁰ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 3.

²¹¹ Bose and Manjapra, *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones*, 159-161.

by elite women in the early twentieth century, Naheed notes that, “Ismat Chughtai was the first writer who rejected the traditional style of writing [in order] to give expression to women’s psychological, physical and emotional experiences.”²¹² *Aangare*, a collection of short stories, was even banned by the colonial government because of “fears that it might cause unrest,”²¹³ which it did. The Pakistani government charged Manto with obscenity on a number of occasions before his death in 1955. It was these Urdu writers and many more that influenced later writers, such as Naheed, to explore and push the boundaries of the Urdu language and to explore new genres of resistance, such as Urdu poetry.²¹⁴

Again Naheed sees herself in a conflicting position. On one hand, Naheed maintained a close relationship with the Pakistani government and continued to represent Pakistani women at the national and international levels, where she could advocate equal rights on behalf of Pakistani women. On the other hand, her attempt to liberate the subaltern ‘woman as myth’ through mass mobilization based on bodily similarity could only be articulated through texts and a fictionalized politics of equality.

Conclusion

Naheed constructs her argument for female oppression through the women as myth and woman as reality framework. More specifically, she addresses a hundred year period of female history (approximately 1857-1947) on the subcontinent through two main lenses. The first is the creation of North Indian Muslim ashraf discourse in the late

²¹² Khan, Saigol and Zia, *A Celebration of Women*, 47.

²¹³ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 3.

²¹⁴ Anantharam, “Engendering the Nation,” 222. According to Kishwar Naheed, “the scene and terminology in Urdu poetry changed because of the Progressive movement.” Shoaib, “Vocabulary of Resistance,” 175.

nineteenth century. This discourse, created by men and upheld by women, signaled generational violence through the mother-daughter relationship by perpetuating a male-created myth of femininity.

The second is the status of elite Indian women who, in contesting their exclusion from the public sphere (namely politics), entered the international sphere as the representative of the Indian female masses. Just as the argument that bodily similarity will unite women across differences, the elite women as the representative of the masses who came to prominence in the early twentieth century had to forgo the crucial differences in female experiences based on class, ethnicity, race, etc in order to negotiate women's rights as distinct from men's rights with the colonial state. In taking on the role of the representative, elite women engaged in structural violence by speaking for the female subaltern instead of letting her speak for herself.

Naheed, a female elite who has represented women in activist conferences worldwide, argues that her autobiography is a history of all oppressed women on the subcontinent beginning in the late nineteenth century. However, the temporal Naheed engages in a different form of generational violence herself, by acting as the elite representative for the abstractly defined Indian woman. This is yet another reason why the temporal Naheed seeks solace in her fictionalized self. Her active attempts at removing herself from generational violence were reproduced when she took on the role as an international activist. The role, passed down since the early twentieth century to a new set of elite women, stymies subaltern voices that subsequently cannot find a place in the international arena. Her position as an elite activist is inherently conflicted. Aware of the elite terms through which her inclusion into the international arena was made

possible, Naheed attempts to resolve this conflict through her textual production of self. Her fictionalized self, therefore, emphasizes her victimhood at the hands of the feminine myth in order to liberate herself from her position as an elite. Again, her fictionalized self is driven by the failures of her temporal self to be true to feminist ideals, such as working across class differences.

Chapter 3

Islamization and Feminism in Pakistan

Naheed's autobiography reflects second wave cosmopolitan feminism as well as late nineteenth century discourse that continue to dictate femininity and female morality in Pakistan today. These layers of her autobiography reveal her mixed feelings towards her own body and mind in addition to obvious class differences and performative morality. Her autobiography also directly critiques the relationship between women and the state and male-female social relations during Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization process. These critiques reveal a much less ambivalent Naheed and the difference between her temporal and fictionalized self is thereby much less pronounced. However, by placing *Buri Aurat ki Katha* in its historical context, in the midst of a self-consciously feminist movement, her decision to avoid the feminist label is an incredibly politicized move that does, in fact, reveal a conflict between the temporal and fictionalized Naheeds.

According to Saadia Toor, "every aspect of the Pakistani state, society, politics and culture worth noting today bears the scars of the eleven years of martial law under General Zia-ul-Haq from 1977-1988, Pakistan's longest and most brutal dictatorship."²¹⁵ Within one year after obtaining power through a right-wing backed coup, Zia announced his intentions to "Islamize" Pakistan and added members of the conservative political party Jamaat-e-Islami to work in his cabinet to ensure his political stability. The funds Zia received from the United States to fight a proxy war against the Soviets in Afghanistan also bolstered his regime.²¹⁶ Zia's Islamization program was not based on a

²¹⁵ Toor, *The State of Islam*, 117.

²¹⁶ Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), ix.

pre-given meaning of Islam.²¹⁷ Rather, he reproduced an earlier, late nineteenth century ashraf discourse on morality that dictated that women belonged in the domestic sphere and did not have a place in the public sphere. One major difference in Zia's reproduction was that his Islamization was directed at all women, regardless of differences. Zia intentionally targeted women as the focal point of his Islamization plans because he knew focusing on the reinvigoration of the Pakistani family through enforcing the veil and *char divari* would be outwardly supported by the religious parties and win him "muted approval"²¹⁸ of all classes of society.

Khawar Mumtaz, author of *Women of Pakistan* and a vibrant part of the women's movement in Pakistan during Zia's period, notes that by 1978 Zia's Islamization campaign, which hinged partially on moral surveillance and partially on a number of juridical measures passed in between 1978 and 1981, resulted in a subtle change of attitude and social atmosphere in Pakistan that adversely affected women.²¹⁹ In 1981, a number of Karachi and Lahore-based female activists launched the Khawateen Mahaz-e-Amal, the Women's Action Forum (WAF), in order to address two alarming trends: first, the growing tendency to segregate women and push them back into their homes and second, to combat the various juridical actions, such as the Hudood Ordinances, that were falsely adopted in the name of Islam.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Toor, "Moral Regulation in a Post-colonial Nation State," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 9, no. 2 (2007): 255.

²¹⁸ Jalal, "Convenience of Subservience," 101 and Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 585. Please also see Toor, "Moral Regulation in a Post-colonial Nation State," 258 and Rouse, *Shifting Body Politics*, 32-34.

²¹⁹ Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*, 74-75.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

One of the Hudood Ordinances,²²¹ the Zina Ordinance, marked the first time that adultery became a crime against the state as opposed to individuals and both actions became non-compoundable, non-bailable, and punishable by death.²²² Zina is defined as sexual intercourse without being legally married and conflates two practices: adultery among the married and fornication among the unmarried.²²³ There was no provision for rape within marriage. In order to prove zina, four ‘pious’ Muslim adult male witnesses must account for the act of penetration, or the accused (male or female) may confess.²²⁴ With the implementation of the Hudood laws, rape was subsumed under zina and if coercion cannot be proved, then the victim of rape becomes an offender of zina who had enjoyed illicit sexual activity.

Khan argues in her book *Zina, Transnational Feminism and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women* that the Ordinance is based on a tension between religion, culture and politics and is ultimately a legal mechanism for controlling impoverished and illiterate women.²²⁵ Indeed, many men and families have used the Zina Ordinance to punish their wives, daughters and sisters for a number of reasons that range from marital differences to property scuffles. Many women have been imprisoned for being accused of zina without any proof that they committed illegal sexual activity at all. While the law is applicable to all classes of women, Khan’s book shows that women from the lower middle and lower classes were the law’s biggest victims. Naheed remembers these real-life incidents in *Buri Aurat ki Katha*, calling the zina ordinance a “slap on the faces of all

²²¹ The other Hudood ordinances banned Muslims from manufacturing, drinking and/or selling alcohol. Yet another Hudood ordinance was the blasphemy law, which criminalized blaspheming the Prophet, his family and companions as well as blaspheming symbols of Islam.

²²² Shahnaz Khan, *Zina, Transnational Feminism and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 8.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 8.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

women” that also vindicates manhood.²²⁶ These women are also largely ignorant of the law’s mandates, their charges and their rights as citizens. The Zina Ordinance attempted to curb women’s autonomy by defining her again by the sum of her biological parts, essentially blaming the woman for rape. A woman’s body was branded as her undoing and ensured her absence in the public sphere.

Zia’s regime launched a propaganda campaign that flowed through the Pakistani media, urging people to become more Islamic and see to it that their neighbors were as well.²²⁷ This propaganda campaign, aimed against women who did not follow Zia’s prescriptions to stay in the home or emerge veiled, gradually permeated Pakistani society on all levels.²²⁸ Mumtaz recalls an incident in the winter of 1978-79 when a woman entered a bakery in an upper class residential area of Lahore and was allegedly slapped by a complete (male) stranger for not having her head covered.²²⁹ What is important to note about this isolated incident is that the woman was in an upper class area in an urban city, where emerging unveiled would not have been as shocking as if a woman was uncovered in a congested inner-city bazaar, for example.²³⁰ Yet another incident Mumtaz cites is when a father daughter pair was stopped daily by a police office asking for proof of their ‘legitimate relationship’ when they were taking a walk in their own neighborhood during the day.²³¹

²²⁶ Naheed, *Buri Aurat ki Katha*, 33-34.

²²⁷ Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*, 71.

²²⁸ While Zia’s propaganda campaigns also preached morality to males, Zia’s actions and directives were largely directed towards women.

²²⁹ Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*, 71.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

The Hudood ordinances invoked a period in which the nation focused on symbolically purging societal impurity.²³² This period was significantly characterized by the displacement of liberal elites from their position of control over state and society, thereby giving the middle classes a foothold in the national quest for religious repression.²³³ Zia's Islamization attempts at making the public sphere moral by removing women from it were accompanied by official directives stating that women serving in government positions and positions as schoolteachers should wear 'Islamic' dress.²³⁴ This amounted to a full-sleeved shilwar kameez with a chador (veil). The chador was to replace the South Asian duputta. While traditionally a large piece of cloth used to cover one's head and obscure her curves, the duputta had dwindled to small piece of cloth draped around one's neck by the late 1960s and 1970s²³⁵ and became a mere symbol of modesty. More fashionable women had abandoned it altogether. Men, on the other hand, were advised (not directed) to wear national dress. Zia also introduced segregation in schools and sports events.²³⁶ All of these directives, while introduced as official government directives, had ramifications in the cultural sphere and led to drastic changes in cultural practice.

Naheed's Critique of Zia's Islamization: Veiling, Seclusion and Moral Surveillance

In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz suggests that cultural practice arises as a form of knowledge when one distinguishes between thin and thick

²³² Khan, *Zina*, 11.

²³³ Anita Weiss, "The Historical Debate on Islam and the State in South Asia," in *Islamic Reassertion in Pakistan: The Application of Sharia Laws in a Modern State* [Ed]. Anita Weiss, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Jalal, "The Convenience of Subsistence" and Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*.

²³⁴ Toor, *The State of Islam*, 134 and Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*, 77-81.

²³⁵ Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*, 78.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 83-98.

descriptions. Geertz explains that the thin description of what an actor is doing, in this case a boy rapidly contracting his eyelids, is given meaning by the thick description of what he is doing, which was “practicing a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking a conspiracy is in motion.”²³⁷ Thus, the difference between thin and thick descriptions constructs a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which twitches, winks, fake-winks, parodies and rehearsals of parodies are produced, perceived and interpreted and without which they would not exist, regardless of what the individual did or did not do with his eyelids.²³⁸

It is this thick description and the stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures that similarly composes Naheed’s critique of moral surveillance under Zia. Veiling and seclusion prescriptions, for example, attempted co-opt middle class female agency within a regime that saw the uterus as the site of cultural and national reproduction.²³⁹ As a result, female sexuality and morality was no longer individual but rather appropriated within public and national discourses.²⁴⁰

Naheed’s critique of moral surveillance in terms of veiling and seclusion occurred organically. Naheed was made to wear a veil from the ripe age of seven because of her family’s social status as sayyids.²⁴¹ This veil had nothing to do with her personal views of Islam and piety and instead was indicative of her upper class status. While Naheed rebelled against her family’s order that she marry a sayyid, her marriage into a

²³⁷ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 6.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

²³⁹ Partha Chatterjee, “The Nationalist Resolution of the Woman’s Question” and Jamal, “Gender, Citizenship and the Nation-State in Pakistan,” 298. Chatterjee argues that the middle-class Bengali household was the original site of anti-colonial nationalism and the development of middle-class female selfhood as “spiritual” objects in a spiritual-material (read: private-public) binary. Jamal argues this reproduction of private-public in the middle classes in Pakistan again gave the middle class a position in the national discourse focused on religious repression.

²⁴⁰ Silva, “Shameless Women,” 25.

²⁴¹ Naheed, *A Bad Woman’s Story*, 25.

conservative family meant her movement outside of the home was again forbidden and scrutinized, forcing her to act defensively about leaving the house for her job. Naheed is also reacting directly to Zia's Islamization policies. As a result of her past and current experiences, Naheed focuses her critique towards to specific practices taken up by a number of women in order to make themselves 'moral': veiling and seclusion.

Zia's national discourse of female morality in the public sphere was upheld in non-official local "courts", ie. the mohalla or neighborhood. Returning to the late nineteenth century didactic manuals and novels for women, one can see that the mohalla was also a trope for performing female morality.²⁴² Nazir Ahmad, the late nineteenth century Urdu novelist known for his reformist literature, uses the mohalla as a setting in which "notions of respectability become constituted, institutionalized and remembered in new ways,"²⁴³ and dress, manner and aesthetics are performative of one's individual, familial and national respectability. Ahmad's female character Asghar (the small one) in his novel *Mirat-ul-Arus* (The Mirror of the Bride), for example, never mixes with the lower-class women of the mohalla but rather educates them in a controlled and guarded, even aloof, manner.²⁴⁴ Asghari is the younger sister of Akbari, the great one. While Akbari never lives up to her name, Asghari becomes great because of her small but wise actions.²⁴⁵ Ahmad's use of the mohalla in order to emphasize normative morality is similar to Zia's emphasis on making sure one's neighbors are also pious and is again

²⁴² Performativity shall be used here to describe a non-verbal form of expressive action that is acted out and received by a society that operates under a set of specific, defined public norms. This definition of performativity is derived from Judith Butler, although it is not an exact replication of her notion of performativity. See Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

²⁴³ Lal, "Gender and Sharafat," 17.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁴⁵ Francis Pritchett, "After The Bride's Mirror: The First Urdu Bestseller." March 28, 2012. http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00fwp/published/txt_mirat_intro.html

reminiscent of didactic male discourse of the late nineteenth century. Ahmad's book very clearly points out that Ashgari, his heroine, ensures she is not polluted by the lower class women of the mohalla.

These non-official courts are reminiscent of Bentham's panopticon, in which Pakistan is a disciplinary society that has inculcated in all of its citizens a religiously moral duty to "observe with the intent to normalize behavior"²⁴⁶ along specific definitions of ostensibly religious morality. Each person in the neighborhood watches the other, according to Naheed,

"Less to help and more to find fault... Who comes to whose house, who goes where, who eats what and meets whom, the neighbors know more about this than the woman of the house herself. If she is a working woman then the women of the whole neighborhood will be aware of what time she sets off for her office or for school. They will all leave their work and come to the wall, rooftop, blinds or windows to watch her."²⁴⁷

In this quote, Naheed is challenging the stigma against women whose work brings them outside of the home, a stigma that is reminiscent of the rejected and unprotected 'woman as prostitute' who must leave her house in order to make a living, as well as the capacity of society to restrict her movement. Even though she remained in vigilant protest of seclusion and performative veiling, modesty and shame shackled her like chains when she was outside of her home: "Through words and gestures, women taunt you. They want to hurt you, to humiliate you, by hook or by crook. This is our sadomasochistic psychology."²⁴⁸

Naheed suggests that moral performance was another mechanism for middle and upper class women who supported Zia's Islamization, largely because it bolstered their

²⁴⁶ Jeremy Bentham, Introduction to *Panopticon*, accessed March 18, 2012, <http://cartome.org/panopticon2.htm>

²⁴⁷ Naheed, *A Bad Woman's Story*, 92.

²⁴⁸ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 242-243.

own elite status, to critique those women who challenged those same policies. Secluded women can adhere to the ideal feminine traits of submissiveness and docility while also deriving pleasure from inflicting pain, usually in the form of salacious gossip, on other women. To this end, Naheed is also questioning the validity of the state's connection between Islamic morality and purdah. As Naheed suggests, morality cannot be forced upon the individual from above.

Moral surveillance was one method for Pakistani women to control other women. In the mohalla construction, individuals are constantly being watched without knowing at any given moment whether they are being watched or not. This method of social control is, as Bentham said, “a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind,”²⁴⁹ thus ensuring the moral enslavement of individuals. Khan further argues that the Hudood Ordinances, specifically the Zina Ordinance, led to the public surveillance of women by men. As a result, one is made hyperaware of their dress, manner and aesthetics because those are the criteria by which judgments are made in this mohalla- panopticon formation.

Naheed's poem “Censorship” is directly reacting to yet another mechanism Zia used to “obtain power of mind over mind,” which was the Pakistani media. She urges individuals to remain vigilant during a time when martial law became semi-legitimate through elections (contested on a non-party basis) and Zia painted himself in the Pakistani media as “the champion of the Afghan mujahideen” fighting to protect Islam from foreign invaders and influence.²⁵⁰ Finally, Naheed calls her reader's attention to the fact that social control is not new, but rather has changed:

²⁴⁹ Bentham, Introduction to *Panopticon*, accessed online 18 March 2012.

²⁵⁰ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 14.

In those times when the camera could not freeze tyranny forever
 only until those times
 should you have written
 that history
 which describes tyranny as valour.

Today, gazing at scenes transferred to celluloid
 one can gauge
 what the scene is like
 and the sound
 when trees are uprooted from the hillsides.

Whether you are happy or sad
 you must breathe
 whether you eyes are open or closed
 the scene, its imprint on the mind,
 does not change

The tree that stands in the river
 always remains wooden
 cannot become a crocodile

For a long time now,
 we have stood
 on the rooftops of stories
 believing this city is ours

The earth beneath the foundations has sunk
 but even now we stand
 on the rooftops of stories
 assuming life to be
 the insipid afternoon's wasted alleyways
 with their shattered bricks
 and gaping fissures.²⁵¹

The poem is also a much more implicit critique of the constructed stories the Pakistani nation has been built upon. As Salman Rushdie has noted, "it is clear that re-describing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it."²⁵² By nothing that the state has taken reality into its own hands and manipulated it, Naheed is using poetry as a way to resist the 'official' version of Pakistani nationhood. By standing on the rooftop of the

²⁵¹ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 50-53.

²⁵² Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 13-14.

stories even after the foundation had sunk, Naheed is indicating that those fictionalized versions of Pakistani nationhood, used as the glue that haphazardly held together shattered bricks and gaping fissures, are now exposed, thus leaving mental and physical space for Pakistani citizens to reinvent the nation-state of Pakistan.

Feminism in Pakistan

The reaction to Islamization was by no means monolithic and a number of elite women who had carefully preserved their elite roles by remaining subservient to social mores, in addition to Islamic women's groups and middle class women, supported Zia's Islamization. On the other hand, it was only with Zia's Islamization and the unexpected shift in policies that upper and upper middle class activists realized how tenuous their hold on their rights actually was. The WAF was not a reactionary movement, as elite women in Pakistan had been fighting for rights and reform since the creation of the state in 1947. The name suggests a different type of urgency to act in order to preserve women's rights. As such, the WAF recognized that if the government could not be depended upon to guarantee women's rights, then the women of the WAF would have to mobilize lower class women and work together to counter the prevailing trend. While women were contesting Zia's Islamization efforts individually in the late 1970s, their contestations did nothing to slow the Islamization process. The women who contested these efforts were more often than not the wives, sisters and daughters of colonels and generals of the Pakistani army, both retired and serving, who, in the case their anti-Zia activism got out of hand, remained protected from the government by their male kin.²⁵³

²⁵³ Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience," 80-83.

An adequate, if broad, definition of the WAF as “an umbrella organization for feminist/women’s groups and individuals”²⁵⁴ correctly implies that the WAF did not stand for the Pakistani women’s movement in its entirety, as it was an urban phenomenon and was pulled together largely by upper-middle and upper class women and thus represented that same constituency, at least at the outset.²⁵⁵ Naheed, for example, was one of the original founders of the WAF.²⁵⁶ Elite women were also not a monolithic group and a number of elites supported Islamization for various reasons. The early 1980s saw a number of self-proclaimed feminists, including writers, academics, performers and politicians, come into the activist sphere. Protest against the state was articulated through newspaper articles, campaigns in schools and universities, and cultural production such as art, poetry and song.²⁵⁷ While a number of these women were the daughters and granddaughters of the women who participated in the Pakistan movement and pushed for women’s rights on the eve of nationhood, their activism was notably different from the activism of the 1940s. Mumtaz and Shaheed, two founders of the WAF, note that the younger generation had a decisively more feminist outlook and approach to problems.²⁵⁸

Saba Mahmood recalls coming to feminist consciousness in Pakistan during the 1970s and 80s, noting,

“There was still a sense among the feminist left in Pakistan that some form of critical Marxism, combined with a judicious stance toward issues of gender inequality, could provide a means of thinking through our predicament and organizing our pragmatic efforts at changing the situation in which we lived. In this we were perhaps not so different from our counterparts in countries like Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, where the postcolonial condition had generated a

²⁵⁴ Toor, *The State of Islam*, 138.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 223, Footnote 56 and Jalal, “The Convenience of Subsistence,” 103.

²⁵⁶ Naheed, email message to author, March 14, 2012. Please see Appendix A.

²⁵⁷ Fauzia Gardezi, “Islam, Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan: 1981-1991.” *South Asia Bulletin* 10, no. 2 (1990): 18.

²⁵⁸ Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*, 75.

similar sense of disappointment but also a continued sense of nourishment... that feminism held out for us.”²⁵⁹

Mahmood’s critical Marxism in Pakistan was exemplified by the WAF’s recognition that it would need to turn to the female masses in order to mount an influential resistance to women’s marginalization by state and society. Nighat Said Khan, a founder of the WAF, recalls with nostalgia that the early 1980s were the “heyday” of the organization.²⁶⁰

The WAF’s ‘umbrella’ sheltered a number of women, some who self-identified as feminists and others who did not, who came together to combat “men, money, mullahs and the military.”²⁶¹ Some of the WAF’s supporters included APWA,²⁶² Shirkat Gah,²⁶³ the All-Pakistan Women Lawyer’s Association, Tehrik-e-Niswan²⁶⁴ and the Anjuman Jamhooriyat Pasand Khawateen.²⁶⁵ The internal struggles to define the character of the organization led to a debate on the issue of religion as a site of contention or as a strategy of empowerment.²⁶⁶ Throughout the early 1980s, the WAF used “progressive interpretations of Islam” to counter patriarchal state religion and in doing so succeeded in gaining the unlikely support of right wing Islamic women’s organizations.²⁶⁷ The WAF

²⁵⁹ Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, ix.

²⁶⁰ Nighat Said Khan, “The Women’s Movement Revisited: Areas of Concern for the Future,” in *Global Feminist Politics: Identities in a Changing World*, eds. Suki Ali, Kelly Coate and Wangui wa Goro (London: Routledge, 2000), 5-10.

²⁶¹ Zia, “The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan,” 30.

²⁶² The All-Pakistan Women’s Association was founded by Begum Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan in the early 1950s because she, “recognized the need for a national association to oversee, consolidate and coordinate women’s activities for the greater good.” See <http://www.apwapakistan.com/> for more information.

²⁶³ Shirkat Gah defines itself as a non-governmental women’s resource center and a leading women’s rights organizations in Pakistan since 1975. See <http://www.shirkatgah.org/> for more information.

²⁶⁴ Tehrik-e-Niswan describes itself as the “cultural wing of the Women’s Movement in Pakistan” and uses cultural production such as dance and theater, to bring attention to the low status of women because of social, political, economic and cultural discrimination. See <http://www.tehrik-e-niswan.org.pk/> for more information.

²⁶⁵ The Democratic Women’s Association. Mumtaz, *Women of Pakistan*, 104.

²⁶⁶ Zia, “The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan,” 32.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 32. Zia notes that right-wing Islamic women’s organizations sided with the WAF in protest against the state regarding rape, but did not agree with the WAF’s stance on Islamization.

and its affiliates conducted mass demonstrations against a number of laws and issues throughout the early 1980s.

In 1985, Zia-ul-Haq lifted martial law, which meant political parties could officially resume their activities. Political activities outside the WAF meant that attention and effort was shifted away from the women's movement and the WAF would never again have the same force that it did from 1981-1985. The idealism of those years, most notably to mobilize Pakistani women from all walks of life, was never realized and the WAF remains an urban, elitist organization today.²⁶⁸ After the WAF's heyday, women's rights agendas fell under the purview of NGOs.²⁶⁹ Naheed has critiqued the WAF for missing a period in time when it would have become the activity of the "common woman" but instead has become the preoccupation of very few.²⁷⁰ Yet, because of its elite status, the WAF continues to be covered in English media in Pakistan.²⁷¹

An emerging elite feminist movement that struggled to define its contours also characterized the 1980s and early 1990s. The main debate between feminists was whether to define feminism through a secular or Islamic lens.²⁷² Afiya Shehrbano Zia defines modernist Islamic feminists as, "scholars and activists who argue for gender equality through their interpretation of the Qur'an and Shariah which seeks an understanding of Islamic law in a historical context and a methodology that ensures women greater freedom and rights."²⁷³ Modernist Islamic feminists, such as Riffat Hassan, Farida

²⁶⁸ Khan, "The Women's Movement Revisited: Areas of Concern for the Future," 5.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 5.

²⁷⁰ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 274. Naheed further notes, "[The] WAF does not include people from the public because it takes a lot of labor. It makes them go to the people. Sitting in a foundation's office or in somebody's house and continue smoking your cigarettes and deciding about issues are not conducive to mass movements." 274-275.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 274-275.

²⁷² Anantharam, "Engendering the Nation," 213.

²⁷³ Zia, "The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan," 35.

Shaheed and Khawar Mumtaz, argue that the Qur'an and Hadith are the ultimate sources of the Islamic tradition and until the present time, "the Islamic tradition and Muslim culture remain overwhelmingly patriarchal, inhibiting the growth of scholarship among women, particularly in the realm of religious thought."²⁷⁴

Secular feminists, while still maintaining their Muslim religious identities, define their struggle for rights outside of an Islamic framework while being careful not to paint themselves as anti-religious.²⁷⁵ Secular feminism was largely been criticized within Pakistan for its 'Western' outlook²⁷⁶ and was marginalized by a number of moderate and right wing Islamic women's movements precisely because of this. Both the modern Islamic and secular feminist movements continued, as had been the historical trajectory of women's movements in Pakistan, to define their agendas by seeking rights from the government and sought to exert maximum influence on policy.²⁷⁷ Pakistani secular-feminists such as Shahnaz Rouse, Fauzia Gardezi, Afiya Zia, Rubina Saigol, Nighat Khan and a handful of others argue that, "wielding Islam as a way to unite women across class, ethnic and linguistic communities did not in fact get to the heart of women's day-to-day subjugation and material oppression."²⁷⁸ Modernist Islamic feminists such as Khawar Mumtaz, Farida Shaheed and Riffat Hasan argue the opposite, that in order not to be perceived as "alien," feminists need to operate within Pakistani culture and therefore within Islam.²⁷⁹ While the space for women in nationalist politics was always small and occupied by elitist women, the space for feminist politics was almost non-existent and a

²⁷⁴ Hasan, "Feminism in Islam," 250.

²⁷⁵ Zia, "The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan," 30-33.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 35.

²⁷⁷ Jamal, "Gender, Citizenship and the Nation-State in Pakistan," 283.

²⁷⁸ Anantharam, "Engendering the Nation," 214.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 213-214.

number of these women, both secular and Islamic feminists, had to be content with voicing their opinions through non-governmental organizations and in academia, both in Pakistan and abroad. One reason feminists remained elitist and unable to mobilize women from all classes was because women from the poorer and working classes saw a place for themselves in Zia's Islamic state by becoming 'protected' and therefore valued by virtue of their gender. This is ironic, of course, because Zia's Hudood Ordinances, for example the Zina Ordinance, most adversely affected poor and working class women.²⁸⁰

However, Rukhsana Ahmad noted, "fear of further oppression still loom[ed] large for women in Pakistan in the nineties."²⁸¹ Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990 and 1993-1996), the first female Prime Minister of Pakistan, supported the removal of the Hudood Ordinances but was unable to carry out these plans. While many argue that the Bhutto could not implement any changes because she presided over a fragile coalition government, Bhutto's acquiescence to covering her head with a duputta can be construed as a concession to Islamist parties looking to overthrow the liberal PPP government and thus her assertion that the Hudood Ordinances be removed was just talk.²⁸² Thus, as the scope for feminist participation in nationalist politics narrowed, feminists turned to instituting feminism as an academic discipline in Pakistani universities and educating

²⁸⁰ Khan, *Zina*, 10 and Jamal, "Gender, Citizenship and the Nation-State in Pakistan," 297-298. Jamal further argues that Zia's period saw the rise of lower middle class traders and petty entrepreneurs who used Islamization to gain footholds in national politics. The ascendancy of this class added financial incentives to boost Zia's regime and marginalize its political opponents. Therefore, the relegation of women to the private sphere was also a product of capitalist expansion of the lower-middle class that subsequently implied these classes of women suddenly had access to upward social mobility and no longer needed to work outside the home.

²⁸¹ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 17.

²⁸² Rouse, *Shifting Body Politics*, 31. Rouse further argues that Benazir Bhutto's silence on the issues of Islamic legislation introduced under Zia was just as bad as conceding in an ideological battle with Islamists. Rouse also notes that Bhutto's arranged marriage to Pakistan's current President Asif Zardari was yet another acquiescence to Islamist agendas.

Pakistani women about feminism. As a result, the early 1990s was an age of self-consciously feminist publication to achieve these ends.

A collection of essays and abstracts collected in 1994 at a Women's Studies Conference in Lahore helps to further elucidate where secular feminism stood in Pakistan. The three editors of the collection *A Celebration of Women*, Nighat Said Khan, Rubina Saigol and Afiya Sherhrbano Zia, stated that the 1994 conference intended to bring together a number of women from various disciplines and fields, including academia, visual arts, creative writing and science. The reason for the conference was due to the fact that there is "fragmentation within and between the different social disciplines, [and] there is also virtually no dialogue between those involved in the social sciences and those doing literary work such as poets, novelists and short story writers."²⁸³

Khan, Saigol and Zia argue that Pakistan is a unique country where academics and writers are also activists and thus, the divorce between theory and practice is less pronounced than in other countries. As such, dance, poetry, novels, short stories and academic essays are all forms of feminism and activism. Khan's eloquently written welcome address states,

"The premise of this multi-dimensional coming together is to bring together the various aspects of a women's being and to try to struggle towards making whole the disemboweled, dislocated, disempowered, and demolished woman. This not only means bringing together the fragment of other women's experiences of the present and of the past, and try to reconstruct the woman that history has erased. In many ways all of us have been that woman, and all of us have been trying in our own ways to re-establish her... But we must not lose sight of the fact that we have not only internalized and made our own the frames, structures and spaces that confine women, and that often we too have defined spaces for ourselves which we are reluctant to go beyond."²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Khan, Saigol and Zia, *A Celebration of Women*, i.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

Just like the WAF in 1981, feminists in the early and mid 1990s were trying to bring together women from all walks of life based on the argument that Pakistani women have similar backgrounds and experiences. This conference was also an attempt to bring secular feminism to Pakistan as both an ideology and a discipline of study. A glance at the biographies in the appendix of the collections shows that the women who presented at this conference have obtained or were in the process of completing college degrees. Most of these women were attending college outside of Pakistan. This was likely why the vast number of essays presented in the conference focus on the charge of Westernization and argue that Pakistani prejudice against feminism lies in others who see feminism as Western and foreign, thus making it, “unsuitable for our culture and rooted in different social and moral norms.”²⁸⁵ A crucial part of this ‘feminism as Western’ charge rests on the assumption that feminism is not just anti-religious and anti-male but also destructive to the family and is thus immoral and ruinous to society as a whole.²⁸⁶

The two versions of feminism, modernist Islamic and secular, maintained connections with the women’s movement under the umbrella of the WAF because all three continued to operate within the discussion on women’s rights between activists and the state. Both feminist groups directly questioned Zia-ul-Haq’s unitary definition of Islam and fought tooth and nail to unsettle so-called Islamic distinctions between public and private. While secular feminists did not engage with religion per se, they defined themselves against modernist Islamic feminists on the basis and role of religion in their framework for fighting the state. Also, they questioned the role of religion in the

²⁸⁵ Khan, Saigol and Zia, *A Celebration of Women*, ii.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, ii.

relationship between the state and its citizens.²⁸⁷ This line of argument called for the state to override non-national claims of authority, such as familial, tribal or religious claims.²⁸⁸ Through these distinctions, secular feminists came under attack as being ‘Westernized.’

The rise of fundamentalism in Pakistan was related to cultural, political and economic crises in society.²⁸⁹ To this end, political Islamic groups used anti-Western rhetoric to refer to a non-Muslim world, in which ‘Westerners’ are figuratively outside of the true community of believers²⁹⁰ and thus excommunicated from participating in the community and nation’s cultural, political and economic discussions. Secular feminists, then, are painted as “anti-national.”²⁹¹ The anti-national label is reminiscent of women’s efforts to gain rights during anti-colonial struggles all across the globe. The choice made by secular feminists not to engage with Islam as a framework meant that they were perceived as truly “alien” to the vast majority of Pakistanis and this identity, coupled with their English-medium educations and elite statuses, did not help them gain a popular base of support.²⁹² However, it is important to note that the feminist label as a whole was seen as negative and modernist Islamic feminists also had to seek refuge and legitimacy in transnational and non-governmental organizations, such as Farida Shaheed’s organization, Women Living Under Muslim Laws.²⁹³

Neelam Hussain, a member of the Women’s Action Forum, Asst. Professor of English Literature at Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore and part of the secular feminist movement, notes that for Pakistani feminists, “there is a constant accusation of

²⁸⁷ Amina Jamal, “Transnational Feminism as Critical Practice: A Reading of Feminist Discourses in Pakistan,” *Meridians* 5, no. 2 (2005): 69.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

²⁹² Zia, “Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan,” 32.

²⁹³ See <http://www.wluml.org/> for more information.

being Westernized. We partake of both worlds as we are the products of both worlds... For women who straddle these two worlds there is an enrichment and a very strong and vital participation.”²⁹⁴ Neelam Hussain’s quote is directly reminiscent of Lata Mani’s assertion that Eastern-born female intellectuals abroad try to broach the tension between East and West by “reterritorializ[ing] themselves as hybrid”²⁹⁵ along a continuum between East and West.

There is a difference in others accusing Pakistani feminist as the Western (or ‘other’) and Pakistani feminists defining themselves along a continuum of Eastern and Western. While the accusation is couched in terms of a pejorative binary between East and West, the self-definition is instead based on a wide range of self-identification based on more positive connotations with Eastern and West. Pakistani secular feminists do not always see themselves as straddling the East and the West. Some, such as Hussain, are proud of their hybrid identity, while others, such as Naheed, try to avoid the accusation of ‘Westernization’ full stop by avoiding the feminist label. Instead, Naheed avoids labeling herself as anything but a writer, poet and activist. These labels, however, refer to things that she does, not who she is.

Naheed’s poetry and prose from the late 1970s through the 1980s are aimed at a number of prominent, overlapping themes from the time, including critiques of the state’s Islamization policies and female oppression by the state and society. Yet this focus on Pakistani politics did not distract from her international gaze. Naheed’s engagement with female writers and women’s issues from across the world in the 1960s and 1970s continued during the 1980s and early 1990s. For example, her book *Women: Myth and*

²⁹⁴ Khan, Saigol and Zia, *A Celebration of Women*, 35.

²⁹⁵ Lata Mani, “Multiple Meditations: Feminist Scholarship in the Age of Multinational Reception” *Feminist Review* 35 (1990): 31.

Realities, published in 1993, combines a number of authors, female and male, Eastern and Western, whose essays discuss women's issues in Islamic countries from a number of academic disciplines.²⁹⁶ The first five pages of her autobiography, published in 1995, mention at least twenty-five different individuals, from entirely different historical time periods and backgrounds, men and women, writers, politicians and cultural icons. These were just some of the writers she was reading during the two years it took her to write *Buri Aurat ki Katha*.²⁹⁷

Margaret Atwood once questioned: can the feminist label be applied to those who do not consciously work within the framework of the feminist movement?²⁹⁸ Atwood, one of Naheed's many influences, rejected the feminist label although her novels focused on female protagonists fighting patriarchal oppression. Similarly, Naheed neither consciously accepts nor rejects the feminist label. A colleague to both types of feminists, through the WAF and other intellectual and cultural networks, Naheed also does not refer to the WAF or contemporary feminist debates in any manner in *Buri Aurat ki Katha*.

However, in an interview with Shahla Haeri, she discusses her views on the feminists in Pakistan. Naheed separates literacy from Westernization, calling the literate class fashionably progressive (in a negative sense) and the upper and upper-middle classes Westernized. Neither had a good understanding of the Qur'an because of their English-medium convent educations and, when Zia-ul-Haq came into power, was inadequately prepared to take on the maulvis armed with Qur'anic knowledge. The first

²⁹⁶ Kishwar Naheed, ed., *Women: Myth and Realities* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel and Hawwa Associates, 1993).

²⁹⁷ Naheed, email message to author, March 14, 2012. Please see Appendix A.

²⁹⁸ Fiona Tolan, *Margaret Atwood: Feminism and Fiction* (Netherlands: Rodopi, 2007).

step towards the point of articulation, in Naheed's view, is showing the irrationality in maulvi-backed, "damaging" Islam.²⁹⁹

On one hand, by not actively adopting the feminist label, Naheed can remain relevant to a much broader range of readers in her present by not alienating self-consciously non-feminist organizations and individuals. She also can refrain from the negative accusation of being 'Westernized.' However, by refusing to actively reject the label that she claims the world has placed upon her writing,³⁰⁰ she is also subtly accepting that her ideas and texts are indeed feminist leaning.

Secular feminists in Pakistan thus had the dual task of defending their Easternness against Westernness while also attempting to fight for women's rights in the national and international arenas through a secular agenda. This does not locate them within the tradition East-West binary but rather within a more complex, non-territorial politics located in the international. Their peculiar situation as "aliens" in their own nation inevitably meant a number of feminists looked to international feminism as a new conceptual homeland for their secular feminist ideals. Most importantly, as Amina Jamal notes, secular feminists needed to, "reposition secular women's activism in the political and social space of Pakistan by challenging representations that construct it as a struggle of elite versus the masses."³⁰¹

As history has shown, the real struggle after 1985 was between groups of female elites (both feminist and not) to become the voice of the female masses in the national and international arenas. Of course, the problem with this is that oppression female elites experience does not represent the day-to-day oppressions of the majority of Pakistani

²⁹⁹ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 278-279.

³⁰⁰ Kishwar Naheed, email message to author, March 14, 2012. Please see Appendix A.

³⁰¹ Jamal, "Transnational Feminism," 65.

women. Indeed, secular feminists had to figure out a way to make themselves relevant to women other than just themselves. Outside of the national struggle, the struggle to become female representatives on the international stage was a less temporal, more fictionalized struggle. Secular feminism did not have a temporal space in Pakistan and therefore had to create a fictionalized, textual space to engage with international discourses on secular feminism. This space is not defined by uterine reproductions but rather by non-biological, textual productions of self.

Middle and upper class feminists opened up a space to reconfigure women's relationship with the state and potentially include women of all classes within this new relationship.³⁰² Of course, this potential was never realized. Rather, middle and upper class Pakistani women who are subservient to social mores are rewarded respect as well as a plethora of privileges within the familial sphere and wider social networks, depending upon their generational and marital status.³⁰³ Elite women created and maintained a space to negotiate with the state and, in practice, have resisted inviting lower class women into this space in order to retain their upper-class privilege both in society and as the interlocutors between the state and the female masses.

Conclusion

This social and political position as interlocutors continues to afford elite women prestige in national and international arenas. While WAF efforts of the early 1980s show that elite women made concerted efforts to mobilize women of all classes to resist state attempts at marginalization, it is also significant that lower class women resisted

³⁰² Jamal, "Transnational Feminism," 75-76.

³⁰³ Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience," 78.

becoming a part of a world of feminist activism and, by 1985, were more likely to identify with Islamic right wing women's organizations and the women's wings of national parties. Even elite women took a distinctly Islamic direction as exemplified by Farhat Hashmi's Al-Huda movement,³⁰⁴ started in 1994, and others continued on Islamically defined political trajectories, such as the woman's wings of the Jamaat-e-Islami,³⁰⁵ to cite just a few examples.

Ultimately, middle class and elite women from urban centers continued to influence and dictate the agendas for the WAF and both feminist movements, leading to a skewed perception of women's issues in Pakistan.³⁰⁶ None of the movements are exclusivist and modernist Islamic feminists and secular feminists, for example, have come together to fight for women's rights under the banner of the WAF. The WAF declared itself secular in 1991, which by definition meant the umbrella organization would "advocate the separation of religion from the state."³⁰⁷ Rather than this self-identification being the end to debates about the identity of the WAF, its secular stance continues to be the subject of debate amongst its members.³⁰⁸

Feminism is indeed threatening to dominant forms of knowledge and power in Pakistan in the political, economic, and cultural realms because these forms of knowledge are largely patriarchal. The number of feminists that continue to engage in feminist discussion in Pakistan has dwindled to a small handful and women's rights arguments

³⁰⁴ Sadaf Ahmad, *Transforming Faith: The Story of Al-Huda and Islamic Revivalism Among Urban Pakistani Women*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009). While Ahmad emulates Saba Mahmood's framework in *Politics of Piety*, a feminist ethnography of a conservative Islamic revivalist women's movement in Egypt, she wants to avoid any approach that silences the voices of her subjects and thus also does not appropriate the term 'feminism' to describe the women and activities of Al-Huda, 16-17. See <http://www.alhudapk.com/> for more information.

³⁰⁵ See <http://jamaatwomen.org/home/index> for more information.

³⁰⁶ Khan, "The Women's Movement Revisited: Areas of Concern for the Future," 5-10.

³⁰⁷ Jamal, "Transnational Feminism," 67.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

have now come under the purview of NGOs. A great number of publications focus on NGOs and developmental organizations that work on endeavors as diverse as grassroots textile training to family planning initiatives, most of which represent feminist solutions to developmental questions in Pakistan.

Elite women and international aid workers take it upon themselves to venture in semi-rural areas of Pakistan and attempt to uplift a woman's social worth through textile training, for example, which enables women to bring home an independent, albeit small, monthly salary. Since development work must be couched in international language and ultimately answer to the international community, there is almost no effort to bridge class divides through grassroots development work but rather address women's development on a scale. Development remains an elitist woman's work because it is elite women who remain the face and voice of NGOs.

While this project suggests Naheed was very much a part of the secular feminist camp when *Buri Aurat ki Katha* emerged on the scene, Naheed fictionalizes a politics of feminist equality by keeping her argument within a second wave worldview and not defining her temporal self as feminist in order to make herself relevant to women from all walks of life in Pakistan. Naheed presents a very complicated picture of agency in this fictionalized feminist politics. She is actively reacting to the local discourses surrounding her and refusing to pick sides in the secular-Islamic feminism debate while maintaining a fixed focus on the international world. Naheed actively fictionalizes feminist equality because of class divisions that continue to stymie women's organizing on a mass scale. By looking at female generational violence, the feminist debate and Naheed's internal conflicts, deep class fractures have not been the only limitations to the emergence of a

coherent women's movement in Pakistan. Rather, the interplay between class, cultural practice and religiously informed politics is the main limitation to a mass women's movement in Pakistan.

Thesis Conclusion

The claim that Naheed is a feminist writer is not wholly false. While it is important to keep a writer's self-definition at the forefront, especially when looking at an autobiographical text, this project has shown that there are temporal elements that force Naheed to fictionalize a feminist version of self in *Buri Aurat ki Katha*. In the text, Naheed contends with overlapping discourses of history, femininity, morality and class that all weigh down her temporal self. Yet her second wave gaze shines through as Naheed expresses her hope of female organizing on the basis of bodily similarity. While the second wave was self consciously feminist, Naheed is able to intellectually engage with feminists texts from that age without taking on the feminist label, which was an increasingly politicized label by the time her autobiography came onto the academic and literary scene in Pakistan in 1995.

Naheed's struggle between the temporal and fictionalized is not novel. The events of September 11, 2001 led to a resurrection of nationalist language in the United States and Europe in order to 'other' terrorists, fundamentalists and Muslims. For example, the United States' war on terror resulted in international feminists painting Afghan women as passive victims of patriarchy. This view, created to support an incursion into Afghanistan, did not take into account history or the ways in which Afghan women colluded with and resisted the Taliban.³⁰⁹ In fact, the ostensible division between Eastern and Western cultures was remarkably evident before the twin towers came down. Pakistani-Canadian feminist scholar Shahnaz Khan's declares that her book is meant to "remind women in the West that what happens in Pakistan is connected to how their own

³⁰⁹ See Saba Mahmood and Charles Hirschkind's "Feminism, the Taliban and the Politics of Counterinsurgency." Available online at <http://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/1/777777190136/>

concerns are increasingly being marginalized... Racist determinations of women *over there* as distinct from what happens *over here* will keep interlinked global issues separate.”³¹⁰ Amina Yaqin’s argument that Naheed is a third world feminist³¹¹ demonstrates the tendency to think of Pakistan in world-systems theory terms, although many South Asian scholars were quick to reject Immanuel Wallerstein.³¹² Accepting Wallerstein’s overemphasis on the role of conflict and inherent inequality in the center-periphery model remains apparent in the language of contemporary global discourses that link capitalism and feminism. International feminism, then, is simply a guise for Western cultural imperialism.

Feminist academics born in Iran and Pakistan and pursuing teaching and researching positions in the United States and Canada, for example, often have emotive reactions to having their ‘Eastern-ness’ marginalized by others, especially their enlightened colleagues. Shahla Haeri and Shahnaz Khan both vividly recall being told by their colleagues that they are “fortunate” to live in the West where they do not have to veil themselves, can work outside of the house and be free to read and write whatever they please.³¹³ Haeri wonders how and when she, an “unveiled, educated, professional Muslim woman,” became invisible.³¹⁴ These women remain painfully aware that their academic endeavors can further Western prejudice about ‘backward Easterners.’³¹⁵

As a response to what she sees as a clear tension between two diverse cultures, Rukhsana Ahmad suggests that using the term feminist in the broadest sense may be a

³¹⁰ Khan, *Zina*, 7. Emphasis theirs.

³¹¹ Yaqin, “The Intertextuality of Women in Urdu Literature,” 159-213.

³¹² See Sugata Bose, *South Asia and World Capitalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).

³¹³ Khan, *Zina*, 3 and Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, Preface and Introduction.

³¹⁴ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, xxiii.

³¹⁵ Khan, *Zina*, 3-4 and 15-30.

step towards resolving this tension.³¹⁶ Ahmad was a professor of English Literature at the University of Karachi who later moved to England with her family, where she decided to compile and translate poems written by Kishwar Naheed, Fahmida Riaz, Zehra Nigah, the late Sara Shahgufta and a number of other Pakistani female feminist poets. By defining feminism as “an awareness of the disadvantages and constraints faced by women in a traditional society and a recognition of their need or the desire for freedom and change,”³¹⁷ she excludes two well-known Pakistani female poets, Parveen Shakir and Ada Jaafri, from her book. Ahmad argues that Shakir and Jaafri’s poems are apolitical, sentimental and conformist and their acceptance of sexist values and tradition makes their writings distinctly “un-feminist.”³¹⁸ This is a controversial move on Ahmad’s part. Other Pakistani-born academics, such as Saadia Toor, see Shakir and Jaafri’s poems as the beginning of progressive women’s poetry, defining progressive as “directly or indirectly subversive of the patriarchal establishment.”³¹⁹ However, Ahmad raises an interesting point. The feminist movement (including secular and Islamic feminists) that arose in the early 1980s in Pakistan struggled to define its contours and ultimately saw itself as directly subversive of the patriarchal establishment. The movement needed to push itself away from “indirectly subversive” activities that characterized women’s rights campaigns, championed by elite women, in Pakistan since 1947. As women and feminists continue to negotiate their various identities, it becomes clear that an East/West dualism is too simplistic.

³¹⁶ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 6-7.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

³¹⁹ Toor, *The State of Islam*, 140.

Ultimately, the temporal Naheed governs both senses of self. In a distinctly unidirectional construction, the failures of Naheed's temporal self are nursed and reconstituted by her fictionalized self. The two selves do not engage in an egalitarian struggle as the temporal self always reigns supreme. Rather, Naheed's fictionalized self has created "a culture of her own,"³²⁰ or a mental utopia in which the heavy discourses that weigh the temporal Naheed down in *Buri Aurat ki Katha* are not longer heavy. The fictionalized Naheed exists in what she calls "the point of articulation," or an equitable system of gender relations that is achieved by reinterpreting every system of learning and a reinterpretation of society, culture and ethics.³²¹ Naheed's fictionalized self is an ardent supporter of second wave idealism and finds commonalities with second wave feminists worldwide through the use of pen and paper. One example of this is Naheed's explanation of generational violence. While her framework for generational violence is specific to the subcontinent, it is a technique that Beauvoir herself used in *The Second Sex* to prove the same argument.

In an interview with a BBC correspondent, Naheed notes that if one poem could represent her, she would stop writing.³²² Yet, in response to a question about her contested public persona, she recited the poem "The Grass is Really Like Me":

The grass is also like me
it has to unfurl underfoot to fulfill itself
but what does its wetness manifest:
a scorching sense of shame
or the heat of emotion?

The grass is also like me.
As soon as it can raise its head
the mower

³²⁰ Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun*, 246.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 252-253.

³²² *Ibid.*, 229.

obsessed with flattening it to velvet
 mows it down again.
 How you strive and labor
 to level woman down too!
 But neither the earth's nor the woman's
 desire to manifest life
 dies.
 Take my advice: the idea of making a footpath was a good one.
 Those who cannot bear the scorching defeat of their courage
 are grated on to the earth.
 That's how they make way for the mighty
 but they are straw,
 not grass.
 The grass is really like me.³²³

Naheed's feminist self must remain fictionalized and relegated to Naheed's mind and, more permanently, to paper through poems such as "The Grass is Really Like Me." A number of temporal concerns do not allow Naheed's feminist self to transcend fictionalization and achieve relevance in the temporal world. The most salient aspect pulling Naheed towards the temporal is class. First, class differences between women (admittedly, these class differences are coupled with race, ethnic, linguistic and geographic differences as well) perpetuate an elite understanding of women's issues in Pakistan. Elite women inhabit a wide spectrum of liberal and conservative identities. Yet these women remain the main voices in the national and international spheres, thus obscuring the subaltern woman's voice. This role was passed down from the early twentieth century and thus is exemplary of generational violence. Naheed, while a member of the elite, educated female class, tries to escape this inherited role by liberating herself from elitism through her text, instead focusing on commonalities between women of all classes.

³²³ Ahmad, *We Sinful Women*, 40-41.

Yet another temporal concern that prohibits Naheed from transcendence is the feminist debate in Pakistan. Naheed, a secular feminist by all other standards, tries to remain relevant to all types of women by casting off the pejorative feminist label. The label is pejorative precisely because feminism is accused (from without) of being associated with the West. Naheed does not think in terms of East and West and instead engages in discussions about her temporal identity, yet does not adhere to the feminist label, in essence trying to remove herself from the debate. Yet clearly the debate affects her identity and by neither vehemently accepting nor rejecting the feminist label, Naheed reveals the ambivalence between her temporal and fictionalized selves. Naheed does not write in the typical binaries of the global vs. the local or East vs. West. She continues to see herself as a second wave idealist, focusing on a global sisterhood. This idealism is wholly unrecognizable in her present but rather than come to terms with this fact, Naheed nourishes it within her mental and textual utopia. Yet the struggle between her two selves remains deeply rooted in the temporal and ultimately Naheed's fictionalized, feminist self will not transcend.

Appendix A

E-Mail Conversation Between Kishwar Naheed and Madihah Akhter March 12-14, 2012

March 12, 2012, Madihah Akhter to Kishwar Naheed:

1. What specifically is it about Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* that you find so compelling? Did any other of Beauvoir's works hit you the same way? Did you translate *The Second Sex* into Urdu from the original French or English?
2. Would you consider yourself part of the second wave of feminist thought, defined as a movement that emphasized (in its purist form) the female body as a site of similarity that should serve to unite women across lines of difference, such as class, race, ethnicity, etc?
3. Why did you write *Buri Aurat ki Katha* in the early 1990s? Why not wait until later in life? What was your intended purpose in writing an autobiography?
4. Why do you mention so many diverse people, men and women, writers and not, in *Buri Aurat*? Do you consider all of these individuals influential?
5. I know you have condemned the WAF as an elitist organization, but what specifically about its elitism do you find worthy of criticism?
6. Some have made the argument that NGO and grassroots development in Pakistan is elitist because it involves international organizations and upper class Pakistani women helping lower class women according to their own circumstances and does not bridge the gap between class and sometimes reinforces that gap. I know you are very active with *Hawwa Associates* and as an NGO founder, what is your opinion about this argument?
7. What do you think about the argument that women have an active hand in repressing other women along class lines in Pakistan?
8. What is your opinion on *purdah* (defined as both veiling and seclusion)? Would you say this opinion stems from personal experience, observation, or both?
9. Would you say that *Aurat Mard ka Rishta* is a replacement text for the *Bihishti Zevar*?
10. What is your opinion of *Al-Huda*?
11. What is the state of the feminist movement (if there is one) in Pakistan today?
12. Do you consider yourself a feminist? If yes, by what definition?

March 14, 2012 from Kishwar Naheed to Madihah Akhter:

1. I translated second sex from English, it is not actual translation, it is abridged volume, I spent three years in this process, excluded cultural and literary references and adjusted some of the Pakistani examples. I have read all memoirs and autobiography of Semon, did translate the chapter "Memoirs of an obedient daughter." It is included in my compilation, titled "Baqi Manda Khawab."

2. I never called myself a feminist, it has been the world over that my poetry has been labeled feminist. It was in 1960 that I started writing poetry. In 1970, did poetry translation from world over, it was printed in 1971.

3. Buri Aurat Ki Katha is written in first person, it is actually the history of women what women went through in 50 years history of Pakistan, that also indicate that who ever is the first girl in the family who breaks the tradition, she is registered as bad girl, that tradition is still continuing in sub-continent, the experience does not need any limit of age.

4. I completed my autobiography in 2 years. The writers during that period I was reading have been mentioned in the book.

5. I am doing work for NGO at voluntary level, I have traveled in the interiors of Pakistan, the women package their products themselves and sold on their prescribed price, the space even I have donated for women artisans.

6. I am one of the founder members of WAF, I never disassociate myself.

7. It is the stigma that women repress other women, those who have no opportunity to explore their identity, they have no choice to see plays at TV and play the same characters.

8. Purdah has been and still continue in most of the Muslim countries, despite of it, women continue to grow up to no limits, seclusion is different, I don't support, women had to grow in the society as men have the opportunity, veiling is their choice, if it is by choice not by pressure.

9. My book Aurat Mard Ka Rishta is a compilation of Semon & Sartre's writings and dialogue.

10. Al-Huda is a system organized by Farhat Hashmi in the name of Dars, it is a common disease these days for all the women who are domesticated.

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