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On Names in South Asia: Iteration, (Im)propriety and Dissimulation

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Names and the Critique of History in Urdu Literature: From Manto's 'Yazid' to Zaigham's 'Shakuntala'

Gregory Maxwell Bruce

- 1 Names and naming in Urdu have been the subject of Urdu, Islamic, and South Asian cultural studies in past decades, but little if any attention has been paid to the role that naming plays in imaginative and critical literary contexts. Urdu dictionaries and anthologies of names record astrological, numerological, religious, aesthetic, and historical information on names and are designed to assist in name selection (Said 1996; Muhammad 1990; Adil 1998; Bano 1974). Relevant English reference books focus on the linguistic, religious, and ethnographic aspects of names and naming to facilitate broader understanding of naming practices in South Asia in general and the Hind-Urdu world in particular (Zaidi 1989: 73–82; Schimmel 1989; Gandhi 1992; Roy & Rizvi 2002). The significance and breadth of such work notwithstanding, it offers little by way of perspective on the ways in which names and naming practices are contested and debated or insight into the role that names and naming play in imaginative literature.
- 2 This essay discusses the significance of names in South Asian culture through translation and close reading of works by two Urdu authors, Saadat Hasan Manto (1912–1955) and Ghazal Zaigham (b. 1964). In his relatively short career, Manto produced a prolific number of short stories, screenplays for radio and television, and translations of European literature. Shortly after Partition, Manto penned a short essay entitled '*Kucchh Nāmon ke Bāre Men*' ['Some Thoughts about Names']. In the essay, Manto sets his satirical sights on naming practices among Indo-Muslim families, modern naming practices among progressive writers, the Bombay film industry, and celebrity names. Explicit and implicit in his satirical critique are the connections among South Asian naming practices and the politics of class, communal and religious identity, modernity, gender, socio-

political violence, and linguistic communalism. This essay first examines Manto's satirical critique of naming practices in 'Some Thoughts about Names.' Then it moves to a close reading of Manto's short story 'Yazid,' in which Manto discusses the power of names to engender violence or to change the course of history.

- 3 Manto's life and works have been extensively discussed in English and Urdu. Literary historian Muhammad Sadiq focuses on aspects of Manto's work related to Partition and sexuality, and generalizes that Manto was inclined towards 'the physically disgusting' and affected 'detachment' both from his subjects and his readers (Sadiq 1984: 587-88). Matthews, Shackle, and Husain describe Manto's work as a product of the All India Progressive Writers Association, a reformist literary movement founded in 1935, which created space in Urdu literature for Manto to experiment with form and to use literature as a vehicle for social reform. They emphasize that although Manto began his career as a member of the Progressive Writers Association, he soon came to clash with its leaders over what they deemed the 'obscene' and 'perverted' aspects of his work (Matthews *et al.* 1985: 121-23).
- 4 Recent scholarship on Manto has called attention to the need to revisit these characterizations of Manto's writing, and has allowed for a more nuanced, contextualized reading of Manto's work. The two satirical essays and one short story by Manto examined in this essay were written shortly after Partition during a period of Manto's life that Ayesha Jalal examines as a 'postcolonial moment' in her recent biography of Manto (Jalal 2013: 151-86). Translator and critic Rakhshanda Jalil judges that Manto's later work, to which the pieces in this essay belong, has been unfairly characterized as 'dark' and lacking 'humanity' and 'liberalism.' In her recent collection of translations, Jalil challenges literary historians who stereotype Manto as a writer primarily concerned with Partition, dark aspects of humanity, and sex (Jalil 2008: vii-xvi). For its part, the present essay seeks to understand Manto's ideas about names and naming practices in his essays and stories, not to read them as part of a biographical or literary-historical project. Still it does connect some of Manto's ideas to the context that Jalal discusses in her helpful biography, and it is hoped that readers find that the essay complements Jalil's project to broaden the field of Manto studies.
- 5 Although mostly focused on Manto, this essay also translates and briefly examines a recent vignette titled 'Shakuntala' by the understudied Hindi and Urdu writer Ghazal Zaigham. Zaigham, who lives in Lucknow, is an award-winning author in Urdu and Hindi, and a documentary filmmaker. 'Shakuntala' appears in her collection of Urdu short stories, *Ek Tukra Dhūp Kā* [*A Little Piece of Sunlight*], first published in 2000. She has worked as a subeditor for Hindi periodicals, an announcer for All India Radio, and has translated Hindi novels into Urdu. She comes from a family of artists and scholars. Her brother, known by his penname Adeebul Hindi [*The Indian Literatus*], was a scholar of Islam. Her sister, Shama Zafar Mehdi, published a collection of Urdu poetry entitled *Māh-e Giriftah* in 2010. Shama Zafar Mehdi's husband, Zafar Mehdi, was a well-regarded Urdu poet who published numerous collections of Urdu poetry. As we shall see, in 'Shakuntala,' Zaigham recalls the classical story of 'Shakuntala' and the name of its eponymous heroine to call attention to issues related to sexual fantasy, gender, and popular culture.
- 6 By closely reading Manto and Zaigham's writings on the politics of inscription, naming practices, discourses of violence, and classical archetypes, this essay seeks to give insight into how two modern Urdu writers use names and naming practices as vehicles for social critique.

Naming and inscription in *Bitter, Sour, Sweet*

- 7 'Some Thoughts about Names' was published in 1954, about a year before Manto's death, in a collection entitled *Talkh, Tursh, [aur] Shīrīn [Bitter, Sour (and) Sweet]*.¹ *Bitter, Sour, Sweet* comprises fifteen short satirical essays engaging issues related to women, Urdu literary history, social mores, and religion. The essay titles, including 'Writing on Walls,' 'Types of Noses,' 'The Question Arises,' 'On Coughing,' 'Why I Don't Watch Films,' 'When My Eyes Opened Yesterday Morning,' 'On Iqbal Day,' 'Confined Women,' 'Faith and Certainty,' 'Purdah Matters,' 'Thirteen Kinds of Freeloaders,' 'Firecrackers,' 'Mirza Nosha's [Ghalib's] Life in Agra,' and 'Ghalib and the Full Moon [-faced Beloved]' reflect the breadth of the subjects that Manto chose for satirical treatment. Manto published most of these essays soon after he moved from Bombay to Lahore in 1948 in the daily newspaper *Imroz [Today]*, which was founded by Urdu literary figures Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911–1984) and Chiragh Hasan Hasrat (1904–1955) (Fleming 1985: 17–18).
- 8 The opening lines of *Bitter, Sour, Sweet* set the stage for Manto's critique of language, speech, religion, and progressive aesthetics in the stories and essays in the collection. In the first essay, 'Writing on Walls,' Manto recalls that he was astonished to discover the command 'Do Not Write on this Wall' written on the very wall on which writing was forbidden. Such irony leads Manto to explore the psychological motivations behind writing on walls. He extolls the virtues of writing on the bathroom walls of mosques:
- Go into a mosque and you'll find progressive literature and progressive paintings scattered on the walls of its bathroom, too. Not only that, you can also acquire necessary information from these wall-writings. What kind of disposition does the mosque's muezzin possess? What kinds of food does the imam prefer? Which of the school's teachers emulates Mir Taqi Mir?² Is the principal sahib popularly accepted in the college or not? You can learn hundreds of such things in a single session by studying these walls.
- 9 Among the virtues of bathroom walls, Manto concludes, is that they provide the author an opportunity to write freely; the words inscribed on bathroom walls are more reliable than contracts and promises. In a personal anecdote, Manto, who wrote for Indian cinema, tells us that he chose not to do business with a major film production company because, while at the company's office to sign the contract, he went to the bathroom and read on the wall that the company did not pay its employees. He tells us that bathroom walls provide the writer with the freedom of anonymity as well as freedom from fear of governmental interference and all forms of censorship. They who write on walls enjoy freedom and independence even from the presence of angels (who record their deeds and determine their fate on the day of reckoning).
- 10 He continues with his observations on public and private spaces of inscription and signification, and the ironic inappropriateness of public inscriptions to their location, in his humorous discussions of film advertisements featuring the fairy-like faces of actors such as the beautiful Naseem Bano (1916–2002) [mother of Saira Bano (b. 1944) and mother-in-law of Yusuf Khan aka Dilip Kumar (b. 1922)] plastered on the walls of graveyards in Bombay.³ He concludes the essay with a short critical discussion of the political and civil aspects of inscription, citing a case in which 'The Corporation' of Bombay took Pears Soap to court when the latter had its name skywritten above the city.

The Corporation built its case on the grounds that the sky and atmosphere above the city, too, fell within the sphere of its control.

- 11 Manto's satirical critique of progressive aesthetics and the idiosyncrasies of contemporary popular culture in 'Writing on Walls' introduces themes and motifs that he develops in the other essays in *Bitter, Sour, Sweet*. Progressivism and religion frequently appear together and are satirized in terms of their mutually exclusive relationship. The Bombay film industry and South Asian celebrity, too, recur as subjects of Manto's satire. Most significant to the subject of naming, however, is the issue of inscription itself and the factors—be they religious, political, aesthetic, or linguistic—that delimit the possibilities of linguistic use and expression.

Critiques of history and culture in 'Some Thoughts about Names'

- 12 In 'Some Thoughts about Names,' Manto develops his critique of progressivism, religion, Indo-Muslim families, and South Asian popular culture. The conventional process of naming, Manto observes, involves a committed effort on the part of the family to find itself reflected in the child. Each feature of a child must be connected not only to one side of the family or another, but to a particular relative, no matter how distant, whose appearance reappears in the present:
- One will declare that his nose is entirely his father's, another that it is a perfect match to his mother's, and another will go and liken it to the maternal aunt's brother's father's paternal uncle's paternal grandfather's nose.⁴
- 13 Singularity and individuality are intolerable to family members, whose tireless quest to discover likeness in the child's appearance and features Manto compares to Columbus' quest to discover America.
- 14 The fervor with which family members seek to identify the origin of a child's appearance, Manto suggests, is comparable to the passion with which they insist on contributing to the selection of the child's name. Manto distinguishes between two types of name-givers. First are the dictator types who pay no regard to the feelings of friends and relatives, and quickly name the 'lump of flesh and bones' [*gosht kā lothrā*] before drifting off into peaceful slumber. Second are the more concerned and worldly parents, for whom assigning a name to the child is a source of great agitation and perplexity that involves the entire family.
- 15 Things become complicated very quickly for parents of the second type. Aunts and uncles send letters, some passive-aggressive, with names they deem appropriate. Grandparents are overbearing. The mother's father quotes couplets by the Urdu poet Ghalib and sends a list of a thousand names. The father's father, near death, peruses the 1300-year history of Islam and offers the names of all the famous people in it as possible names for the child. Manto suggests that the overwhelming task of keeping the feelings and desires of their relatives in mind leads parents to hasten to choose a name for their child. He also suggests that the fear of offending one family member is accompanied by the fear that, if too much care is given to honoring the family's suggestions, the child may grow to resent his given name in adulthood.
- 16 Superstition [*tavahhum-parasti*],⁵ too, Manto writes, plays an important role in the selection of names:

If the boy or girl has been born after a long time or after much supplication and promising, its name, too, will be given accordingly. If it is a boy, then, for example, Allah Datta [God-Granted], Piran Datta [Pir-Granted], Khuda Bakhsh [God-Bestowed], Nabi Bakhsh [Prophet-Bestowed]. If it is a girl, then Allah Datti [God-Granted], Piran Datti [Pir-Granted], Khairatan [Charity or Alms], Hayatan [(God-given) Life], etc. And if God has given a boy or girl after a great number of children have died, then the name will be something like this: Allah Jivaya [God-caused-to-live], Kalan [Little dog (f.)], Kalva [Little dog], or Kalb-e Ali [Dog of Ali], etc.

- 17 Manto suggests that religious naming practices, too, are intertwined with *tavahhum-parastī*. Parents consult the Quran for augury. They commission horoscopes. They avail themselves of astrologists and fortune-tellers. They seek the opinions of pirs and fakirs. All this before they finally deem a name suitable and appropriate. But as some children mature, they begin to feel disheartened and discontented with their names, despite their parents' emotions and feelings, and perhaps despite the trouble they took to name them. Manto suggests the following remedy:

What should be done is that children remain entirely nameless until the age of maturity and consciousness. As soon as the boy or girl is able to write a poem or story, he should be told, *Okay dear, now name yourself whatever you desire*. By doing it this way, neither will the parents be heartbroken, nor will the children ever have occasion to complain.

- 18 Familial naming practices grounded in religious culture and superstition, Manto suggests, result in modern Urdu writers changing their names. In the following section of the essay, he satirizes South Asian notables who have altered their names or renamed themselves completely. Manto's tone is at times light and good-humored, and at other times biting and caustic as he explores the relationships among progressivism, religion, and South Asian popular culture.
- 19 Of course, the practice of self-naming is common in Urdu literature in particular and Arab-Persianate literature in general. Urdu and Persian poets adopt a *takhallus* [penname], which they use in their poetry in what English critics have called 'signature couplets.' In *ghazal* lyric poetry, this is usually the final couplet [U: *maqta'*] of a poem. Poets may adopt their given names as pennames, as Mir Taqi 'Mir' did, or adopt an entirely new name, as Mirza Asadullah Khan 'Ghalib' did. Poets write themselves into poems in most genres, but their names feature most prominently in *ghazal* lyric poetry. The poet usually addresses himself in 'signature couplets,' and often puns on the many valences of the *takhallus*.⁶
- 20 Manto begins his discussion of the modern practice of self-naming by satirizing the name-aesthetics of Urdu progressivism. At the time that Manto was writing 'Some Thoughts about Names,' the Progressive Writers Association had not only declared that progressive writers were necessarily Marxist, but also blacklisted Manto from progressive journals for his friendship with literary critics whom the PWA deemed conservative and reactionary (Jalal 2003: 164–67). Manto's quips about progressive naming practices in 'Some Thoughts about Names,' therefore, can be read as a critique of the PWA's stance on religion. He first focuses on the names of pioneers of Urdu free verse N.M. Rashid (1910–1975) and Miraji (1929–1949), and the film lyricist and literary journalist Qateel Shifai (1919–2001).⁷ He writes:

If the famous progressive poet Nazr Muhammad's name had been in accordance with his nature and temperament, it is clear that he would never have felt the need to cut and crop it. If he had willingly or unwillingly remained content with Nazr Muhammad, then Urdu literature would have been deprived of the progressive

poetry of N.M. Rashid today. In the very beginning, that is, immediately after the cutting and cropping, he must have felt some estrangement and alienation from his name, but now he has grown so accustomed to it that if someone were to call him Nazr Muhammad, he would think some other person was being called.

He continues:

Qateel Shifai's parents certainly did him wrong when they named him Aurangzeb. Progressive poetry and traditionalist, conservative Aurangzeb!? Who isn't familiar with Miraji's work? He, too, is a poet, and such a progressive poet that most of his work is above and beyond people's understanding. His original name was Sanaullah, the meaning of which is clear [praise of Allah]. If he had remained Sanaullah, he would have been compelled to write poems whose meaning would have been clear, but because this was not Sanaullah's purpose in life, and he wanted to write mysterious kinds of poetry, he had to name himself something of this kind.

- 21 Here Manto weaves together the issues inherent in self-naming with the aesthetics prevalent among progressive Urdu writers at the time. He suggests that progressive writers stand in anxious and sometimes ambivalent relation to religious identity, and obscure the markedly religious elements of their names (*e.g.*, Muhammad) in order to appear modern according to progressive standards. He also suggests that renaming in terms of religious identity plays a major role in modern Urdu's aesthetics of community. Miraji's change is particularly salient in this context. Sanaullah adopts a marked Hindu feminine name that evokes in modern readers the mystical poet associated with the Vaishnava Bhakti movement, Mira Bai. One wonders what Manto means by the mysterious [*pur-asrār*] quality that he claims the penname affords Miraji's poetry. Is the mystery related to the communal identity of Sanaullah, and the mysteriousness of an Urdu poet's affecting a name associated with Hindu devotional practice?
- 22 Manto develops his critique of progressive Urdu literature's relationship to religion as he discusses the name and career of Muhammad Din Taseer (1902–1950). Muhammad Din Taseer was among the earliest affiliates of the progressive writer's movement. He was present at the movement's iconic meeting at the Nanking Hotel in London in 1934, and later founded and edited the magazine *Nairang-e Khayāl* in Lahore (Mir & Mir 2006: 1–2).⁸ In 'Something About Naming,' Manto puns on Dr. (M.D.) Taseer's name, saying that there is indeed much to be impressed by in his name [*tāsīr* means impression], but that 'when you move closer to the original, all that remains is Muhammad Din [*dīn* means religion]. Manto again points to assumptions about the aesthetic contradiction of modern titles and religious names, writing that 'doctor-ness is unsuitable and out of joint' with Muhammad Din. Here, the progressive idea seems to be that to juxtapose titles associated with Western education alongside religious names amounts to an aesthetic contradiction in terms. Manto gives a number of examples that suggest that obscuring religious identity goes hand in hand with Westernization and modernity. Ahmad Shah Bukhari, Manto tells us, only feels right in the form of A.S. Bukhari, because 'Ahmad Shah' would have caused people's thoughts to turn towards the Afghan general Ahmad Shah Abdali (1747–1772), and this would not have suited A.S. Bukhari's humorous writings.⁹ So too with Deenanath Madhok, who, Manto tells us, changed his name to D.N. Madhok to give his name a 'Western color like Dr. Muhammad Din Taseer.'
- 23 It is important to keep in mind that around the time Manto was publishing satirical essays in *Imroz*, communalist politics and the violence of Partition had polarized the Urdu progressive scene. In May 1949, the All India Progressive Writers Association met in Bhivandi, near Bombay, to discuss the status of progressive literature and progressive writers in post-war India. The outcome of this meeting was a lengthy and divisive

manifesto that accused writers who produced 'art for art's sake' of misleading the people of India and rendering them complicit in capitalist and anti-Soviet political agendas.¹⁰ Coppola tells us that this group of 'art for art's sake' writers included Manto, though the manifesto did not name him. As noted above, the PWA had ostracized Manto as a 'reactionary' for his unwillingness to identify progressive aesthetics exclusively with Marxist ideology (Coppola 1975: 295).

- 24 The effect of the All India Progressive Writers Association's new stance, which stood in stark contrast to the inclusive manifesto of the previous decade, was the exclusion of authors whose socio-political leanings did not fall line with those of the organization. According to Ali Sardar Jafri, a leader of the organization, just after Partition, a number of progressive authors disassociated themselves from the movement and chose seclusion over potential political and governmental repercussions, while others broke with progressive principles and aligned themselves with conservative politics. Jafri names the aforementioned Dr. M.D. Taseer, along with his supporters and followers in Lahore, as formerly progressive authors who turned to communalism and took part in communalist political activities (Coppola 1975: 295-96). It is therefore not difficult to see how the issues of freedom of expression, progressive aesthetics, and naming that Manto raises in *Bitter, Sour, Sweet* connected to the increasingly constrictive and polarized intellectual and creative environment in which he was writing.¹¹
- 25 Manto next attends to the issue of the *shuddhī* ['purity' or 'purification'] of names in the context of Indian cinema. The term is closely associated with Arya Samaj proselytization efforts that began in the late 19th century and, by the 1930s, had not only become a massive conversion campaign, but also had caused the Muslim community to undertake defensive campaigns at local and institutional levels (Sikand 2003: 98-118). Manto begins with a discussion of the 1933 biopic *Puran Bhagat*, a film that tells the story of prince Puran, who is rescued from a death sentence by the mystic Gorakhnath and leads an army against a power-hungry general before returning to the life of an ascetic.¹²
- 26 Manto tells us that while *Puran Bhagat* was in production, the film's director, Debaki Bose, selected the Lucknow-based actor Ali Mir in the role of Puran. The film industry immediately wondered if the Hindu community would object to a Muslim playing the part. Manto abruptly switches to a Sanskritized register of Urdu to emphasize the socio-linguistic dimension of his satire on the 'conversion' of religious identity that *shuddhī* suggests. The Sanskritic vocabulary contrasts with the typical Perso-Arabic register of the essay and Manto's writing in general. How could a Muslim assume [*dhāran*] the form [*rūp*] of such a pious devotee [*bhagat*], he asks? With these questions in mind, he continues: Ali Mir's name was 'purified' [*shuddhī*] and he was presented as Kumar in the film. Manto characterizes Muslims' adoption of Hindi stage names in Indian cinema as a 'fashion' [*faishan*]. He also suggests a cause-and-effect relationship between adopting a Hindu stage name and popular acceptance in the Indian film industry. He cites the cases of Zakariya Khan, a 'pure' [*thet*] Pathan, better known as Jayant, and Kashmir-born Yusuf, pen-name 'Nazr,' better known by his stage name Dilip Kumar. He mentions the actress Tajour (also spelled Tajvar), better known by her stage name, Veena. Manto puns on Veena (the name of a stringed instrument) when he says that Tajour only began to resound and reverberate [*gūnj*] in films after changing her name.¹³
- 27 Manto continues his critique of Hindu-Muslim communal politics as he satirizes the practice of adopting two-part names from which one is supposed to 'catch a whiff' of Hindu-Muslim unity: Mumtaz Shanti, Gita Nizami. He cannot make sense of Asha Posley's

¹⁴ name, and exclaims, 'Let someone try to understand!' Then he makes light of a name that he finds ugly, awkward, and ill-formed [*be-dhab*; lit. without shape]:

Before the Partition of India, there used to be a Vidhava Singh [lit. moon-like lion]. He was absolutely never put off by this *be-dhab* name, and as long as his store was here, he regularly advertised as '*Bhai Vidhava Singh's Achār Shaljam*' [Brother Vidhava Singh's Turnip Pickle].

- 28 Vidhava Singh's name, of course, suggests his background is Sikh. Manto commends, perhaps ironically, the Sikh community for its steadfastness, and seems to admire Sikhs who, in contrast to the aforementioned Muslim actors and authors, are unwilling to change their names. But Manto's praise of the Sikh community lends itself to interpretation as farcical. He begins by praising Sardar Kharak Singh.¹⁵ Sardar, of course, is a term of respect given to Sikhs in Urdu, but it is also a trope that marks the subject of an Urdu joke. Manto tells us that it has been a long time since Kharak [lit., crash, boom, bang] Singh, now in his 80s, has '*kharak-ed*' [cracked, boomed]. Still, (Manto continues the pun) one must applaud the fact that the idea to change his *kharkhar-ing* [creaking; rattling] name has not occurred to him. Manto then satirizes the kind of progressivism that seeks to transcend region or community as he imagines that even if Sikhs named Lahora Singh, Peshavara Singh, Pahavara Singh (all of whose names are geographically marked) became progressive poets, they would not change their names. The joke here, of course, is that one of the stated aims of the All India Progressive Writers movement, as the name implies, was to transcend regional and linguistic boundaries (Mir & Mir 2006: 1-23).
- 29 At the end of the essay, Manto turns his attention to singers and *mujra* dancing girls. He admires their sweet and cute [*halke phulke*; literally, 'light and fluffy'] names: Shamshad [boxwood tree, often a metaphor for a graceful figure]; Gulab [rose; beloved]; Nilam [sapphire]; Ilmas [diamond]; Mushtari [Jupiter]; Zuhra [Venus]. He tells us that because of their association with dancing girls and courtesan culture, these names have become the 'forbidden tree' in Urdu, suggesting that respectable families, though attracted to them, would not choose them as names for their daughters. Among the singers, Manto writes, one finds 'strange and peculiar' names, including Tamancha Jan [lit., 'pistol dear; *jān* means 'dear' (but also 'life, spirit')]. He concludes the essay:
- [Tamancha Jan] has reached the utmost limit of progressivism... Just as with other goods and wares, there is also a shortage of names these days. New names are not to be found despite extensive and exhaustive search. My thought is that Tamancha Jan has blazed an entirely new trail. Such armed [*musallah*] names can be produced so easily:
- Top* [cannon] Kumari; Anti-aircraft Begum; Atom ud-Din; Tank Singh; *Banduq* [rifle] Bano; *Gola* Bakhsh [cannonball-bestower]; Machine Gun Das; Double-dozer Khan; Mine Kaur... Hand-Grenade Devi... Bomber Bai; D1 Jan; D2 Bose, etc. etc.
- 30 Taking the aesthetics of progressivism to its logical, but absurd, conclusion, Manto suggests that the modern imagination is bound to take recourse to military culture and the vocabulary of war and weaponry. However, in these lines his critique reaches beyond the realm of naming, and engages issues of 'newness' in literature in general. If one aims to obscure or do away with the language of the past, one's attention is bound to fall on the most powerful language of the present. In this case, that language is the terminology of war and the rhetoric of violence.
- 31 Past-tense references to Partition, and present-tense references to Muhammad Deen Taseer suggest that Manto wrote in 'Some Thoughts about Names' between 1947 and

1950. With this in mind, the final lines of 'Some Thoughts about Names' can arguably be read as a critique of the trajectory of language and discourse in South Asia in response to the violence of Partition. Militarization, the strictures and exclusivity of the progressive writers, and the communal intolerance in Indian cinema, though predating Partition, are symbols of the epistemic violence with which Manto's essay grapples. As noted, Manto's legacy in Urdu literary history is largely tied to his writing about Partition, and therefore, the presence of Partition-era thematic content is not surprising. However, as we shall see, the unique position that naming plays in Manto's imaginative literature on Partition has not received adequate critical attention.

Naming and violence in 'Yazid'

- 32 Manto revisits themes related to the rhetoric of violence, religion, and, one might say, 'forbidden' names in the story 'Yazid.' 'Yazid' was published in 1951 in a collection of short stories with the same name. A note in Manto's collected works suggests that Manto finished the story on 4 October of that year (Manto 2012: 245). In the context of Urdu literature, the name Yazid immediately calls to mind Umayyad Caliph Yazid bin Muawiyah (647–683) and his involvement in the events at Karbala in 680 CE, where Yazid's army killed the Prophet's grandson Husain (626–680) along with Husain's companions and most of his family. Longstanding debates exist within the Islamic world concerning the extent of Yazid's culpability in the killing, but most traditions, regardless of sectarian affiliation, regard Yazid and his army's actions at Karbala as an abuse of worldly political authority and affront to Islam. Yazid's character is often the subject of critical writings that portray him as a licentious drunk (Hawting 2015).
- 33 The overwhelmingly predominant medium through which Urdu speakers remember Yazid is the large corpus of Urdu literature that commemorates the events at Karbala, the martyrdom of Husain, and the suffering of his family and companions. In this corpus of literature, and in the Shia community in South Asia in general, the name Yazid is detested and associated with filth and impurity.¹⁶ Though the Karbala narrative permeates multiple genres of Urdu, the genre most typically invoked in discussions of Yazid and Husain is the *marsiyah* [elegy]. *Marsiyah* poetry in Urdu is generally associated with the assemblies and rituals of mourning that take place during the month of Muharram to commemorate Husain and his family's suffering and death at the hands of Yazid's army. *Marsiyah* narratives characterize Yazid as a usurper of Islamic political authority and the progeny of a political dynasty hostile to the Prophet's family. Indeed, the name Yazid typically functions as a metonymy for un-Islamic and tyrannical rule, and is contrasted with the righteous Husain, whose martyrdom symbolizes the rescuing of Islam from the unrighteous.¹⁷
- 34 Manto's 'Yazid' spans a few days in the life of Karimdad, a villager whose world was turned upside down by the violence of Partition. The name Karimdad comprises two parts: *karīm* (beneficent; also one of the divine names in Islam); and *dād*, the past participle of the Persian verb *dādan* (to give). Thus, Karimdad literally means 'given by the beneficent,' or '(beneficent-) God-given.'¹⁸ In addition to obvious notions of divine blessing, if we keep in mind Manto's observations in 'Some Thoughts about Names,' then we may also imagine that Karimdad's parents had prayed and made promises to God for a child (see above). In the opening paragraphs of the story, the narrator repeats the phrase 'the troubles of '47 came and went' as if it were a refrain. The refrain resonates with

Karimdad, who wishes to put Partition and its violence behind him and move on with his life.

- 35 Early in the story, Karimdad fulfills a longstanding desire when he marries Jinan (*jīnān*). Some readers interpret the name as meaning life or living.¹⁹ Indeed, a 19th century British ethnography of names in Punjab lists it among 'the many names turning on the roots meaning life.' Interestingly, the same ethnography associates the name with the Muslim Dogar community in Punjab, though it also argues based on census data that the name is 'common to Hindus and Musalmans' (Temple 1883: 30, 49, 111). Other readers may read the name as rooted in the Arabic *jīnān*, meaning heavens or paradise.²⁰ The lengthening and shortening of vowels in the Urdu-speaking world, for example, pronouncing *muhī* as *mohī*, as well as diverse regional practices of nasalization are common enough to allow for some degree of ambiguity. In any case, soon after the wedding, Jinan's laments for her deceased brother begin to irritate Karimdad, and he pleads with her to stop mourning the dead, reasoning that there will be many more who will die in his and Jinan's lifetime.
- 36 Themes and images of death and loss provide counterpoint to Yazid's central narrative, which follows Karimdad and Jinan as they prepare for the birth of their first child. Karimdad is enamored of Jinan, and tells her that she looks more beautiful now that she is pregnant. Feigning jealousy, he tells her that if she has become more beautiful for the child's sake, he and the child will fight. Jinan is embarrassed, and covers her stomach. Playfully, Karimdad begins to refer to the child with mild curse words: *chor* [thief]; *sūar ka baccha* [son of a pig]. When Jinan takes offense, Karimdad begins to laugh, and insists on calling himself a 'great big pig.'
- 37 Karimdad is the kind of person who does not forget the past, but chooses not to mourn it. This affects Jinan, who does not feel she can mourn for her lost loved ones in front of him. But the mourning rituals of Muharram offer a chance for both to commemorate the dead in their own ways. Jinan asks Karimdad to take her to see the *ta'ziyah* procession. Karimdad promises to take her and the 'son of a pig' in her stomach. At first, Jinan is upset by Karimdad's words, but she begins to find love and tenderness in them.
- 38 One day, Bakhto Dai [*dā'i: midwife*], while gently massaging Jinan's stomach, tells her that India plans to cut off the water supply to the village's farmland. Later, Jinan discusses the matter with Karimdad. Karimdad acknowledges hearing the rumors, but quickly changes the subject to the child. Jinan tells him that Bakhto Dai expects the child to be born in ten days. Karimdad begins to celebrate, but Jinan scolds him and insists that a Karbala is coming to the village. Jinan's words point to an important implication that underlies the remainder of Manto's story: In the Karbala narrative, we are told that Yazid's forces refused to allow water to reach Husain's camp, and that Husain and his family, including his small children, went for days without water. In 'Yazid,' this has been grafted onto the landscape of Karimdad's world. That is, by implication, Hindustan threatens to become the army of Yazid, thereby turning Karimdad's village into Husain's camp.
- 39 That evening, Karimdad attends a village meeting. The villagers are cursing Nehru and heatedly debating the truth of the rumors about India's plans. One villager suggests the plan is punishment for the villagers' sins, and encourages everyone to meet at the mosque for prayers. Others curse the Indians, calling their action vileness, turpitude, the greatest tyranny, the worst sin, and 'Yazid-ness' [*yazid-pan*]. Just one of the villagers, Chaudhari Nathu, is preparing to cast a barrage of insults and curses on India, Karimdad stands up and tells the villagers not to curse anyone. When confronted, he explains that although it seems to him that Indians are his enemies, one should not curse or insult

them. He explains that insults [*gālī*] are to be used only when one has no other response to give. When the villagers ask him for such a response, he refuses to speak on behalf of the entire community. Rather, he insists that responses require time, as does the process of stopping or changing the course of a river. By contrast, hurling insults and venting rage take only a minute. It is wrong, he insists, to curse at India, and it is foolish to expect mercy from one's enemies, who have greater weapons and more resources.

- 40 Karimdad's critique centers on the act of naming Hindustan as 'enemy' [*dushman*]. Once one has done so, one can only expect enmity in response. Karimdad addresses the villagers:

Chaudhari, when you have called someone 'enemy,' then how can you complain when he wants to starve you to death? If he doesn't starve you to death, doesn't turn your green and grassy fields into wilderness and wasteland, then what, is he going to send you pots of *pulao* rice dishes and jars of sherbet? Set up parks and gardens for your amusement and pleasure?

- 41 The villagers are not convinced by Karimdad's appeal or its logic, and call it prattle [*bakvās*]. He continues:

Just stop and think for a minute. What won't both sides do to pin each other in a fight? When a wrestler girds his loins and enters the ring, he has the right to use any move. [...] So then it is also right to block the river... It is tyranny for us, but for them it is allowed.

- 42 Karimdad then indicates that naming an 'other' implicates the namer in a fixed positionality vis-à-vis the named. Here, one may think of Judith Butler's discussion of naming, vulnerability, and the violence of interpellation:²¹

Why do you forget that they are not only our enemy? Are we not their enemies? If we had the choice, we, too, would have stopped their grain and water... But now that they can and are about to do so, we will have to think of some defensive move. What is the point of casting useless abuses? They aren't going to cause rivers of milk to flow for you, Chaudhari Nathu. If he could, he would mix poison into every drop of your water. You'll call it tyranny, you'll call it brutality, because you do not like the method of striking. It is strange to set marriage-contract-like conditions before starting a fight... to say to them, 'Look, don't starve me to death, but you can destroy me all you want with a rifle, and with a rifle of such-and-such a bore at that.' This is real nonsense.

- 43 After quipping at Chaudhari Nathu, Karimdad stands up and leaves the meeting.

- 44 Karimdad returns home to find that his child has been born. Bakhto Dai greets him with smiles and congratulations at the door. Like one of the family members of 'Some Thoughts about Names,' she immediately asks Karimdad to think of a good name for the child. Karimdad pauses and says, 'Yazid... Yazid.' He enters the home to find the child sucking its thumb beside Jinan. He looks at the child with loving, proud eyes, and addresses it as Yazid. Jinan lets out a faint cry, '... Yazid?!' Karimdad inspects the child's features and, satisfied, says, 'Yes, Yazid... this is his name.' The story ends:

Jinan's voice became weak. 'What are you saying, Kimu...²² Yazid?'

Karimdad smiled. 'What's the big deal? It's just a name, after all.'

Jinan could only say this much: 'But whose name?'

Karimdad responded seriously: 'It isn't necessary that he be that same Yazid. That one, he closed off the water supply. This one will open it up.'

- 45 With the invocation of Yazid, the archetypal enemy of Islam, Karimdad's critique of enmity comes to its conclusion. In naming his son Yazid, Karimdad hopes to change the

meaning of Yazid, and by extension the category of 'enemy,' and in so doing to alter the course of history.

- 46 Reading 'Yazid' strictly in the context of Partition literature and Partition-era politics, Alok Bhalla interprets the significance of the name Yazid as the means through which Manto challenges notions of perpetual Hindu-Muslim communal conflict, calls attention to Sunni-Shia sectarian tensions in Pakistan, and disputes 'two-nation' theorists who associate migration to Pakistan with the Prophet's *hijrat* and Yazid with 'Hindu *kafirs*.' Bhalla's reading is strategically aimed at refuting Manto translator Khalid Hasan's claim that 'Yazid' justifies Muslim League politics (Bhalla 2012: 27). But 'Yazid' does not directly invoke communal Hindu-Muslim conflict. The characters in the story debate enmity between Pakistan and Hindustan, not Muslims and Hindus. The sectarian identity of the story's characters is never specified, and, as I have argued above, Muslims in South Asia regardless of sectarian identity associate the name Yazid with injustice and usurpation, and scholars argue convincingly that the symbolic significance of Karbala, Muharram, and Yazid cannot be tied exclusively to a single religious sect or community in South Asia.²³ 'Yazid' relies on this shared background for its aesthetic effect. Bhalla's third point confusingly mixes two disparate events in Islamic history, and his notion that Yazid, a metonymy for the unjustified claim to Islamic authority, directly ties to 'Hindu *kafirs*' has no basis in the story. The villagers call Hindustan Yazid because Hindustan threatens to shut off the water supply and bring Karbala to their village. None of the villagers' insults (meanness; lowliness; the greatest tyranny; the worst sin; Yazid-ness) calls attention to the religious identity of Hindustan. The words *mazhab* [sect], Muslim (or Musalman), Islam, Hindu, Shia, Sunni, and *kafir* do not appear in the story. By reading religious-sectarian and communal conflicts associated with Partition into the symbol Yazid and the story 'Yazid,' Bhalla unduly limits the scope and significance of both.
- 47 Bhalla argues that 'Yazid' proposes two 'ethical strategies:' 'we should give up our collective fixation with religious identities;' and 'we must begin to regard our little rituals of marriage, childbirth, friendship or burial as acts of moral care which are sufficient for our common survival' (Bhalla 2012: 26). The first 'lesson' resonates with Manto's characterization of Karimdad as the kind of person who wants to leave the past behind and change the significance of names closely tied to religious history. Still, such characteristics do not amount to a desire to abandon religious identity altogether, and, as mentioned above, religious and sectarian identities are not explicitly discussed in the story. The second ignores the looming threat of international violence to which the story responds. Karimdad's hope is not to alter the course of history by cherishing his love for Jinan and his newborn son, and by participating in local ritual and religious culture, but to effect far-reaching, international change by imbuing the name Yazid with new meaning.
- 48 Both Bhalla and Jalil judge that 'Yazid' differs from Manto's other stories. Bhalla judges that its tone contrasts with Manto's 'bitterly ironic and angry stories' on Partition (Bhalla 2012: 26). Jalil judges that Yazid is 'gentle' and offers glimpses into 'the pacifist in Manto.' Jalil also judges that the story 'makes a point about rough-hewn country folk being repositories of the wisdom distilled from the ages' (Jalil 2008: xiv). The latter judgment is at odds with the unwise majority of villagers who incite violence by labeling Hindustan 'enemy.' Karimdad's wisdom derives not from his 'folksiness,' but from his counter-cultural behavior: His refusal to mourn, his violation of linguistic convention, and his intervention at the village meeting, and his final, subversive act. While Karimdad and

Jinan's relationship in 'Yazid' is certainly marked by gentle tenderness, the story's indictment of violence, while perhaps not the 'shock treatment' that literary historians typically find in Manto's writing, is incisive and provocative.²⁴

- 49 While discussing Manto's writings on Partition, Fleming lists 'Yazid' among 'secondary' stories, and writes that it, like other 'secondary' stories, fails 'to capture the real sorrows and joys engendered by Partition.' She accuses Manto of using violence to shock his readers. She also accuses him of ignoring the diversity of popular reactions to the formation of Pakistan, including enthusiasm at the possibilities concomitant with the newly formed state mixed with the shock of deracination from one's ancestral home and the loss of historical identity. Further, she claims that 'Yazid' does not 'take us beyond the specific characters and situations with which [it deals]' (Fleming 1985: 86).
- 50 Fleming's characterization fails to recognize that the focus of 'Yazid' is not on the inner workings of the characters' minds, but rather on the rhetoric of enmity and the violence of Partition- and post-Partition-era political discourse. In the *marsiya* tradition, all focus remains on the bravery and suffering of Husain and the injustice and tyrannical violence of Yazid's army. By contrast, Karimdad and Jinan's feelings about Partition are left largely ambiguous in the story, partly due to Karimdad's refusal to mourn and his insistence that Jinan, too, not mourn the dead. Eschewing predictable discussions of the bifurcation of South Asian political geography in terms of 'the sorrows and joys of Partition,' 'Yazid' explores feelings of confusion, ambivalence, hope, anger, and optimism, and focuses its satirical lens on the implications of naming one's 'other' as 'enemy,' 'Pakistan,' and 'Hindustan,' and one's loved ones as the archetypal enemy, 'Yazid.' In doing so, the story reaches beyond its characters, and confronts readers with the brutality of differentiation and the relationship between rhetorical and physical violence. It proposes unconventional uses of language and unconventional naming practices as forms of resistance. Karimdad's profanity endears him to Jinan and to readers who find wisdom in his refusal to observe the conventions of propriety. Just as he breaks convention by cursing his child and calling him a thief, a son-of-a-pig, and, ultimately, by naming him Yazid, so too does he break convention and socially sanctioned practice as he calls himself a great big pig, refuses to mourn the dead or curse Hindustan and Hindustanis. Karimdad's countercultural refusal to observe conventional naming practices leads to his refusal to name India as 'enemy,' and, consequently, to his refusal to implicate himself in the discourse of enmity and the violence that it engenders.

Naming and archetypes in Zaigham's 'Shakuntala'

- 51 Like Manto's 'Yazid,' Ghazal Zaigham's Urdu vignette 'Shakuntala' examines how archetypal names mediate between past and present.²⁵ Where 'Yazid' linked early representatives of Islamic justice and the violence of Partition, 'Shakuntala' connects the classical archetypes of Sanskrit romance and the lives of women in modern India. The story of Shakuntala appears in the *Mahabharata* and is famously told in a Sanskrit play by Kalidasa (fl. 5th c. CE). In Kalidasa's version, Shakuntala is the child of Menaka, an *apsara* (a beautiful 'celestial nymph') sent by Indra to seduce the sage Vishvamitra and thereby weaken the threat that Vishvamitra's spiritual power posed to Indra's authority (Johnson 2001; Lochtefeld 2002: 49; Williams 2003: 57, 251-252). Shakuntala is orphaned as a child and found by a rishi, who raises her in an ashram in a forest. The king Dushyant visits the forest on a hunting expedition. Shakuntala and he conceive a son (Bharat). Dushyant

gives Shakuntala a ring and leaves the forest. Soon a curse is placed on Shakuntala that Dushyant will forget her unless he sees proof of their union. Shakuntala has the ring that Dushyant gave her as proof, but on her way to join the king at his palace, she loses it. This leads to a series of complications, but Dushyant eventually sees the ring, remembers Shakuntala, and Bharat eventually inherits his kingdom.²⁶

- 52 Zaigham's 'Shakuntala' appears in her collection of Urdu short stories, *Ek Tukrā Dhūp Kā* [A Little Piece of Sunlight]. As is the case in many of the stories in the collection, filmmaker Zaigham sets the scene as if she were writing camera cues. My translation leaves the language as it appears in the Urdu in order to preserve some of the dramatic changes in verb tense and syntactical ambiguities present in the original.
- 53 Zaigham's 'Shakuntala' is intertextual and satirical. The opening lines evoke the setting of Kalidasa's Shakuntala narrative, but soon Dushyant finds himself caught between the world of archetypal fantasy and modern reality. The markers of modernity, the telephone, the PA, the computer, and the use of English phrases, upset the Kalidasa-like grove setting and, consequently, Dushyant's fantasy. The presence of English words (e.g., 'idiot') is therefore an important feature of the piece, and in order to preserve the switch in translation, I have italicized the English words and phrases present in the Urdu. Dushyant ultimately displaces his archetypal fantasy onto a supermodel of the same name:

Shakuntala

A pool full of limpid water in which golden, silver, darling little fishes were swimming about. Gently, lazily, white and pink lotuses were blooming; beads of water were sparkling like diamonds on their round green leaves.

A pleasantly cool breeze was blowing.

Countless strings of fragrant jasmine flowers were swaying back and forth. For a moment, Shakuntala's reflection twinkled in the water. And with her ringing laughter, the entire forest awoke.

They began dropping and floating about.... flowers made the tree branches bow.

Dushyant awoke from a deep sleep. At once his sight fell upon the ring. Aray!... He was just strolling with Shakuntala. The forest breeze was with them... Where did you go?

Khar-khar he dialed the PA's (*pī ay*) number.

'Can you give me Shakuntala's *phone number*...?'

(Who knows how the poor thing is doing at the ashram? I completely forgot! But years passed in this fighting business.)

'Sir!'

'Yes.'

'Which Shakuntala's *number* do you want?'

'What?'

'Sir ji... I mean, Varmala Shakuntala Varma? Sadhana Shakuntala Sisodhya? Shakuntala Chaudhary? Sagar Yaka Shakuntala Arya? Romila Shakuntala Baltiwala?'

'What are you going on about?'

(Shakuntala... What is your surname, my love... *Just I forget*.)

'Sir, there are several numbers with this name in your *computer*.'

'Search by profession...'

'Sagar Yaka is a *dancer*...'

'Varmala ji, a *teacher*...'

'Romila is in a *transport company*...'

'Chaudhary is a *housewife*...'

'Sadhana is a *typist*...'

'Look, she used to live in an ashram, rishi ji's... there was a lush green forest, very

dense... even in the daytime you couldn't see light, that's how overgrown and green it was... I had just gone to hunt deer.'
 'In the forest of which *state*, sir?'
 'I don't remember the name of the *state*...'
 'Sir, all the forests have been cut down... Shahbaz Khan has hunted the black deer... And all the white deer have committed suicide for fear that someone might kill them.'
 'Idiot.'
 'Yes sir.'
 'I see; ask 197 *telephone inquiry*...'
 'Sir, it is giving me the *number* of *top model* Madhurima Shakuntalam...'
 'Fine, just take that one...'
 (This is fine...)

- 54 Readers of the opening lines of Zaigham's story are invited to suppose that they are reading an Urdu prose version of the classical Shakuntala narrative, an illusion that is not broken until Dushyant dials the telephone. In Zaigham's story, waking life interrupts Dushyant's sleep, but not his fantasy. He confronts the reality that Shakuntala refers not only to the woman in his dreams, but also to contemporary women. Still, this fails to break his fantasy. The abrasively alliterative *khar-khar* emphasizes the disruptive role that the phone plays in the narrative. Indeed, the personal assistant disrupts Dushyant's fantasy by referencing the modern nation and women's roles in its economy. Dushyant seems impervious at first, and retains his desire for the classical Shakuntala of his dream-fantasy, until he displaces the classical fantasy onto a modern one, that is, onto a supermodel with a similar name. Read intertextually, Zaigham's vignette suggests a provocative relationship between Shakuntala's *apsara* heritage and the seductive qualities of the supermodel as opposed to the other Shakuntalas in the story.
- 55 By juxtaposing the classical Shakuntala with the modern Shakuntalam—that is, the idealized beloved of the *Mahabharata* and Kalidasa's poem with a contemporary Indian supermodel—Zaigham invites us to consider the formative power of names to direct Dushyant's desire and determine the object of his fantasy. On one reading, this formative power is tied to the exclusive signifier-signified relationship of the name Shakuntala and the classical archetype. On this reading, the aim of Zaigham's critique is the notion that symbolic names are inextricably tied to what they conventionally symbolize. The parallels with Manto's 'Yazid' are obvious, though in Manto there is hope that Yazid can be resignified, whereas in Zaigham, the displacement of Dushyant's fantasy suggests that conventional symbols and the fantasies that they engender are not so easily transformed.

Conclusion

- 56 Saadat Hasan Manto and Ghazal Zaigham satirically examine modern South Asian culture through the lens of names and naming. Manto's essays on naming and inscription satirize the aesthetics of progressivism. They cast satirical light on familial naming practices; state and social suppression of creativity; and the ironies and absurdities of the relationship between signifier and signified. They also invite us to consider connections among the obfuscation of religious identity, Urdu progressive aesthetics, and post-Independence politics. 'Yazid,' in particular, critiques the discourse of enmity and the violence that it engenders, offering the appropriation of names and the refusal to name others as 'enemy' as interventional strategies.

- 57 As Manto and Zaigham's writings demonstrate, names and naming are significant vehicles through which at least two modern Urdu authors engage and satirize aspects of South Asian culture and history. Manto uses names to satirize emergent exclusionary discourse among progressive Urdu authors and the Hindi/Hindu 'purification' of names in Indian cinema. Zaigham's 'Shakuntala' satirizes literature that sustains classical gendered archetypes to suggest a link between such classical literary archetypes and modern desires for the kind of beauty represented by contemporary models. Both Manto and Zaigham disrupt traditional and contemporary attitudes about religious identity, aesthetics, modernity, and gender, and offer insight into the myriad roles that names play in Urdu literary culture.

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NOTES

1. Some published editions have included the conjunction, others have omitted it.
2. Here, Manto alludes to the poetry of Urdu poet Mir Taqi Mir (1724–1810), in which the beloved is often a young boy.
3. For more connections with Naseem Bano, see *The Internet Movie Database* (2015: 'Naseem Banu' at http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0052568/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1)
4. This section translates and discusses Manto's 'Kuchh Nāmon ke Bāre Men' as it appears in his collected works (listed in the bibliography). Because I quote extensively and Manto's essay is quite brief, I have omitted references.
5. *Tavahhum* is a reflexive or intensive verbal noun related to *vahm* (fear, paranoia; imagination, fancy; suspicion, doubt; anxiety). I have translated the term as 'superstition' here because it best fits the context, but reflexive senses of the aforementioned English nouns, approximated by English terms such as fancifulness, are also suggested. The second part of the compound, *parastī*, is used synonymously with the English suffix '-ism' in Urdu. It comes from a verb meaning to admire or worship, and therefore can carry some degree of religious connotation.
6. For a detailed discussion of the aesthetics of the *takhallus* and 'signature couplets' in Persian *ghazal* poetry, see Losensky (1997: 239–71).
7. For an English study of N.M. Rashid's life and poetry, and his contributions to free verse and modernist poetry in Urdu, see Pue (2014: 1–18). For an English study of Miraji's poetry and its place in Urdu literature see Patel (2002: 3–13 and 83–167). Studies of Qateel Shifai's work are wanting in English. For Urdu, see Quraishi (1991).
8. [*nairang*: magic; deception; wonder; miracle; strangeness. *khayāl*: thought, idea; imagination. *Nairang-e Khayāl*: lit. wonder of thought].
9. Ahmad Shah Abadli or Durrani (1747–1772) was an Afghan ruler whom historians remember for his repeated military campaigns in India between 1747 and 1769. For an account of Ahmad Shah and his expeditions to India, see Davies (2015).
10. The manifesto is reproduced in Coppola (1975: 282–87).
11. Ayesha Jalal examines the impact of this literary environment on Manto's creativity and health (Jalal 2003: 164–86).
12. According to the Internet Movie Database, this film was released with the English title, *The Devoted*. See *The Internet Movie Database* (2015: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0156916/?ref_=nm_film_dr_33).
13. Dilip Kumar (b. 1922) is among the most famous actors of Bombay cinema in the 20th century. See *The Internet Movie Database* (2015: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0474801>). For Tajour Sultana (1926–2004), see *The Internet Movie Database* (2015: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0156916/?ref_=nm_film_dr_33).
14. Born Sabira Begam, Asha Posley (d. 1998) rose to stardom in the 1940s. See *The Internet Movie Database* (2015: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0692695/>).
15. Also known as Baba Kharak Singh (1868–1963); Sikh political leader, supporter of Gandhi, outspoken critic of the British jailed numerous times, advocate for Sikh rights and national unity He retired to Delhi in 1947 (Singh 1992: 493–94).
16. One scholar raised in a Shia home in Hyderabad, India, recalls that in his youth his cousins named a stray dog in their neighborhood as 'Yazid.' See Hyder (2006: 14).
17. For more on Yazid, Husain, and South Asia, see Hyder (2006: 3–12).

18. Compare with the proper name Khudadad [God-given].
19. I interpret the name this way, as does Bhalla (2012: 29).
20. I am indebted to two friends, both 'native' Urdu speakers, one born and educated at Hyderabad, India, the other born and educated at Lahore, for suggesting this reading of the name.
21. Euro-American philosopher Judith Butler discusses the constitution of subjectivity by hate speech interpellation in the context of speech act theory and American media, law, and politics; see Butler (1997: 1-41).
22. Jinan calls Karimdad Kimu [*kīmū*], a familiar, shortened form of Karimdad, throughout the story. In Urdu, such names are variously referred to as '*urf*' [lit., 'what one is known as'], which is technical, or, colloquially, as *ghar-vālā nām* [lit., home-name].
23. See Hyder (2006).
24. Urdu literary historian Salim Akhtar uses the term 'shock treatment' to describe early Urdu writing on 'gender and the creative consciousness' in general and Manto's writing in particular. See Akhtar (2005: 453).
25. I call the piece a vignette, though it is interesting to consider that it is in fact a *Laghukathā*, a Hindi genre of short, typically political prose. See Sarma (2002).
26. For an English version of Kalidasa, see Johnson (2001).

ABSTRACTS

This essay examines the ways in which two modern Urdu writers, Saadat Hasan Manto (1912–1955) and Ghazal Zaigham (b. 1964), discuss issues related to familial naming practices, religious identity, Islamic history, communalism in Indian cinema, progressivism in Urdu literature, and archetypes of gender. Translations and close readings of Manto's essays and stories as well as Zaigham's vignette are enriched by discussions of relevant issues in South Asian history, religion, and literary culture.

INDEX

Keywords: Manto (Saadat Hasan), Zaigham (Ghazal), Urdu literature, South Asian culture, South Asian history, South Asian religion

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