

Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies Vol. 1, No. 1 (2009)

Editorial

Welcome to *Pakistaniaat*—*Chishm-e-ma Roshan* *Dil-e-ma Shaad*

Even as these lines are written, Pakistan is involved in a struggle for its very survival against fanatics who claim to understand the mind of God and who have sullied Islam's traditional image of love and compassion by replacing it with hatred, violence, and torture.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Pakistan is valued only within the context of its possible instrumentalization for US foreign policy. Opinions about Pakistan rely heavily on crude stereotypes and are often declarative rather than being reflective. Just a few weeks ago, for example, congressman Gary Ackerman declared: "Pakistan's pants are on fire!" Unfortunately, when it comes to Pakistan, ignorance isn't just the hallmark of the Pakistani Taliban; it also permeates US politics and media.

Why start a journal about Pakistan? Perhaps because, in the spirit of Fanon, we feel that there are too many inane things being said about Pakistan, things posited as naturally axiomatic and normative when they are neither. We say in Urdu, mullah ki dor masjid tak (a mullah runs only as far as the mosque), and as academics our remedy to this normalized ignorance is to do something academic that enables and encourages a more nuanced and scholarly engagement with Pakistan. *Pakistaniaat*, thus, is an outcome of this attempt at giving voice to otherwise silenced voices.

Pakistaniaat is to be a free on-line journal, openly available to its readers. Furthermore, it offers more than academic articles and book reviews. The journal is inspired by the model set forth by *Postcolonial Text*, an esteemed and established open-access journal in the field of postcolonial studies.

We were aware, at the outset of *Pakistaniaat's* inception, that online journals are still somehow considered less academic and authentic as compared to their print counterparts. We think that, with the quality of contributions to the first of what we hope will be many issues, we may dismiss that notion. We exist to bring the work of dedicated academics, essayists, fiction writers, and poets, whose work is related to Pakistan in one way or another, to a global audience.

Our journal is hosted by Scholarly Exchange, a non-profit that provides affordable access to Open Journal Systems (OJS) software, which is, in our opinion,

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the best software for online scholarly publication. We have also made arrangements with a print-on-demand company to make print copies of the journal available to all those who would want a physical copy of the journal.

Our all-volunteer team has worked exceptionally hard to bring this first issue to you. Special thanks to Deborah Hall, Sarah Husain, David Waterman, Jana Russ, and Yousaf Alamgirian, co-editors, and Jason W. Ellis, our layout editor. We are also fortunate to have the technical support of Audra and Mike of karmacms.com, who made it possible for us to launch the first journal website in less than a day. I am also personally indebted to my department chair, Ron Cortshell, who—despite the tough economic conditions—provided the initial financial support.

We look forward to submissions, possibly from you, for our future issues. We also hope to enjoy your general support in whatever way you deem it fit to give us.

Enjoy reading this first ever issue of *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies*.

Masood Ashraf Raja
May 12, 2009.