



Indigeneity and Resistance in Zubair Ahmad's *Grieving for Pigeons*

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ABSTRACT

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This article explores how short stories in Zubair Ahmad's collection *Grieving for Pigeons* (2022) manipulate the narrative of cultural memory to project the intricate realities of the postcolonial Pakistani Punjab. These stories set in Lahore foreground the rich memories of pure culture and the partition of Punjab, contribute to the empowerment of Punjabi language, and depiction of cultural and historical heritage of Lahore. Moreover, significantly, these short stories also showcase a postcolonial resistance. Drawing upon concepts of Mieke Bal on cultural memory and Aleida Assman's "remembering forward", this research highlights how Ahmad's stories (2023) succeed in excavating the transformation and reformation of cultures by reinterpreting understanding of the past and, thus, put forward a "remembering forward". These stories, originally written in Punjabi and translated into English by Anne Murphy, situate culture of the past in the future to come, by influencing people to embrace their culture, enabling it to adapt to new circumstances and achieve an elevated position where it becomes resistant against colonial exercise. I argue that cultural memory, impacting the identities of individuals, grows to a point of resistance which I term as postcolonial resistive memory. This postcolonial resistive memory produces the Affect to emphasize the authenticity of the shared past and ideological resistance in the masses. This memory also has the potential to maintain indigeneity, reinscribe the cultural past, and revolutionize futuristic ideals.

Keywords: Cultural memory, remembering forward, Affect, resistance literature, postcolonial resistive memory,

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This article explores how the situations depicted in Zubair Ahmad's short story collection *Grieving for Pigeons* (2022) allude to the indigenous realities of postcolonial Punjab through a narrative of cultural memory. I argue that these stories, using the city of Lahore in general and Krishan Nagar, the old Mohalla in particular, foreground the symbolic memories of pure culture and the narrative of the partition of Punjab. These stories use the medium of Punjabi language, not only to revive the historical heritage of Lahore but also to highlight the lost connectivity to the undivided Punjab. I argue that the settings and descriptions in the selected stories reflect a postcolonial resistance through indigeneity that works as a tool against becoming obsolete or foreign/colonial exercise. I draw upon the paradigm of cultural memory by invoking the concept of "remembering forward" to read the stories as texts reinscribing the past to transform the future. To do this, I employ Mieke Bal and Aleida Assman and Jan Assman's theoretical positions. This postcolonial resistance highlights the importance of indigeneity as a living reality that not only saves the culture from becoming dead but also revives it in terms of becoming a shield against foreign conspiracies to reject its authority. It connects the historical past to the impending future. Ahmad situates the cultural past in the future to influence the people to adapt to their indigenous hues and embrace their indigenous culture, thus impacting the impending future. Getting informed of their cultural past and resituating that in the coming times contributes to postcolonial resistance so that relationship between the postcolonial resistance and indigeneity emerges as a two-way process.

Postcolonial resistance relies upon indigeneity while indigeneity pushes forward postcolonial resistance, both of which have cultural memory in the background. Therefore, I argue that cultural memory having a great impact on the identities of the individuals, achieves a position of postcolonial resistance which I term as postcolonial resistive memory. This memory runs on the basis of 'Affect' which has some powerful capacity to move the individuals or groups under its effects. This postcolonial resistive memory can easily contribute to preserving indigeneity, redescribing the cultural past, and revolutionizing futuristic ideals. The availability of these stories in both Punjabi and English creates connectivity between the indigenous people of Lahore and the world. This facility provides a vast space for these stories and their Indigenous cultural narratives to be disseminated to a wider audience. An explanation of some controlling key theoretical terms is in order here.

Cultural memory

Cultural memory studies, a contributing category of memory studies, presents an interdisciplinary and international interest, yet nationally impacted academic norms and language barriers have impeded the dissemination of knowledge regarding cultural memory. Expounded in the works of Maurice Halbwachs on *mémoire collective*, the narrative of cultural memory has witnessed remarkable growth in contemporary cultural and literary scenarios. Continuous

appropriation, translation, and reassessment methods lead to constant renegotiations in the concepts of cultural memory and cater to a self-reflexive approach to this diverse field. In Nora's terms, Memory can be defined as a phenomenon that perpetuates a hook to bind us to the eternal present (1989, p. 8). Imitating Ricoeur's lines, collective memory can be conceived as a "web of remembered experiences embodied in collectively communicable symbols" (Cristina, 2019, p. 88). Cultural memory can be defined as, "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts" that includes a vast spectrum of phenomena in its objects that range from individualistic remembering of the groups to national memory and to "transnational *lieux de mémoire* such as the Holocaust and 9/11" (Erll & Nunning, 2008, p. 2). In simple terms, cultural memory is significant for both cultural and individual phenomena because it has devoured both individual/psychological and social memory.

This study uses the narrative of cultural memory and its importance in re-excavating the past and through its modification shaping the future of the group related to that cultural memory. This study manipulates the theoretical stances related to cultural memory put forward by theorists like Mieke Bal, Aleida Assman, and Jan Assman, who, in one way or another, emphasize the influencing impact of cultural memory in terms of transforming the identities of the individuals and constructing the future of the group. Bal et al., in their book *The Acts of Memory: The Cultural Recall in the Present* (1999) describe the narrative of cultural memory and its functions in detail. Bal et al. view cultural memorization as a remembering activity that occurs in the present, continues the modification and redescription of the past, and strengthens its impact in shaping the future. Cultural memory as in Bal's words, "Neither remnant, document, nor relic of the past, nor floating in a present cut off from the past" connects the past to the present and the future (1999, p. 88). The functions of this memorial presence of the past range from conscious remembering to unconscious recall, from nostalgic longing for the lost to the manipulative tendency of the past to reform the present. The collective agency of any group or nation generates this interaction between past and present and according to Bal's conviction, cultural recall is not something born by the people but instead performed by them. Memory gives a primary glimpse of something stuck in the past. The event happened and is held in the stopped time but, memory is dynamic and flows through the three temporal lines: it refers to the past, evokes the present, and forecasts and even constructs the future to come. Bal, in a book chapter titled "Dis-remembered and mis-remembered", alludes to the nature of cultural memory having a "tripartite temporality". He advocates that "Memory is a connection between the three times of human temporal awareness: the past, in which things happened that the memory engages – or not; the present, in which the act of memorizing takes place and into which the remembered content is . . . "retrieved"; and the future, which will be influenced by what the subjects in the present, together and embedded in their cultural environment, remember and do with those memories" (2022, p. 7).

Bal proposes the concept of “acts of memory” and suggests memory’s link with the narration by quoting Pierre Janet, who believes that “Memory is an action: essentially, it is the action of telling a story”. This narrative memory essentially excavates events of the past that are related to the events of the present and contains suggestive possibilities for the future. Bal’s “acts of memory” encapsulate a narrative of mini theory because this phrase condenses the value of the word memory into a concept of a transitive verb having an active mode. It is related to something we perform in the present and has a subject and an object. This phrase suggests a theory of memory that changes the status of the word memory into an active concept. This twofold nature of the phrase “acts of memory”, “activity and present tense” justifies the connection of memory with the “cultural utterances such as performativity and duration”. Bal quotes Spinoza’s concept of “Spinozistic responsibility” which explains the idea of the self as a social entity that foregrounds the responsibilities felt during the present time connected to the past and emphasizes itself in the present. Bal grabs the concept of “temporal dimensions of human consciousness” that endorse the idea of “multiple forming and reforming of identities over time and within the deliverances of memory and imagination at any one time” (2022, pp. 11-15).

Researchers Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann, during an address at the conference entitled ‘Communicative and Cultural Memory’, highlighted the symbolic modes of cultural memory and their durable role in constructing identities and their impact on mnemonic dynamics regarding the formation of new nation-states respectively. Jan referred to cultural memory as the objectified memories that can be saved, traveled through, and reincorporated through the coming generations. Cultural memory embodies cultural symbolic heritage through texts, cultural rites, celebrating events, monumental remembrances, holy scriptures, and other media so crystallizing collective remembrances, can live through millennia. For Jan Assman cultural memory, “allows us to build a narrative picture of the past and develop an image and an identity for ourselves”, [as] it runs over normative paradigms and individuals must rely on the ‘symbolic institutionalized heritage’ to develop their identities relating to the particular group (Assman qtd. in Meckien, 2013, pp. np). Assman describes the three themes of his book, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization* as identity, memory reproduction, and continuity between successive generations. This relationship of continuity characterizes every culture. Every culture contains a connective structure that prevails on two lines, social and temporal. This structure gathers the adherents of that culture in a “symbolic Universe,” a common space for experience, expectation ideals, and action, with its binding force providing them with trust and orientation.

Aleida regards cultural memory not as nostalgia but as a phenomenon always directed towards the future or a ‘remembering forward’, a device always protecting the past against the corrosion of time and enabling personas to understand the world and expect the future (qtd. in Meckien, 2013, p. np). Aleida Assmann considers the true essence of memory in her book *Formen des Vergessen*,

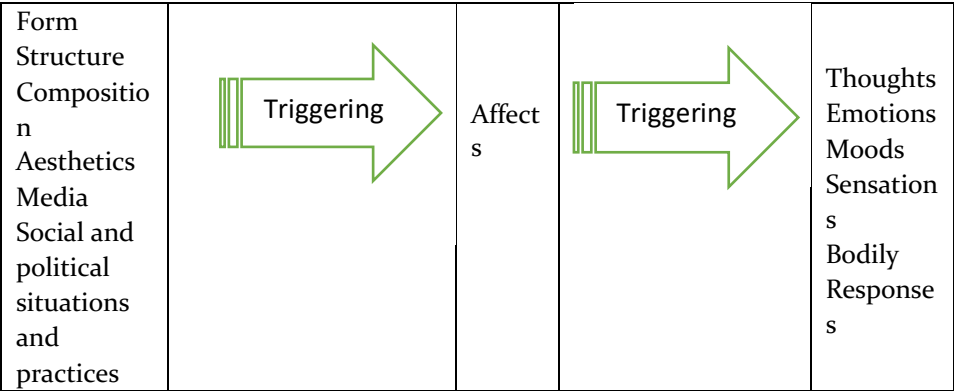
while defining this narrative as “a filter, as a weapon and as a prerequisite for the creation of new things” (Bal, 2022, p. 7). Relying upon the above-mentioned theoretical stances, this study also suggests a postcolonial resistance through reforming the individuals’ identities of a specific group and the remembering procedures in the context of cultural memory.

Theory of affect and the postcolonial resistive memory

Alphen and Jirsa in the introductory chapter of their book *How to Do Things with Affects: Affective Triggers in Aesthetic Forms and Cultural Practices* (2019) present a significant scholarship about how Affects can process within aesthetic forms and cultural practices and how they can be manipulated to achieve specific goals. They focus on the “agency of cultural objects” and how Affects trigger and get triggered by multiple aesthetic forms and mediums like media and social arrangements. They quote Eugenie Brinkema who redirects the affective turn in the form of “Radical formalism”, that is, Affects can be understood better as forms, “Forms are autoaffectively charged, and [. . .] affects take shape in the details of specific visual forms and temporal structures”. Affect works like a process or production or as Spinoza terms it like an “action”. Affect is the stage or level in the mechanism of triggering because Affect is what is triggered by form. Hence trigger means to stimulate or activate so what Affects can trigger are emotions, thoughts, moods, feelings, and bodily responses or short activism. Since Affect is a process, it has different phases on which major theorists focus. Deleuze and Tomkins suggest affect as “a productive trigger of thought and/ or emotion” and Brinkema focuses on “form as a trigger of affect” (Alpha & Jirsa, 2019, pp.1-4). Alphen and Jirsa describe the process of Affect in the following postulates.

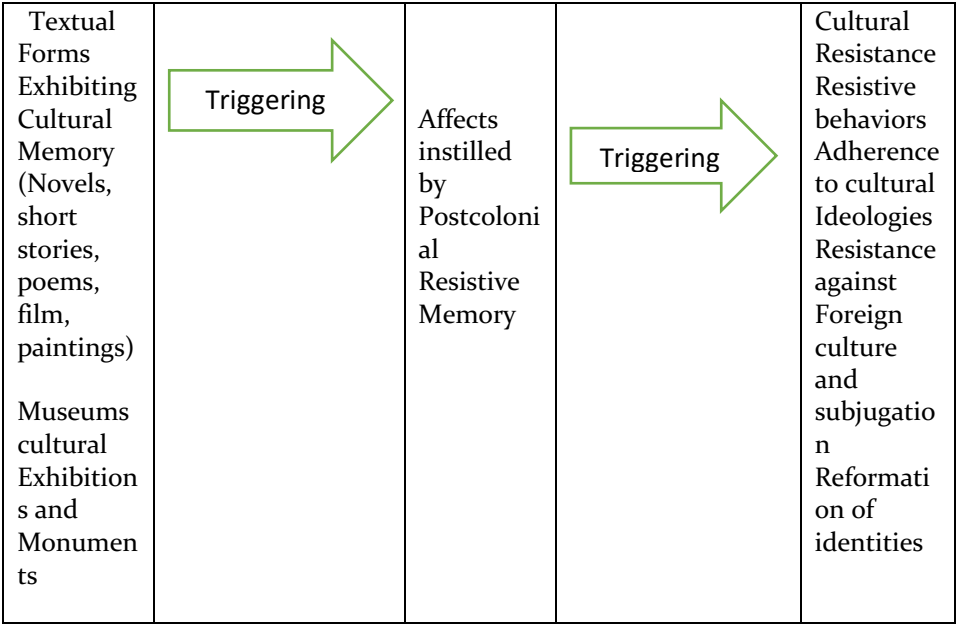
- (1) Form as the trigger of affect
- (2) Affect as the intensity, sensation, or resonance in which this triggering results
- (3) Affect as the trigger of thought, emotions, and imagination.

I have presented the whole process outlined by them in the following table:



(Table-1)

This research argues that texts or literary forms like *Grieving for Pigeons*, which foreground the importance of cultural memory push forward postcolonial resistive memory. This postcolonial resistive memory affects and triggers the audience's emotions and thoughts to acknowledge their Indigenous frameworks, cultural connectivity, and activism for resistance against foreign narratives. This resistive memory may produce a strong Affect on the Indigenous people to connect to their shared heritage showing intense resistance against the frameworks that tend to shatter their cultural integrity. Hence ideologies are created and affected by the Affect, the Affect of this postcolonial resistive memory emphasizes the authenticity of the cultural past and invokes the resistive outlooks of the individuals on the ideological levels. Cultural memory encompasses functional concepts such as tradition forming, past reference, and political identity or imagination (Assman, 2011, p. 9). Resistive memory instills the Affect to trigger the emotions of adherence to that political imagination and traditions. Bal recommends that “affect-based analysis” can do wonders for our comprehension of art than “formalist analysis only, while still including form in the endeavor” (2019, p. 181). Considering the Affect narrative triggered by forms and structures showing postcolonial resistive memory, this study proposes the following process of Affect and effects (in Table below) involving the forms and structures that encircle the narratives of cultural memory.



(Table-2)

In the next section, I make a critical textual analysis of the selected stories under the following three subheadings. For the analysis of texts, I invoke the theoretical positions only as reading supports to push my argument through to

vindicate my intervention, but I don't exclusively apply these theoretical concepts on my selected short stories.

Cultural memory in the context of space and individual

Before moving on to analyse the selected texts with reference to cultural memory in the context of space and individual, it would be instructive to briefly introduce the writer. Muhammad Zubair, with his pen name Zubair Ahmad, is one of the most famous names in contemporary Punjabi fiction. He is the author of two volumes of Punjabi poetry, three short story collections, a book of translations, and a collection of essays. His first collection of short stories *Meenh, Boohay tay Baariaa(n)* is considered remarkable for establishing his fame through his expertise in using poetic diction. His distinguished manipulation of time and space gradually evolved into the intricacy of a narrative craft and rendering places as living characters turn his narrative pieces into visual masterpieces. Mahmood Awan wrote a review of *Grieving for Pigeons* in *The News on Sunday* on December 18, 2022, with the title "A world of remembrance." He writes:

Grieving for Pigeons is the first book-length translation of Ahmad's Punjabi short stories includes twelve short stories from his published books, *Meenh, Boohay tay Baariaa(n)* published in 2001; *Kabootar, Beneray tay Galyaa(n)* published in 2013 and *Paani di Kandh* (2019). Earlier, the translations of Ahmad's short stories into English have been brought to foreign readership in many anthologies. *Booha Khulla Aye* was published in *A Letter from India: Contemporary Short Stories from Pakistan* (edited by Mozzam Sheikh; Penguin, 2004), *Meenh, Boohay tay Baariaa(n)* was featured in *Stories of the Soil* (edited by Nirupama Dutt; Penguin, 2010) and *Sweater* appeared in *South Asian Ensemble* (a Canadian Quarterly 2010, Vol.2, Number 3) (Awan, 2022).

The twelve selected stories in Ahmad's *Grieving for Pigeons*, based on the spatial landscape of Lahore, excavate the cultural and historical heritage of Lahore where life exhibits its hustle and bustle decades after the partition. This narrative is a type of longing and remembering described through a narrator who remembers the ancient times and lively picture of Krishan Nagar, the old *mohallah*, in different stories through different perspectives. Zubair Ahmad's pen gets inspiration from the traditional Punjabi *Qissa, var, and Dhola* poetry and produces organically lyrical poetic prose to portray traditional themes and the cultural rubric of life through cultural memory (Ahmad, 2022). All the stories have a single narrator, an individual who puts forward the remembrance of the cultural past of the community living in the suburbs of Lahore. Halbwachs specifically describes in *The Collective Memory*: "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember." He asserts that the number of collective memories increases according to how many groups and institutional structures are in a society. Families, social structures,

corporations, associations, armies, and even trade unions as groups hold their distinctive memories that have group-based constructions over a lengthy period. “Memory is more than just chronology, it is the (re-)construction of past practices, motions, and emotions, i.e. the fabric of social interaction” (Horn et al., 2020, pp. 1-2).

Memories are fabricated by the organizing groups but remembered by the individuals only, not by groups or institutions. The members of the group rely on specific contexts and in those contextual backgrounds, they recognize and recreate the past (Coser, 1992, p. 22). Ahmad pushes forward his specific individualistic narrator to bring to the surface the pre-partition historical heritage of Lahore and the post-partition continuation of that cultural past in different ways. He manages to set the Krishan Nagar or old *mohallah* as a site of memory or memorial space to connect the past to the present. He alludes to a form of futuristic revolution by describing political rallies and revolutionary activism of the past. The spatial structures and concrete spaces are the suburbs of Lahore or suburbs of a city located in the partitioned other. Nora introduces the site of memory to prevent the lively narrative of memory against the discipline of history that was supposed to be engulfing the memory (Sadiq, Majeed, & Hyder, 2022, pp.482-483; Winter, 2010, p.312). Nora’s ‘site’ talks about a spatial presence where nations, ethnic groups, or even private social structures collect their remembrances (Szpocinski, 2016, p. 246). Ahmad’s portrayal of *mohalla*, Krishan Nagar, becomes a site of memory and performs its function rightly as a space where cultural memory finds its commemoration in its full sense. The city of Lahore remains to be the center of the stories of Zubair Ahmad. Its roads, cafes, streets bustling with the people, and hustle and bustle of life on Mall Road, Anarkali Market, Gol Bagh, and most important of all, political rallies and revolutionary protests of the people, memories, and landscapes are in a multi-layered relationship dependent on the cultural context but hold transcending aspects. In ‘The Estranged City’, Ahmad describes Lahore thus, “There used to be two coffee houses in Tollinton Market, the Capri and the Kabana. There were also small huts behind the market. If someone wanted to sit and have a quick drink, in private, that was the place. Some friends would sit in those coffee houses all day long” (Ahmad, 2022, p. 98).

Each story in one way or another alludes to Krishan Nagar, the old *mohalla*, *the neighborhood* of the narrator and the author also, where most of the people from the parted region migrated and longed to return to their homes afterward but their homes remained in their memorial past only. Building the concept of “Noeuds de mémoire” or knots of memory upon Nora’s concept, Rothberg states that these knots of memory are in the form of “conglomerations of heterogeneous elements” that are not static but dynamic. Sites of memory require the Individuals or public crowd as active agencies to commemorate the particular memories they are concerned with. The agency of these individuals “entails recognizing and revealing the production of memory as an ongoing process.” (Rothberg, 2010, p. 8)

Ahmad tries his best to make the reader sensitive to the importance of belonging to the space by creating its absence. In 'Sweater' the recollection of the narrator's experiences in a foreign land, highlights his belonging to his native space. "I was overwhelmed by strange memories of my country. One dream in particular came to me many times, like a painted still life: An empty room with a table and some chairs, some crockery, and half-eaten food on the table. Nobody sat in the chairs. . . . In the dream, I try to reach inside but cannot." (Ahmad, 2022, p. 87). He feels nostalgic about his home country while living without documentation and surviving on the streets along with other outsiders. Just like Halbwachs says, "Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time." (Halbwachs qtd. in Coser, 1992, p.22). In 'Dead Man's Float' the protagonist visits his old house and reflects like this, "He stood looking at the new house. He had the old one in his heart: he was watching the new one through the old one. When he could only see the old one and not the new, he became even more dejected" (Ahmad, 2022, p.30).

A. J Kabir explains that numerous Hindus and Muslims preferred not to migrate, and many families were fractured due to individual choices. The most pathetic picture of the partition was this 'reconfiguration of the individual, the political and the collective norms of loyalty and belonging' (Kabir, 2013). Ahmad describes the partition and migrations indirectly through the atmosphere-like presence irrespective of the trauma of the narrative and establishes connectivity of the people living in the Mohalla to the past people of their acquaintance before the partition. The personality of Riaz in the storyline of 'Rain' gives an aphoristic illustration of the landscape of Lahore and becomes a strong source of connectivity between the pre-partition and post-partition space of Lahore. Only Riaz, this retired postman, can give an account of the old names of streets and mohallas and other neighborhoods of the city that were recognized before partition and people rely on him for the renamed information. These stories resonate with and propel the lingering aura of Partition and treat the time, trauma, and cultural past in the best memorial way.

Connecting past, present, and future

The slippage between past and present and the ultimate aura of the stories show that there are no boundaries between times and this exhibition of no dividing lines between time drags us toward the future and these remembrances of the past demonstrate a sort of futuristic hope. Cultural memories enable the individuals to retain their personalities gripped in the communal structures where their behaviors grow normalized and become strongly normativity-based like "conditioned reflexes" that become second nature and can be "reconstructed as an Ur-narrative" adopted in childhood, idealized by the discipline and carried along the identities and to the later life (Bal et al., 1999, p. viii). Lahore is revealed as a place of belonging but also of a deep sense of cultural loss, of transition from innocence to adult life, and the disappearance of the familiar and reconstruction of something less

recognizable. 'The Estranged City' embodies what is described in the following words:

I passed through the square past where Peeju's coffee house used to be and kept walking straight. Appha's tea stall used to be there too, on the corner on the left. The place had now been taken over by a shop selling ready-made children's clothing. Appha fought in court to hang onto it, but it must be thirty or thirty-five years now since he lost the case. I kept walking, slowly. The jewellers' shops were on my left and, in the old days, the BRB Library, Peeju's, and Cheeny's Restaurant would have been on my right. All of them are gone now, except the jewelers' shops. They now survive only in books. (Ahmad, 2022, p.100)

Likewise, the city of Lahore erects across the stories as a "palimpsest" having diverse layers of meaning shelved during different times and peoples. This layering of the meaning, cultural history, and depth of the lost past creates an intriguing sense regarding future upholding. Rothburg believes that memory can't recede but tends towards pluralization and blurs the boundaries of identity (Ahmad, 2022, p. 10).

Jan Assman stresses the forming of identities through cultural memory and the potential of this tendency to shape the future. Cultural memory encompasses all the functional concepts embedded in any society like past reference, traditional formulations, and political identity or imagination. He calls cultural memory an amalgam of mimetic memory, the memory of things, and communicative memory and a medium of "handing down of meaning" to the coming generations (p.6). This transfer of meaning works in favor of impacting the identities. In "Half Maghar Moon", student politics and their concern for their future is described as

My meetings with the members of our Leftist group had increased. We were beaten up once or twice by the Islamists and participated in some demonstrations on Lahore's Mall Road. So we began to think a lot of ourselves. It was peak of the power of the People's Party government and student politics were hot. There was always something to keep us busy, something that would set fire, that would then smoulder among us. (Ahmad, 2022, p.119)

Aleida Assman talks about the "remembering forward" capability of cultural memory to appear in the future with its effects in terms of constructing the pending future. Almost all the stories deal with the remembrance of the lost cultural past and bring them forward for the next generations and also most of these stories contain an intertwining of the literary and the political. Many stories project a deep link between the books, writers, or literary people/places and the social or cultural propagation, like in the story "Waliullah Is Lost" Waliullah is a bookbinder by profession and his shop is depicted as a hub for meeting people, outpouring their

cultural thinking and sharing political viewpoints. In “The Estranged City,” of those caught up in the idea of revolution, the narrator alludes to the idea of revolution and futuristic change and associates these ideas to the literary people and comments, “But those who gathered at the YMCA and the tea stalls mostly wanted to be writers. There was an unbridled passion for reading and writing” (Ahmad, 2022, p.99). In “Half Maghar Moon”, the literary and political meetings show concern for the future, “After classes were finished for the day, there would be meetings in the college residence. There were discussions about new things happening, about new members. Group leaders from other colleges would come as guests. Long sittings, long discussions, hot and cold” (Ahmad, 2022, p.120).

In “Unstory”, we see the narrator as reading books the whole night long. In “Pigeons, Ledges, and Streets,” books disseminate the “awareness of the idea of sharing wealth for the sake of all, and understanding of the pain of the dispossessed.” Reading and writing are depicted as sources for growth and sites for the exploration of futuristic forecasts and resistance. Books and writers emerge as a symbol of a journey from excavating the cultural past to exploring the future revolution. Throughout these stories there is a sense of loss; that can be a home, a person, or any *mohalla* or neighborhood. Memory joins all these losses, erects them in a queue, and pushes them forward one by one from the past to the future (Ahmad, 2022, p.50).

Postcolonial resistive memory

This futuristic value of the cultural memory pushes its boundaries toward postcolonial resistance and its value in preserving the indigeneity of the people of a particular space. In this article, my argument is premised on the projecting of Indigenous norms and values through cultural memory described in the collection of short stories *Grieving for Pigeons* by Zubair Ahmad, and how this cultural memory transformed into postcolonial resistive memory projects a postcolonial resistance to preserve the indigenous norms. Paul Ricoeur, in *Time and Narrative* (1984), highlights that concretization is achieved in two ways: one by history manipulating the tool of fiction to remodel time and the other by fiction that makes use of history for the same purposes. History and fiction interweave together to narrate the past (Cristina, 2019, p.90), and this intermingling, in the form of a historical narrative of cultural memory, impacts the future in constructing terms through resistance. As discussed above this research proposes the formulation of postcolonial resistive memory that works over the principle of affect. That Affect holds great effects on the identities and ideologies of the people connected to the textual representations or forms which portray the narratives based on cultural memory. In Bal’s terms, “the concept of affect unifies such divergent effects as sexual arousal, political manipulation, ethical and intellectual edification, the compulsion to reflect” (2019, p. 181).

The narrator of the story “Pigeons, Ledges, and Streets,” speaks in a questioning way projecting great resistance and the role of postcolonial resistive memory in connecting the memory of the past to the future and having great Affect. He wonders: “How much time would it take for the country to get freedom? We’d been through all this before” (Ahmad, 2022, p. 57). Ahmad weaponizes the tool of fiction to project the indigeneity by talking about historical culture and lifts a postcolonial resistance by turning cultural memory into postcolonial resistive memory, to do so he emphasizes the role and importance of indigenous Punjabi language in depicting the culture in its true lines. Cristina argues that Paul Ricoeur asserts the suitability of historical knowledge and its projection through fictional representations. Ricoeur’s idea of collective memory gets justification from his analysis of historical knowledge. Ricoeur’s dynamic model of reconstruction of historical reality fabricates a paradoxical individuality having shelves of “existential, social and empirical aspects.” She further argues that firstly, historical knowledge displayed through archives and historical documents witnesses the past, secondly, he believes in a healthy convergence of historical knowledge and fiction. Fiction as an imaginative weapon exposes the hard and grotesque possibilities in favor of what might have been (and what can be in the future). Imaginative representative speculations intermingle with the historical procedures of reconfiguration of the cultural past and molding the coming generations (Cristina, 2019, p.90).

Ahmad projects indigeneity and the historical culture of Lahore to put up resistance by indicating the importance of culture as a revolutionary sword. Edward Said distinguishes between the debased political definition and an elevated productive meaning. Culture can be “a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society’s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought” (Said qtd. in Pappe, 2021, p. 278). It may also be defined as the drama of life “where various political and ideological causes engage one another” (Pappe, p. 278). Through these short stories, Ahmad portrays a vivid and panoramic canvas of living cultural life of the past and the present. Pappe believes that the Palestinian political struggle can be successful by incorporating the cultural Indigenous resistance into it (p. 278). In the same manner, Ahmad projects indigenous culture as resistance by using postcolonial resistive memory.

In view of analysis in the foregoing pages, Zubair Ahmad’s stories present a “symbolic space” (Assmann, 2011, p. 25) in which the generations of past, present, and future get connected through shared cultural spaces, and adhere to postcolonial resistive memory to stage resistance against foreignness. By implication of cultural memory, these stories contain a profound Affect on the audience and impart resistance against all norms and performative activities that refute the shared culture. Ahmad’s work is deeply embedded in the social and physical landscapes of Lahore, and the experience of the Punjabi community on both sides of the Pakistan-India border. It reaches out to engage in broader literary conversations. The Affect of this work activates the audience for resistance in favor of reconstruction of the future in terms of shared past. Offering postcolonial

resistive memory, Ahmad's short fiction has the tendency to affect the people to cling to their collective connectivity, adhere to the desires of resistance, and reform their identities for future possibilities. This resistive memory can gain a wider reception from the postcolonial World because it seems to be the high time for accepting indigeneity and propelling resistance. The deployment of postcolonial resistive memory can help deconstruct and hamper the empowering colonial strategies like epistemic violence, strategic or slow violence, ideological dominance, and erasure of indigenous identities. It may develop strategic essentialism in the Indigenous people to emphasize their collective identity for a shared cause.

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