

Socio-Cultural and Historico-Political Crisis in Harris Khalique's "Between You and Your Love"

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Abstract: This paper examines the socio-cultural and political crisis in *Between You and Your Love* (2012) by the Pakistani Anglophone poet Harris Khalique. Employing Greenblatt's concepts of new historicism as a theoretical framework, this research attempts to establish the embedment of the selected verses in Pakistani society. As the selected poetry collection has not been analyzed through the lens of new historicism, this research will also fill this gap. The study reveals that the people of Karachi have been facing ethnocultural violence, sectarian clashes, and native-migrant conflicts since the inception of Pakistan. The shrinking space for cultural expression and thriving terrorism due to politico-sectarian division on the one hand, and Pakistan's involvement in the War on terror in the context of 9/11 on the other hand, have pushed the country into a perpetual state of crisis. Khalique has given voice to such dire issues related to regional identities and marginalized communities who are either not represented or misrepresented in the official narrative.

Key Words: New Historicism, Sectarianism, Violence, Ethno-Cultural Conflicts

Introduction

Harris Khalique (b. 1966), an acclaimed contemporary Pakistani poet, has composed poetry in English, Urdu and Punjabi languages with "equal felicity" (Anwar, 2002) and no doubt, "has a distinct voice in each" (Tanweer, 2012). According to Iftekhhar Arif, it is basically, Khalique's "ideas that differentiate him from his contemporaries," who "capture the pain and suffering unique to our time and place" (Nangiana, 2012). He "belongs to the tribe that Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Habib Jalib and Fahmida Riyaz belonged to" (Salman, 2021) and has appropriated the

English language to address the social-political and cultural issues which have occurred due to various external and internal political upheavals. He has "emerged as a strong voice" which the contemporary literary circle was lacking (Mahmood, 2019), whereas, Tariq Rehman highlights that Harris Khalique's poems describe current social and political questions (Rehman, 2019) because his literary sensibilities have been shaped not only by Persian and Urdu language poets but also by foreign poets including "Czeslaw Milosz, Nizam Hikmet, Anna Akmatova and Pablo Neruda"

(Tanweer, 2012). Being a columnist and a human rights activist, he has been writing articles for newspapers and magazines namely, *Dawn*, *The News International* and *Herald* to resist injustice, oppression, dehumanizing activities and many other contemporary political crisis. Since 2019, Khalique has been working as the secretary-general of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). He achieved the President's Award for Pride of Performance for his services to literature in 2018 and the UBL Literary Excellence Award in 2013. *Between You and Your Love* (2012) is a collection of English poems which encompasses not only Pakistani culture and history but also portrays the Indian-Muslim culture of Lucknow, Delhi and Dera Dun. This reflects his emotional attachment to the culture of India, his forefathers' land. Ethnic and sectarian violence in Karachi, migrant-native conflicts, democracy and dictatorship, and growing religious extremism have been the central themes of his poetry. The poet's mind seems to oscillate between culture and history, past and present, and tranquillity and turmoil in *Between You and Your Love* (2012).

According to Taufiq Rafat, "only that poetry can survive which has deep and firm roots" (Rafat, 1969, p.73) and springs from the very society in which it is written. On the contrary, during the last two decades of the 20th century, "the Islamic fundamentalists and Zia's martial law" regime "did not encourage the outspoken anglophone poets"... and "the major themes remained the conflict between tradition and modernity, the alienation of the artist from Pakistan as well as western society" (Rasheed, 1984, p.32-34). An overview of the prior research reveals that "Pakistani literature, since Independence, has come a long way from its early roots in post-independence English writings... it has evolved from its imitative, slavish cast into an original and rather dynamic mode" (Awan and Ahmed, 2011,

p.19) and now Pakistani English-language writers are contributing a lot to "new cultural expressions in ... literature" as well (Shamsie, 2011, p. 119) whereas Shamsie (2007) describes Pakistani poetry as "a body of works, created by a myriad of influences" from Anglo-American and Commonwealth countries (p.257). Kumar (2007) analyzed the poetry of the late 1990's poets who lived during the military rule of General Zia. He mentions that poetry reveals "historylessness" (p.93) and a "lack of an exclusive and autonomous nationalist past" (p.93). Kumar has endorsed that the people of Pakistan had suffered from "multiple historical betrayals" and that is why the Anglophone poets pursue "refuge in the pre-historical and the trans-national" themes (p.117) and hence their poetry remains "primarily ahistorical in nature and scope" (p. 117) and "history remains a burden as well as an embarrassment to the Pakistani poets" (p. 117). Rather than "religion or the politically invented icons of nationality--from national flag to national song" (p. 101), nature such as "trees" and "Cycles of season" are recurrent themes in Pakistani poetry. Hence "Nature precedes religion as well as a nation" (p.101). In this regard he refers to Ghose who searches "beyond official histories" and looks beyond apolitical geography. Similarly, Perveen Pasha, rather than "seeking any national or ethnic or religious identity", yearns for a return to the prehistoric earth in "Homing" (p.97). He argues that Taufiq Rafat, Shuja Nawaz, Maki Kureishi and Adrian A. Husain have written about ancient Mohenjo-Daro and Buddhism instead of Pakistani history and religion. The researcher has also pointed out the absence of the detailed "ground realities of the present day Pakistan" (p.106) in the works of Alamgir Hashmi and Maki Qureshi as well. In short, this article reflects a lack of indulgence in the socio-political issues in the poems of the Pakistani poets and "postcolonial identitarian politics takes a back seat" (p.97). But Yusuf (2012) gives a critical account of the growth of

Pakistani Anglophone poetry with reference to both indigenous and diaspora poets but Khalique's poetry has not been discussed in detail. Basically, she highlights Rafat's contributions to Pakistani literature and endorses Rafat's role as a mentor who fostered the poets of the 1970s and 1980s. She also refers to indigenous and foreign influences on the literary creations of Maki Kureishi, Daud Kamal and Shuja Nawaz. Maki Kureishi's poetry reflects the political and ethnic violence in Pakistan during Zia's regime. According to Mansoor (2012), Pakistani Anglophone poetry is still going through a formative phase and young voices are trying to reshape its "distinct identity" (p.20). Ilona Yusuf (Aslam, 2016) says that "Pakistani Anglophone poets were not noticeable but isolation did not deter them from writing".

A number of research articles have been written about the literary sensibility and contributions of Taufiq Rafat, Shadab Zeest Hashmi, Daud Kamal, Maki Kureishi and Kaleem Omer. In this regard, Awan and Ahmed (2011) argue that Rafat has appropriated the colonizer's language for the expression of indigenous cultural traditions. This article refers to the "Punjabi-Pakistani-Asian milieu" (p. 26), "local images" and "indigenous impression" (p. 26) portrayed in *Arrival of The Monsoon*. Zia and Raza (2021) state that Rafat mourns over the negative "effects of industrialization" on the natural spaces and celebrates the indigenous culture, "climate and landscape" which are used "as a motif to recover the cultural selfhood in postcolonial paradigm" (p.9). Shakeel and Jafar (2015) have traced the influence of romanticism, modernism, imagism, and symbolism in Rafat's poems. The researchers hold that appropriation and abrogation are ways of resistance and Rafat has commendably handled them: firstly, by writing in the English language and, secondly by depicting the indigenous landscapes. Moreover, Arshad (2016) has worked on a

similar topic, whereas Mohsin, Jamil, and Hassan (2015) focus on the expression of rural culture and traditions in "Kitchen" and "Wedding in the Flood". According to their findings, Rafat "unveils the conditions of the people" (p.5) and presents the "disillusionment and destruction" of Punjabi culture (p.5). Similarly, Hayat (2016) highlights the use of "culture-specific" images in Taufiq Rafat's poetry (2016, p. 1638). In a similar manner, Mansoor (2012) states that *Arrival of The Monsoon* describes a range of experiences such as personal to political, economic to religious and local to universal. The findings have revealed a unique sense of cultural insight, pastoral landscape, and postcolonial resistance in Rafat's poetry. Amin (2018) compares Pakistani poets and Romantic poets, with a particular focus on Rafat's "use of faunal images" which has given a "new paradigm" to Pakistani poetry (p.78) whereas Amin (2018) endorses that the distinctive quality of Taufiq Rafat ...is his usage of "indigenous idiom and terminologies" through which he delineates his "countryside" (p.72) and the eastern landscape, rituals and cultural celebrations. Rafat gives references to the ancient civilizations of Mohenjo-Daro and the Himalayas. Every aspect of nature, culture and history is depicted in a unique way. "Karachi 1955" throws light on metropolitan activities whereas, "Kitchen" presents a comparison of rural and urban life, shifts in life patterns and effects of modern life as well. Ahsan (2019) points out that Shadab Zeest Hashmi's poems are Eco-centered. She celebrates the beauty of nature as well as mourns human indifference and moral degradation. Rajashekar and Malleswaramma (2015) compare Dharker's *The Terrorist at my table* (2006) and Zeest Hashmi's *Baker of Tarifa* (2010). The article highlights cultural harmony and the Muslim history of Al Andalusia which is celebrated for tolerance between Muslims, Jews and Christians. Yusuf (2019) has called Shadab Zeest Hashmi's work

as "politically charged" (p.248) and replete with political references mainly about Pak-Afghan relations during and after Zia's Regime. Although she is living in America, still her verses are expressions of indigenous culture, traditions and political unrest in her home-town Peshawar. In "Stepping across the Borders" she recalls "the peaceful Pakistan" (p.245) and mourns the plight of the local people of Swat, while in "Jinnah's Typewriter" she refers to Jinnah's principles and the nation's selfish mindset. The findings reveal that Hashmi's poetry is deeply rooted in the political issues in Pakistan created due to the Afghan war. Sajjad and Anjum (2019) analyzed Kaleem Omar's poetry to trace end nostalgia. Mubeen (n.d) studied Daud Kamal's poetry. "Beirut" is about war and violence in Lebanon. Moreover, "An Ancient Indian Coin" "Floods" and "A narrow valley" portray the cruelty of nature, injustice and hypocrisy of the people. Alshara (2016), Kehar (2018), and Pervez (2018) have studied Kamal's "An Ode to Death" by utilizing Geoffrey Leech's theory and findings reveal Kamal's attitude to death and life and amalgamation of "cultural, historical and religious images" (Pervez, 2018, p. 21) as well. Rehman and Khan (2018) highlight spirituality and mysticism as recurrent themes in their poetry. The researchers have given stylistic analyses of *A Remote Beginning* (1985). Coppola (1981) studied Ahmed Ali's *Purple Gold Mountain* (1960) which expressed the themes related to the partition and revealed the "relationship between art and politics" (p. 69). Rahman (2018) in *A History of Pakistani Literature in English* has endorsed that Pakistani English language poets remained indifferent to "political and historical changes in Pakistan" (p.193) due to "no encouragement from "Islamic Fundamentalists and Zia's Martial Law backed government" (p.194). The above-mentioned research studies cater to various dimensions of several major poets but the study of Khalique's *Between You and Your*

Love (2012) from a New Historicist perspective is still lacking, and the current study attempts to fill this gap, besides exploring culture, history and politics in the selected text.

Theoretical Frame Work

Stephen J. Greenblatt's principles of New Historicism have directed the analysis of the selected poems from *Between You and Your Love* (Khalique, 2012). Greenblatt is an American philosopher who coined the term New Historicism. Greenblatt (1985) has suggested that in order to grasp literature one has to take recourse to both culture and society that has produced a literary text (p.118). Moreover, Greenblatt (1988) states that literature is a social practice and is written in a cultural background. That is why, a number of social constructions such as social inequality shape artistic representations which in return "constrain, shape, alter and even resist" those social constructions (p. viii). New historicists move against the ahistorical concept of the formalists and "seek to study literature as a part of a wider cultural history" and thus endorse a "relationship" that always "exists between literature and society" (Gray, 1992, p. 137). They do not completely reject the role of an author, rather they endorse that text and author are ingrained in the culture and history of a society. Hence, "The work of art is the product of negotiation between a creator...equipped with a communally shared repertoire of conventions, institutions and practices of society" (Greenblatt, 1989, p.12). As a methodology, new historicists' approach of "parallel reading of the literary and non-literary text" has also been followed and several articles are incorporated, where it is thought essential, to support the analysis (Barry, 2009, p.166). Moreover, Belsey's (2013) concept that "text analysis involves a close encounter with a text and there is no such thing as pure reading", (p.162) and "interpretation always involves extra-textual

knowledge" including personal interests, biographical elements, cultural specifications and other secondary sources" (pp. 163-164).

Text Analysis

Pakistan has a chequered political history. It has gone through four military rules and a few interludes of pseudo-democracy since its creation in 1947. The political, religious, linguistic and cultural background of the local people, the migrants from India and the neighbouring countries have played a noteworthy role in shaping the present socio-cultural and politico-religious condition of the current Pakistani society. On the one hand, the strong ethnocultural feelings as Bengali, Pashtun, Punjabi, Sindhi, Blochi and migrants have germinated the seeds of hatred, intolerance, and prejudice among the stakeholders and, on the one hand, the credos of minorities mainly, Shias, Ahmadis, Christians, Hindus, and Parsis, are disregarded by the radical religious groups and the power-seekers as well. Religious extremism had been employed, not only by the Islamic fundamentalist government of General Zia from 1977 to 1989 but also by the global political forces to gain power and exercise power in this region of South Asia. All such historical and political issues have given birth to a complex situation which is rooted in the "violation of human rights, clampdown of democratic values, increased extremism and intellectual dishonesty" (Salman, 2019). This situation has inculcated fear, anger, prejudice and loneliness among the local people.

Harris Khalique, just like other poets from troubled societies and conflict-hit regions, has been facing the inner pull for artistic expression and the outer pull due to the serious political issues of the society. *Between You And Your Love* (2012) reveals that he has to make "a choice every single moment – between silence and speech, caution and courage, calm and rage, amnesia and memory" (Khalique, 2020). This state of

internal conflict actually works as a driving force for a poet like Khalique. There is a tricky relationship between literature and politics, especially in Pakistan, it is like a tightrope to walk because, now, poets and writers are not only threatened by the state institutions but also by the fundamentalists and bigots. Khalique belongs to Karachi and he has been witnessing many political and sectarian conflicts in Karachi since his childhood which have left indelible marks on his memory and their reflection is visible in his poetry. Due to this attachment to Karachi, this city has emerged as a significant geographical location in his literary works. The poems reflect culture, history, violence and terrorism in *Between You and Your Love* (2012). The pre-partition and post-partition political history, the four military rules, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, Zia's Islamization policies and the contemporary socio-cultural and natural landscape of Karachi and Lahore are the recurrent themes. That is why some of his poems have stark political elements and are embedded in the social-political issues of the past and the current socio-political condition of the city.

People from various religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds have been living in Karachi. Due to the influx of migrants who settled in Karachi after partition in 1947 and the Afghan refugees who entered Karachi in the 1980s, multiple socio-cultural and political issues emerged and spoiled the peaceful fabric of the city. Khalique in "I shall not return the borrowed Dust..." (2012, pp. 9-11) refers to political clashes between ethnic groups and religious minorities. The poem highlights the socio-political issues of the pre-partition period in India where the Hindu-Muslim riots began on trivial issues due to their religious and cultural differences. Khalique points out the water-taps segregation on the train stations which were labelled as "Hindu Pani and Muslim Pani" (2012, p.9). This line carries

a reference to two major nations and religious communities: the Hindu and the Muslim, and their clashes which had reached a critical point where their water taps were also labelled as Hindu water and Muslim water. The situation was even worse at the railway stations which, later on, turned into sites for mass killings of Muslims in India. Khalique writes;

*"They made Pakistan on train stations
Separate water taps for Hindus and Muslims,
And they were labelled,
Hindu Pani, Muslim Pani"* (2012, p. 9).

Basically, it was an uneven distribution of rights and resources such as the right to education, jobs and shrinking space for cultural and religious activities which resulted in the partition of India in 1947. Khalique highlights that the Muslims in Pakistan have been facing similar social, economic, linguistic and political issues due to growing intolerance, the use of force to handle the conflicts and military interventions as well. Though they "live in the valley of Sindh / but fail to choose a name for themselves/ and fail to choose a water tap / with Gun-powder / Srinagar and Karachi are cleansed" (2012, p.10). The inhabitants of Karachi regardless of race, colour and creed have been experiencing violence and violation of basic rights. Khalique has connected the plights of the local inhabitants to the Muslims of the Indian-held Kashmir and mourns the mass killing of the inhabitants in Karachi and in Srinagar due to the clashes between the state and the non-state actors. In Srinagar, the Hindu armed forces have been killing Muslim freedom fighters. But in Karachi, Muslims and ethnic minorities are being killed by Muslims from rival ethnicities and religious groups. Now the situation is that "we are not given time to bury the dead.../ they are heavy / we are always tired, always thirsty" (2012, p. 10).

In fact, in 1947, a large number of people migrated from India to Pakistan and later on, fifty per cent of the migrants settled in

Karachi. They have been living in a perpetual state of conflict and with no visible change in their lives. Khalique has highlighted a major issue i.e native-migrant divide and it can also be described as the "native-native divide" which is the outcome of the clash of interests and control over resources by the dominant groups. The clashes between East Pakistan and West Pakistan came to an end in 1971 with the dismemberment of the Eastern Wing. The root cause of the conflicts with Bengalis was the unequal distribution of power, jobs and resources. Now, though, the provinces of Pakistan have been facing issues similar to those that were there between East Pakistan and West Pakistan. However, due to a large number of economic, cultural, political, religious and other practical reasons the provincial integrity of the country is not drastically challenged. Khalique has highlighted this plight of various ethnic and linguistic groups as: "Punjabi tears, Bengali Tears / Mohajir tears, Sindhi tears" (2012, p.10). There had been a lot of violence; both psychological and political, in addition to the search for identity for these people within Pakistan. Due to various factors, they could not achieve a suitable status and identity in the country, particularly in Karachi. Khalique says:

*We live in the valley of Sindh,
But we fail to choose a name for ourselves
And fail to choose a water tap.* (2012, p.10)

The struggle for rights, the fight for identity and the political interest of various political leaders gave birth to serious conflicts which resulted in mass killing and violence. Not only those who migrated from India in 1947 but also those who entered Karachi for jobs and educational purposes. A large number of people also migrated to Karachi from neighbouring countries due to political unrest like Afghanistan and Iran. These refugees changed the whole political, religious and ethnic balance and also introduced militancy, drugs and arms culture as well. So, the void between various

minorities and ethnoreligious groups has deep and the violent clashes have become serious with every passing day. Khalique has used the images of "tears", "thirst", "dead", "bury" etc. to expose the deprivation of basic rights and the worries of the ethnic groups, religious minorities and migrants who came and settled in Karachi.

*Hindu tears, Muslim tears,
Punjabi tears, Bengali Tears,
Mohajir tears, Sindhi tears. (2012, p. 10)*

Khalique has also delineated the rich indigenous culture of Karachi in "The Street" (Khalique, 2012, pp. 82-83). Cultural, ethnic and linguistic features are highlighted through the urban- the street culture of local people in Karachi. The poet's "soul wanders on the streets of Karachi" (p.82) and "played hide and seek with other souls on the streets" (p. 83). Everyday issues such as young men "fighting with policemen, / wearing gaudy blue and yellow ties, / Lunchboxes suspended from the handles"... and they "seldom wear helmets" (p. 82). The vehicles "breathing in and out thick smoke through their gills" (p. 82), and "balconies wrapped in washing lines" whereas "tea stalls, pan shops" and vendors selling "biryani and Haleem" (p. 83) and buildings designed in "Italianate, Gothic, Rajasthan" (p.83) and modern architecture, on both sides of streets, reflect rich local Sindhi culture. But, this poem shows a gradual shift from tranquillity to turmoil and ends on a tragic note. Khalique dexterously introduces the political strand in the following lines:

*Some souls, living and dead,
In dozens of languages and scores of dialects,
Hover above with no purpose.
Death unfolds its yarns too often
On the streets of Karachi (2012, p. 83)*

A large number of innocent people have been victimized in political and criminal clashes. "Languages and dialects" (p.83) is a direct reference to various groups and

segregation due to provincial and regional languages and dialects as well. Basically, Karachi has the following main regional identities: Sindhi, Punjabi, Baluchi, Pashtuns, and Mohajir (Urdu speaking). Besides, there are several non-muslim minorities including Christian, Hindu, Sikh and Parsee. "Living and dead" (p.83) refers to all those who suffered violence and were killed in ethnolinguistic riots. Life in Karachi has been oscillating between peace and violence and "death unfolds its yarns too often / on the streets of Karachi" (p. 83). Khalique has personified death which conquers the streets and marketplaces of his native city. But this mayhem and havoc fail to hinder everyday activities because "life strikes back" (p. 83) after such tragic happenings. The local people take death as normal daily routine and his own "soul played hide and seek with other souls on the streets" and "the streets anywhere are the streets of Karachi" (2012, p. 83). The inhabitants of Karachi and, particularly in "the most violence-prone localities, gradually became accustomed to violence" and they have accepted ordered disorder. And the poet feels that "resilience, mixed in coal tar, / is paved on the streets" (2012, p. 83). Gayer (2014) also refers to the body count which kept on rising, from the mid-1980s onwards, and Karachi -based poets started pondering over the false sense of "apparent normality of the abnormal".

Khalique's poetry is an amalgamation of mixed feelings: a shift from happiness to sadness, from life to death and from mourning to celebration yet hope is weaved in along with grief. In "I'm Alive and so is My City" (2012, p. 60) Khalique laments political violence and loss of peace in Karachi. From the beginning till the end of the poem, hope and sorrow move in a crisscross manner and "mourning" is juxtaposed with "celebration" in the following line: "Let's mourn and celebrate Karachi" (p.60). Karachi has experienced various changing patterns of

violence and Khalique deftly delineates this culture of violence that the local people have been facing in their day-to-day life.

Mourn the young

Whose bodies are found in gunny bags every day

With their eyes gouged and limbs broken.
(2012, p. 60)

In the 1990s, a number of cases were reported about founding gunny bags with mutilated dead bodies from various parts of Karachi. Khalique resists and expresses his anguish at this callous attitude and cold-hearted violence inflicted upon the people. The peaceful fabric of society has been distorted, on the one hand, due to the conflicts between the state and the non-state actors, while on the other hand kidnapping, target killing etc. by criminal gangs. Khalique (2020) in "The rise of New Reich" talks about the formation of MQM in the 1980s which grew out of a students' political party and organized young-blood by fascist principles of conduct. They triggered disorder and havoc in Sindh and used violence to achieve their political ends. Khalique has written these lines in the context of the above issues and "mourn the death inflicted on its citizens" (p. 60). These non-state actors spoiled the remaining traces of peace in the city. According to Gayer (2014), dead bodies in gunny bags were found almost every day. In 1995, the politically encouraged ethno-sectarian conflicts reached an unprecedented level. Khalique mourns the strikes which hit the city as an aftermath of clashes and suicide blasts, and is worried about the lost activities of learning and performing arts as well:

Mourn the libraries that were never opened.

Celebrate the poets who are still writing.

Mourn the cinema halls that were closed down. (2012, p. 60)

But the element of hope is also highlighted by the references to poets and artists who are still writing and performing

respectively during those testing times. Khalique has never remained indifferent to the violence and pain of the people in his surroundings. Such a literary response to socio-political issues is quite natural in troubled societies like Pakistan. Like a committed artist, his writings do highlight the issues which pinch and jolt the readers' conscience and to some extent resist the power-that-be. Like Khalique, several other poets have also expressed their feelings about Karachi. Maki Qureshi penned poems on political and social unrest in Karachi like "Elegy on Karachi" and "Curfew". But Khalique's expression is different due to the fact that he had witnessed the conflicts and to some extent, his family had experienced the impact of the military rule of General Zia. Due to the Urdu and Persian influences, Khalique's English writings have a different flavour of resistance. In Urdu poetry, as N.M Danish says in his poem "Layari": "Riots, slogans / a world of violence and hatred thrives". Perveen Shakir (2012) penned a poem on Karachi which is saturated with anger. She compares Karachi with a worn-out prostitute who was used and abused by all. She has used the metaphor of prostitute for Karachi and her criticism is directed at the migrant workers from the Punjab, interior Sindh and the Pashtun Belt, who came in large numbers to the city since the 1960s. These people lived and worked in Karachi yet spoiled its peace as well. The Urdu poets from Sindh are the most razor-sharp chroniclers of the city's plight, in this regard, Zeeshan Sahil's poetry conveys the sense of fear that gripped the inhabitants. In the 1980s, Karachi turned into a battleground for political groups who were competing for votes, land, jobs and ethnic superiority. These sectarian and ethnic conflicts were promoted to a great extent by the Islamization policies of General Zia's martial law-backed government.

Khalique has witnessed the rise of sectarian violence in Karachi since the mid-1980s. Karachi has been hit by frequent acts

of terrorism and sectarian violence during and post-Zia regime. Afghan –soviet war resulted in the influx of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the easy availability of arms increased the cases of violence. About 70 to 80 per cent of Pakistani people are Sunni and the rest are Shia and other minorities. Mostly they live together in peace, but the radical groups on both sides are responsible for frequent deadly attacks on their place of worship etc. Khalique has captured the tragic incident of the suicide attack on the Hyderi mosque in Karachi. "Friday Prayers" (2012, p.81) portrays the whole scene:

*"In the debris of Hyderi mosque,
We stand and we cry
The bomb rips apart...
The country rips apart
Not once But always (p. 81).*

This reveals Khalique's concern for the local political crisis, security and stability of his country. Terrorism is the aftermath of growing religious intolerance and shrinking space for minorities. According to Khan (2004), a large number of individuals lost their lives in the terrible blast which broke windows and splashed the hall with blood and human remains. It is also highlighted that the radical groups, among both Shia and Sunni factions, have foreign backing and financial aid. The attack on Hyderi mosque in May 2004 was the third attack within a couple of months against the Shia community. Previously, in February a Shia mosque in Rawalpindi and in March nearly a suicide blast in Quetta killed 60 Shias in Quetta. After every such blast, the Shia community protested and burnt private and government-owned buildings and vehicles. In fact, a blast actually flares up a non-stop chain of violent acts. That is why the poet says: "future is maimed / verve is buried alive" (Khalique, 2012, p.81). So these consecutive attacks jolted the poet and he captured the pain and the crisis in his poem. The conflicts began in the 1980s and with the passage of time, the situation has worsened. Shias

became the victim of target killings, a large number of doctors and their clerics all over the country, particularly in Karachi and Quetta had lost their lives during the past few decades. Their mosques and religious processions were the main targets for suicide bombers and are still constantly under threat as well. Non-literary articles are incorporated to comprehend the factual and contextual elements of this poem. "Carnage in Karachi" (2004, May 8) has highlighted the need to control religious madrassahs and to promote religious tolerance and respect for minorities as well. Ahmer (2014) says that during Zia's era sectarian division between Sunnis and Shias had widened and a large number of people were killed in suicide attacks and target –killings. Similarly, Majeed & Hashmi, (2014) argued that Sunni –Shia clashes occurred more frequently after 9/11 and have appeared as a major threat to the national security of Pakistan. In fact, the extremist elements were upset with the initiatives taken to curb militant extremism by the government during and after the Musharraf government. The Pakistani Taliban who emerged in mid-2001 had developed relations with the militant sectarian groups and had generated serious threats by attacking religious processions, mosques and other sacred places. Similarly "Square" (2012 p. 32) also refers to violence and death in Karachi.

"The brief history of Pakistan" (2012, p.30) mentioned the political history and the military's involvement in the political affairs of the country. Since 1947, Pakistan has experienced four martial laws and, "the men in uniform arrive/commanded by generals" (2012, p.30). General Ayub was the first person who rose to power in 1958, and later on, General Yahya whose regime ended with the dismemberment of East Pakistan in 1971. In 1977 General Zia-ul-Haq took over control due to a political crisis and ruled with an iron fist. That was the most difficult period in the history of Pakistan and its aftermaths are still

prevalent in the form of intolerance, sectarianism and extremism which have become part of the contemporary culture and society. General Musharraf rose to power in 1999. After the 9/11 attacks, Musharraf introduced his policy of moderate enlightenment and promoted Sufism in order to eliminate religious extremism and intolerance in Pakistani society. But his policy created problems like terrorist attacks and suicide blasts on the shrines, mosques and public places. Khalique (2012, p. 30) while criticizing the politicians and legislators, has pointed out their disloyalty and lack of commitment towards their nation. He felt that "the Lawmakers are made of straw/ People wait for the sun to die / Happiness lives in the moon" (p.30). They have done nothing for the betterment and protection of the basic human rights of the Pakistanis. Rather they have been struggling for personal gains. Ordinary people are optionless and are waiting for the dawn of happiness and freedom. Through this poem, Khalique has highlighted the deprivation and powerlessness of the Pakistanis due to the military rules and the incompetency of the lawmakers as well. Khalique blatantly criticizes the rulers are "thin/downcast, and subdued" (2012, p. 12). The poet has been disappointed by the civilian ruling elites and feudalism who are equally responsible for political instability. Khalique (2012, p. 14) expresses his grief for the persistent feelings of deprivation and suffering that the ethnic and sectarian minorities have been going through since the birth of Pakistan. The people have been inflicted with "wounds unhealed and seasons of fear" and "the sibilance of sorrows creeping behind us" (Khalique, 2012, p.14).

Conclusion

Following Greenblatt's philosophy of new historicism which has challenged the idea of literature as "an autonomous aesthetic form... detached from other kinds of cultural

practices" (Rice & Waugh, 2001, p. 252) and there is no such thing as the autonomy of author or a text because author and text, both, are deeply ingrained in culture and history. The above discussion has revealed that Khalique's poetry cannot be read as an autonomous document detached from the socio-cultural, geo-political and historical circumstances of Pakistan. It requires a proper understanding of the culture and the various phases of the political history of Pakistan since 1947. The in-depth analysis reveals that Khalique's anglophone poetry unveils the society of Pakistan as an amalgamation of various racial, regional, religious and national individualities. *Between You and Your Love* (2012) highlights the sufferings, inequalities and violence inflicted on the inhabitants of Karachi in particular, and the people of Pakistan in general. The selected verses reveal infallible imprints of the local Pakistani culture, history and politics in his work. Khalique's poetry encapsulates the complex network of violence in Karachi which has been engulfed in a spiral of ethnic, sectarian and political strife since the 1980s. The people have been living under the shadow of fear and unresolvable conflicts, which arose after partition, and still persist in the society. From gunny bags with dead bodies to target killings, from suicide attacks at mosques to bomb blasts in shrines, there is an unending wave of violence, terror, and death. Political groups and land mafia are deeply involved in creating law and order issues. The inhabitants of Karachi faced more violence as compared to other parts of Pakistan. Khalique like a poet of witness enters into dialogue, overtly and sometimes covertly, with the tyrants. He refers to the violation of social, political and economic rights, and stresses the need to promote religious tolerance among the various factions as well. The study of the selected text reveals that no poet can be apolitical and text is always ideologically charged. Harris Khalique's

poems carry thin strands of political references and he resists inequality, violence, terrorist activities and violation of social, economic and democratic rights. He talks about the sweat and sufferings of minorities and marginalized classes. The portrayal of terrorist attacks on sacred places, targeted killings, ethno-sectarian clashes and native-migrant conflicts delineate the socio-cultural, and historico-political crisis in

Pakistan which is not only rooted in the historical incident of partition of India but also in the shift of global power after Afghan-Soviet issue and the post 9/11 twin tower attacks as well. Khalique's poetry throws light on the contemporary bleak condition of society and he consciously gives his work a political nuance and hence delivers a message to the authorities as well.

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