Surveying Pakistani-English drama, fiction, non-fiction, and poetry from the inception of Pakistan in 1947 to 2015 reveals how Pakistani-English writing developed and changed over the years, from a small marginalized genre in the early years of Pakistan to the dynamic, growing body of work in the 21st century. Bringing together writing by Pakistan-resident writers as well as those in the diaspora demonstrates both contrasts and links among them. Early writers such as Shahid Suhrawardy and Ahmed Ali and the role of Taufiq Rafat in the birth of a new contemporary poetry in Pakistan are included alongside a discussion of the extensive writings of Zulfikar Ghose, an early diaspora writer. This article covers the critical writings of Alamgir Hashmi, Tariq Rahman, and Muneeza Shamsie in defining and developing a new canon. The internationalism of Tariq Ali and the new multi-cultural British identity asserted by the writing of Hanif Kureishi—and indeed Kureishi’s links to his Pakistan-resident family—poet Maki Kureishi and the journalist Omar Kureishi are pointed out. The extensive English-language non-fiction written in Pakistan ranging from autobiographies, collected editorials, and newspaper columns to writings on art and literature are also given space, as are the creative memoirs of Sara Suleri and others, the plays of Ayub Khan Din and Ayad Akhtar, the poetry of Moniza Alvi and Imtiaz Dharker, and a wide range of fiction writers from Aamer Hussein and Daniyal Mueenuddin to Nadeem Aslam, Mohsin Hamid, and Kamila Shamsie as well as newer voices such as Roopa Farooki, H. M. Naqvi, Fatima Bhutto, and Maha Khan Phillips.

Keywords: Pakistani-English writing since 1947, fiction, poetry, drama, non-fiction, creative memoir

In the early 21st century, English-language writing by authors of Pakistani origin has received considerable attention, although it has been a part of Pakistan’s literary life since the creation of an independent Pakistan in 1947. Of course its origins are rooted in the colonial encounter. At the approach of Independence, the founding fathers of India and Pakistan all used English to great advantage as a link language with the British Raj to press their demands. In Pakistan, this is very evident in the collected speeches of Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876–1948) and that of many other leaders compiled over the years. The independence movement was supported by a nationalist press, which included English-language newspapers such as Dawn and the Pakistan Times, established in 1941 and 1946, respectively. At Partition, Pakistan “inherited” a handful of established English-language novelists and poets. The most prominent of these were Shahid Suhrawardy (1890–1965) and Ahmed Ali (1910–1994).

Suhrawardy’s two poetry collections, Faded Leaves (1910) and Essays in Verse (1937), reveal his development “from a pre-modern poet to a modern one.” Faded Leaves has links to the earliest Indian-English poetry, which drew on Orientalist translations of Indian literature and related 19th-century British poetry. These Orientalist
The first decade of Pakistan’s independence was a period of great difficulties for the newly created country, which struggled with the task of nation-building a fragile state apparatus and insecure borders. Added to that, the country was divided into two wings, East and West Pakistan, separated by 1,000 miles of hostile India, with a

Continuing Struggles

In 1957, Mumtaz Shahnawaz’s novel The Heart Divided (1957) about Partition was published posthumously. Hers is the first post-independence Pakistani-English novel; Shahnawaz, (1912–1948) a writer and political activist, died in an airplane crash, leaving behind a first draft, which her family finally published, unedited. Despite polemical dialogues and extensive socio-political passages poorly integrated into the text, the novel has historical importance: its portrayal of freedom struggle has rare immediacy and “can be taken as a document of its time,” as Farooqi says, “Ali’s work signifies language in a different spectrum.” His work prefigures the more successful linguistic strategies of post-independence writers.

Other well-known writers of the time include Aliya Begum (1877–1867), author of The Music of India (1914) and Iqbal (1948), which includes letters written to her in English by the Urdu poet Sir Muhammed Iqbal (1877–1938); the extensive writings of her husband Samuel Fyzee Rahamin (1880–1964) include two plays—Daughter of Ind (1937) was performed in London during George VI’s Coronation celebrations. Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon (1893–1970) is the only future prime minister of a South Asian nation state (Pakistan) to have written a novel, Scented Dust (1942), a somewhat didactic work explaining his country to foreigners.

In pre-Partition India there were ongoing arguments, fueled by growing nationalism, over the use of English as a creative vehicle once the erstwhile colonials had left. The paradox was that English remained the language of government and elite schools (both inherited from the colonial system) and a lively English-language press flourished. Inevitably perhaps, the earliest post-independence Pakistani-English books, which can be loosely categorized as fine writing, are compilations of articles written in the press. These include Black Moods by Omar Kureishi (1955), Sand, Cacti and People by Anwer Mooraj (1960), and A Mug’s Game by Khalid Hasan (1968), the first of the collected columns of each of these journalists.

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Early Post-Independence Writing

In the early years of Pakistan, a huge debate raged over the “validity” of using English as a creative vehicle once the erstwhile colonials had left. The paradox was that English remained the language of government and elite schools (both inherited from the colonial system) and a lively English-language press flourished. Inevitably perhaps, the earliest post-independence Pakistani-English books, which can be loosely categorized as fine writing, are compilations of articles written in the press. These include Black Moods by Omar Kureishi (1955), Sand, Cacti and People by Anwer Mooraj (1960), and A Mug’s Game by Khalid Hasan (1968), the first of the collected columns of each of these journalists.

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In 1960, Ali adopted a “mannered” oriental voice in his only poetry collection, The Purple Gold Mountain (1960), which combined the classical traditions of Chinese and Urdu poetry to create metaphorical poems that tell of despotic Chinese emperors and tyrants with clear parallels to martial law in Pakistan: thus he subverted and evaded censorship. Later Ali lampooned military dictators and diplomats in a somewhat awkward magic realist satire, Rats and Diplomats (1985). In the 1960s he turned his attention to his unfinished pre-Partition novel in Ocean of the Night (1964), set against the backdrop of the independence movement. Despite the vivid imagery, this tale of lawyers, feudal lords, and courtesans collapses into a melodrama of Victorian theater and Indian film and “English-Indo-Muslim prose” that Ali used to advantage in Twilight in Delhi and reinforces Ocean as work belonging to an earlier time. Instead, in the post-Partition era Ali’s best work remains his pioneering, critically acclaimed translation of classical Urdu poetry, although the posthumous publication in 2012 of Ali’s co-translation of modern 20th-century Chinese poetry, written during his sojourn in China in 1947–48, revealed an early work of considerable skill.

In the 1960s, several other works were important milestones in Pakistani-English literature. Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah followed her essay collections, Letters to Neena (1951) and Behind The Veil (1953), with her autobiography From Purdah to Parliament (1963), which employs a chatty, modern colloquial English and links her struggle for empowerment with that of Pakistan: she leads up to her election to Pakistan’s first constituent assembly. Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon’s From Memory (1966), though overweighed by details of governance, includes many insights into pre- and post-Partition politics until the declaration of martial law. Both these books are among the earliest post-Partition Pakistani-English autobiographies with a literary quality. The expatriate Zulfikar Ghose’s Confessions of a Native Alien (1965) gave a completely new direction to the genre: migrant writing. He explores issues of identity and belonging in his account of his family’s migration from his native Sialkot to Bombay in 1942 and to London in 1951.

Pakistani-English language drama has developed almost entirely in the diaspora, but in 1965 Taufiq Rafat’s (unpublished) verse play The Foothold was performed in Lahore to great acclaim. Significantly, Sayeed Ahmad (1931–2005), the only prolific Pakistani-English playwright of the time, belonged to East Pakistan, where the majority language was Bengali, which had a much stronger theatrical tradition than Urdu. He wrote three plays — The Thing (1962), The Milepost (1965), and Survival (1967)—influenced by the Theatre of the Absurd. This was very new in Pakistan and also enabled him to employ symbolism and the abstract to comment on the human condition (and therefore Pakistani life) but avoid censorship. These plays were first performed in his native Dhaka, then directed and published by Yunus Said in Karachi and also translated and performed in Bengali and Urdu; two were translated into Punjabi. These inter-provincial exchanges suggested the possibility of a multilingual co-existence in a country beset by conflicts of language and ethnicity, but these productions soon came to an end, following changing political realities.

In 1968, populist anti-government demonstrations spread across East and West Pakistan. In 1969, the military government of Ayub Khan was overthrown. The elections held in 1970 under his military successors revealed a country divided along ethnic lines, with the Awami League in East Pakistan as the overall electoral victor. In 1971, the military embarked on a brutal military action to thwart the election results. This culminated in a war with India and the secession of East Pakistan, which became an independent Bangladesh, where Sayeed Ahmed had a very distinguished career as a writer and civil servant but was largely forgotten in Pakistan.

A new Pakistan came into being consisting of the erstwhile West Pakistan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who held the majority vote formed a government. He was faced with many political challenges and soon imposed strict censorship. Comparatively little appeared in any Pakistani literature about the trauma of 1971 and the loss of half a country—it passed into public amnesia. In Pakistani-English literature, the only immediate literary response was a short story by Tariq Rahman and two poems by Kaleem Omar.
Rafat played a particularly important role in forging a new poetry in Pakistan. He spearheaded a discourse on “a Pakistan idiom”—a poetry that reflected an experience of Pakistan and its culture, one, he said, that was not created by interjecting Urdu words and which he described as “the total us: our heritage, our environment, our myths, our climate, our art, our music.” This discourse created poetry very different from that of Suhrwardy and Ali (and the large number of self-published writers emulating 19th-century British poets). Rafat also developed the narrative poem in Pakistani-English literature. He conducted informal poetry workshops and became mentor, guide, and critic to a younger generation of poets. The late 1960s and most of the 1970s is regarded as the great heyday for Pakistani-English poetry, with public events that included broadcasts on Radio Pakistan and reviews in British and American academic journals. In 1965, Kaleem Omar edited Wordfall: Three Pakistani Poets (1975), the most accomplished of the Oxford University Press anthologies, which was also reprinted in Britain and consisted of work by Rafat and Omar (1937–2009) together with a new poet Maki Kureishi (1927–1995), the first Pakistani-English woman poet to rank among the best. Kureishi believed, however, that it was important for Pakistani-English poets to express their cultural duality, not suppress it in search of an idiom. Two other leading poets, Adrian A. Husain (winner of the 1968 Guinness Prize for Poetry) and Salman Tarik Kureshi, subscribed to this view too. This in turn led to considerable debate between these two schools of thought.22

In Peshawar, Daud Kamal (1935–1987) created his own distinct voice in English with his three poetry volumes from 1973 to 1985, compiled in a posthumous collection, Before the Carnations Wither (1995). Kamal had not been engaged in Rafat’s discourse on idiom nor represented in the three Oxford anthologies. Instead, he created brief spare poems, with strong visual images (much of his work celebrated Pakistan’s landscapes and its antiquity) that were influenced by his translations of the Urdu poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797–1869).

Poetry: An Era of Isolation

In 1977, General Ziaul Haq overthrew the elected prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, instituting martial law, and in 1979 Bhutto was executed. Zia allied himself with right-wing clerics and encouraged extremism and sectarianism. He introduced brutal punishments and discriminatory laws in the name of faith, which attacked in particular the most vulnerable—women and minorities. He banned music and dance. He also tried to marginalize English in Pakistan, but this met with considerable resistance. English was now regarded as the language of trade and the new electronic media, but Pakistani-English poetry, which had a small audience, found itself isolated. The new, changed climate of fanaticism and bigotry, in the guise of a new nationalism, coincided with a crisis in the local publishing industry. Although Pakistani-English poetry was highly praised in Western academic journals, these poets were not able to attract international publishers or audiences. Younger poets, such as Henna Faisal Imam, Athar Tahir, and Waqas Khwaja, played a pivotal role in the small in-house literary groups and publications that kept poetry alive. New poets continued to emerge, including Ejaz Rahim, GF Riaz, Raja Changez Sultan, and Shahryar Rashed (1948–1998).

As an act of subversion, Rafat expanded his oeuvre to translate classical Punjabi poetry into modern English in Bulleh Shah: A Selection (1982) and Qadir Yar’s Puran Bhagat (1983); both asserted an indigenous, centuries-old, inclusive multi-cultural tradition as a foil to Zia’s zealotry. Rafat’s first collection, Arrival of the Monsoon: Collected Poems 1947–1978 (1986), soon followed; the poems “Circumcision” and “Wedding in the Flood” are among those considered Rafat “classics.” His continuing development as a poet emerged in the posthumously published Half Moon 1979–1983 (2009) and an earlier collection Taufiq Rafat: A Selection (1997). The latter was one of several poetry volumes by leading Pakistani-English poets published by Oxford University Press to celebrate Pakistan’s Golden Jubilee. These publications included the selected poems of Alamgir Hashmi and Daud Kamal and a new poet, Shuja Nawaz. This series was described by Carlo Coppola as “a veritable embarrassment of riches”; it included the first poetry volumes ever of three widely anthologized “established” poets: The Far Thing by Maki Kureishi, Desert Album by Adrian A. Husain, and Landscapes of the Mind by Salman Tarik Kureishi.23

Oxford’s Golden Jubilee books included An Anthology, edited by Maya Jamil, which focused on newer poets, while A Dragonfly In the Sun: An Anthology of Pakistani Writing in English edited by me, was a retrospective of fiction, poetry, and drama that brought together forty-four published writers in Pakistan and the diaspora—and revealed the extent to which Pakistani-English literature had diversified, developed, and grown. It extended to writers well known to Pakistani and Western audiences alike, such as the Pakistan-resident Bapsi Sidhwa and several diaspora writers ranging from Tariq Ali, Zulfikar Ghose, Sara Suleri, and Adam Zameenazad to the British-born Hanif Kureishi. Thus, “Pakistani” defined anyone who claimed that identity; the discourse generated led to me to compile another anthology Leaving Home: Towards a New Millennium: English Prose by Pakistani Writers (2001), on different forms of migration.
By this time, the debate over the use of English as a creative vehicle by Pakistanis had been put to rest. Zia ul Haq’s resolve to abolish English in Pakistan had not materialized. He died in 1988. Meanwhile, in the diaspora, the presence of increasingly assertive migrant communities in the West saw growing international interest in South Asian–English fiction. The Indian-born Salman Rushdie’s experiments with language to capture the “subcontinental sound” within English prose in *Midnight’s Children* (1982) provided new linguistic strategies for countless others, including Pakistanis Bapsi Sidhwa and Adam Zameena in *Ice-Candy Man* (1988) and *Cyrus Cyrus* (1991), respectively. In 1989, a major international conference on Engishes in South Asia was held in Islamabad, which included extensive discussions on “Pakistani English” and Pakistani–English literature. This was followed by conferences and seminars in Pakistan’s academia, although Pakistani-English literature was not introduced into the English curriculum of Pakistani universities until the 21st century.

### Early Diaspora Writing

All the while, the career of Zulfikar Ghose had followed a different trajectory from his Pakistan-resident contemporaries. Ghose belonged to a new breed of post–World War II writers from Britain’s one-time colonies that included V. S. Naipaul and Sam Selvon. He was also closely associated with London’s new poetry circle, The Group. His first poetry collections, *The Loss of India* (1964) and *Jets from Orange* (1967), reclaimed images of the subcontinent, but many of his poems were also an attempt to negotiate his new diaspora identity—a theme that runs through his memoir, *Confessions of a Native Alien*. In 1969, Ghose migrated from Britain to the United States. He co-authored *Penguin Modern Poets 23: Gavin Ewart, Zulfikar Ghose, B. S. Johnson* (1972) and published *The Violent West* (1972), a meditation on America, including an intertextual engagement with American poetry and lore as well as a continuing preoccupation with themes of migration, dislocation, and quest. *A Memory of Asia* (1984) includes several multi-textured poems that blur illusion and reality—a theme that runs through his later fiction too. His selected poems and some new work appeared in 1991 and 1993.

Ghose’s fiction includes two story collections: *A Statement Against Corpses* (1965), co-authored with B. S. Johnson, and *Veronica and the Gongora Passion* (1998). However, Ghose’s novel *The Murder of Aziz Khan* (1967) is the first significant novel in Pakistani-English literature to employ contemporary idiomatic English (unlike Ahmed Ali’s linguistic experimentations incorporating Urdu). The book remains his only full-length work set entirely in Pakistan. Written in London, beyond the long arm of martial law and the censor, the novel employs a linear narrative to tell of the unequal tussle between a new breed of rapacious industrialists and a proud Punjabi farmer and provides a biting critique of Pakistan’s new primitive capitalism in the 1950s and glaring social inequalities. Ghose reworked many of its themes on “a much more ambitious scale” in *The Incredible Brazilian*, a trilogy set in the homeland of his wife, Helena de la Fontaine. The trilogy was strongly influenced by Thomas Berger’s novel *Little Big Man* (1964) and similarly employs the picaresque mode. Ghose’s unreliable narrator, Gregorio Pexoto da Silva, is 400 years old and bears witness to Brazil’s history through various reincarnations. The trilogy begins with *The Incredible Brazilian*, which describes Gregorio’s misadventures as the son of early Portuguese settlers in Bahia in the 18th century. *The Beautiful Empire* portrays the half-English Gregorio during Brazil’s 19th-century rubber boom and links the histories of Brazil and the British Empire. *A Different World* finds Gregorio in a confused, derailed 20th-century society (similar to Pakistan) overtaken by vested foreign interests, competing political ideologies, martial law, and urban warfare. The trilogy is embedded with metaphorical, mystical subtexts, embodying a search for enlightenment and self, a concept Ghose makes explicit in his eleventh novel *The Triple Mirror of the Self* (1991), which unites the many continents in which Ghose has lived from the Americas to Asia. Ghose’s many other novels include the stream-of-consciousness *Cramps Terms* (1975), set in post-war Europe; a work of metafiction, and *Hulme’s Investigation into the Bogart Script* (1981), which comments on American art, literature, and film. Ghose engages extensively with Shakespearean themes and classical mythology in *A New History of Torments* (1982), *Don Bueno* (1983), and *Figures of Enchantment* (1986). Ghose has also written several works of literary criticism; Vanessa Guignery edited the invaluable *B. S. Johnson-Zulfikar Ghose Correspondence* (2015). These works provide valuable insights into Ghose’s ideas on literature and, thus, his writing.

The Lahore-born Alamgir Hashmi, who has taught at universities in the United States and Switzerland, combines elements of diaspora writing with that of Pakistan-resident poets. His third poetry collection, *America Is a Punjabi Word* (1979), received particular praise for his witty thirty-part title poem, a comment on exile and migration, featuring an imaginary camel traversing the United States. Hashmi continued to use cross-cultural images, memory, and absence with increasing skill in his subsequent collections, including *My Second in Kentucky* (1981), *This Time in Lahore* (1983), *Inland and Other Poems* (1988), and *Sun and Moon* (1992). Selected poems are included in *The Ramazan Libation* (2003). Hashmi also played an important role as a critic. He redefined the Pakistani-English canon to include diaspora writing that was not “culture specific” to Pakistan, such as Ghose’s Brazilian trilogy. He was possibly the first to place Pakistani-English literature within the context of wider Muslim world—beyond South Asia and the Commonwealth—which asserted a strong humanist ethos, contrary to that of the Zia regime, but this increasingly popular categorization in the post-9/11 era overlooks the immensely valuable contribution of non-Muslim Pakistanis such as Bapsi Sidhwa. However, the anthropologies Hashmi edited in the United States—“Pakistani Literature,” a special issue of *The New Quarterly*, and later *The
Interestingly, at the turn of the 21st century, the distinguished Urdu writer in Britain, Abdullah Hussein, wrote an embarked on a new project: writing Urdu short stories, including “The Swan’s Wife,” which was translated into Georgian descent, who marries a talented Urdu writer in Karachi. Recently, the bilingual Aamer Hussein adjustment and adaptation to Pakistan and also the self-empowerment of Lydia Javashili, a British woman of minority community, and as an English-language writer during Zia’s regime was a strong assertion of plurality and gender equality that he wished to destroy. In The Bride (1982), Sidhwa, a committed feminist, offers a biting attack on patriarchy and age-old honor codes through the story of an urban, Lahore-bred girl, the daughter of a migrant laborer, who is married into her father’s remote Kohistan tribe. In 1988, Sidhwa published Ice Candy Man (U.S. title Cracking India), her most important work and the first Pakistani-English novel to center on the Partition riots. Her narrator, Lenny, an endearing Parsee child, with a leg paralyzed by polio, employs the multi-lingual cadences of subcontinental English and brings to her account a rare combination of humor, innocence, and veracity that provides equal space to the communal violence on both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border. In The Crow Eaters Sidhwa had judiciously employed dialogues in an inaccurate English to increase the comedy. In Ice-Candy-Man her use of a narrative voice employing the multi-lingual cadences of subcontinental English heightens “Lenny’s naivete and limited understanding that makes the unfolding of this narrative so powerful and painful.” In 1998 the book was made into a film, Earth, by Deepa Mehta. In 2006 Sidhwa adapted Mehta’s screenplay Water, about a Hindu child-widow, into a novel of that name. By then, Sidhwa had migrated to the United States, and her fourth novel, The American Brat (1994), juxtaposes the misadventures of a young Lahore-born Parsee girl in the United States with the brutalization of Pakistan during the Zia’s regime.

The 1980s saw a gradual expansion of migration literature by writers of Pakistani origin. In Britain, Adam Zameenenzad followed a pattern similar to Ghose: an early novel set in Pakistan, followed by others set in different countries. The innocent and the dispossessed are central to his fiction, as is the blending of the real world with the supernatural. The Thirteenth House (1987) links the lives of the dead narrator and that of poor clerk in Karachi; My Friend Matt and Henna The Whore (1988) tells of three children struggling to survive in famine stricken Africa; in Love, Bones and Water, a rich neglected boy, Peter, in a nameless South American country is befriended by shanty-town dwellers, all with metaphorical biblical names. The concept of redemption through suffering also permeates Cyrus Cyrus (1991), a bawdy, gargantuan book that follows the misadventures of its hapless dark-skinned, disfigured, and impoverished narrator across India, East Pakistan/Bangladesh, the United States, and Britain. The imagery of Hollywood, race, and gender run through Gorgeous White Female (1995), the first Pakistani-English novel to deal with transgender issues. Tariq Mehmood’s somewhat polemical Hand on the Sun (1982) provides insights into second-generation working-class British Pakistanis confronted by racist threats, which Mehmood developed further in a more nuanced While There Is Light (2003).

In Pakistan there had been a continuous production of fiction, particularly short fiction, over the decades, but Tariq Rahman was the first Pakistan-resident author to concentrate on the short story form. He published four collections between 1989 and 2002. In London, the Karachi-born Aamer Hussein’s Mirror to the Sun (1991) was the first of several collections establishing him as leading writer of Pakistani-English short fiction. He has studiously avoided the use of the popular hybrid “bazaar English” to capture the subcontinental sound; instead he uses nuance and reference, often rooted in his knowledge of Urdu and other literatures, including Anglo-American classics. This Other Salt (1999) includes an experimental sequence, “Four Texts for an Autobiography,” which contrasts the expatriate narrator’s visit to the fractured, strife-riven Karachi of the 1990s, with memories of the more peaceful city of his childhood in the 1950s. Autobiographical imagery and negotiations with memory and migration are often woven into Aamer Hussein’s work, including Turquoise (2002), Cactus Town (2003), Insomnia (2007), and his only novel The Cloud Messenger (2011), which includes intertextual engagements with the classical Sanskrit writer Kalidasa and the 18th-century Sindhi poet Shah Abdul Latif. He writes with great insight about women’s lives too. His novella Another Guldahmar Tree tells of the adjustment and adaptation to Pakistan and also the self-empowerment of Lydia Javashili, a British woman of Georgian descent, who marries a talented Urdu writer in Karachi. Recently, the bilingual Aamer Hussein embarked on a new project: writing Urdu short stories, including “The Swan’s Wife,” which was translated into English in his 2014 collection of that name.

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Ugly Rumours by Brenton, revolves around the Soviet leader Gorbachev; Brenton and Ali lampoon Tony Blair and New Labour in rapidly (as was his first novel) in response to political events.

Howard Brenton a teleplay, writer and broadcaster in Britain. In 1989, amid the furor over Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses, Ali co-authored with Howard Brenton a teleplay, Iranian Nights, a metaphorical work on the nature of censorship, art, and storytelling, featuring three characters: Omar Khayyam, The Caliph, and Scheherazade. Ali's plays are often written very active politics in Pakistan, and by the 1980s he had given up politics in Britain as well. He became a full-time Government College, Lahore. In 1963, to avert his imminent arrest by martial law authorities in Pakistan, his parents sent him to Oxford. He arrived at a time of great unrest among a new postwar generation. He led student debates and student marches and became a key figure in the left-wing, internationalist student revolution that changed during General Zia’s regime. The death of the past coincides with deaths in her family. Suleri also contemplates her Welsh-born mother’s adaptation to Pakistan and her own migration to the United States. Suleri continues with her exploration of intertwined East/West narratives in her critical study of colonial and postcolonial writing, The Rhetoric of English India (1989). Her second creative memoir, Boys Will Be Boys, A Daughter’s Elegy (2003), is written under her married name, Sara Suleri Goodyear and centers around her late father, the journalist Z. A. Suleri. It contemplates politics, language, and bilingualism: each chapter is defined by well-known Urdu quotes. Moore-Gilbert suggests links between Suleri’s compression of language and image with that of miniature painting and the Urdu ghazal. In 2009 Suleri Goodyear co-translated with Azra Raza the classical Urdu poetry of Ghalib.

In Pakistani-English literature the creative memoir remains rare. Zeeba Sadiq (1962–2010) reclaims her magical Karachi childhood in 38 Bahadurabad (1996) through a series of interlocking sketches in the third and first person. The plot is framed by the discovery by 9-year-old Zeeba Sadiq, soon after her beloved father dies, that he had another family—an English wife and two sons—he had abandoned in England. Send in the Idiots: or How We Came to Understand the World by Kamran Nazeer (2006), a British civil servant, is unique because the author was diagnosed with autism as small child. His book is a journey of discovery that leads him to his ex-classmates from his pioneering Special School in New York: through their experiences and challenges his develops insights into his own, as well as the nature of autism. Rafia Zakaria’s The Upstairs Wife: An Intimate History of Pakistan (2015) knits together the story of Zakaria’s family with that of Pakistan and of Karachi to tell of the suffering of her paternal aunt, Amina, who finds herself trapped in a bigamous marriage after her husband takes a second, younger wife.

Sara Suleri’s multi-layered creative memoir Meatless Days is the first in Pakistani-English literature and consists of distinct chapters, each defined according to metaphor. Her rich, visual prose commemorates the lives of her mother and sister, who were both killed in hit-and-run accidents in Lahore within a year of each other. Her reclamation of her carefree family life in Lahore also represents that of liberal Pakistan, which was irrevocably changed during General Zia’s regime. The death of the past coincides with deaths in her family. Suleri also contemplates her Welsh-born mother’s adaptation to Pakistan and her own migration to the United States. Suleri continues with her exploration of intertwined East/West narratives in her critical study of colonial and postcolonial writing, The Rhetoric of English India (1989). Her second creative memoir, Boys Will Be Boys, A Daughter’s Elegy (2003), is written under her married name, Sara Suleri Goodyear and centers around her late father, the journalist Z. A. Suleri. It contemplates politics, language, and bilingualism: each chapter is defined by well-known Urdu quotes. Moore-Gilbert suggests links between Suleri’s compression of language and image with that of miniature painting and the Urdu ghazal. In 2009 Suleri Goodyear co-translated with Azra Raza the classical Urdu poetry of Ghalib.

The Creative Memoir

In Pakistani-English literature the creative memoir remains rare. Zeeba Sadiq (1962–2010) reclaims her magical Karachi childhood in 38 Bahadurabad (1996) through a series of interlocking sketches in the third and first person. The plot is framed by the discovery by 9-year-old Zeeba Sadiq, soon after her beloved father dies, that he had another family—an English wife and two sons—he had abandoned in England. Send in the Idiots: or How We Came to Understand the World by Kamran Nazeer (2006), a British civil servant, is unique because the author was diagnosed with autism as small child. His book is a journey of discovery that leads him to his ex-classmates from his pioneering Special School in New York: through their experiences and challenges his develops insights into his own, as well as the nature of autism. Rafia Zakaria’s The Upstairs Wife: An Intimate History of Pakistan (2015) knits together the story of Zakaria’s family with that of Pakistan and of Karachi to tell of the suffering of her paternal aunt, Amina, who finds herself trapped in a bigamous marriage after her husband takes a second, younger wife.

Britain: Politics, Fiction, and Drama

Pakistan and the United States have been uneasy allies since the early Cold War days, but the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and Pakistan's engagement during Zia's regime with the U.S.-backed Afghan mujahidin placed Pakistan in the center of modern conflicts. The rise of religious extremism, the influx of drugs and arms into Pakistan and related violence, the birth of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, the wars in Iraq, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, and the 7/7 bombing of London all became a part of the Pakistani-English novel and, in a new global world, took the narrative into the diaspora.

Tariq Ali, the son of Marxist parents, imbued politics from childhood and became a fiery student leader at Government College, Lahore. In 1963, to avert his imminent arrest by martial law authorities in Pakistan, his parents sent him to Oxford. He arrived at a time of great unrest among a new postwar generation. He led student debates and student marches and became a key figure in the left-wing, internationalist student revolution that swept across Britain, the United States, and Europe in the 1960s. He recorded those heady years in Street Fighting Years: An Autobiography of the Sixties (1987), which expressed a universalism and social and political vision central to Ali's work. His extensive non-fiction includes his writings on literary subjects, as in Protocols of the Elders of Sodom and Other Essays (2009). His political books range from works on Pakistan, the Soviet Union, the collapse of communism in Europe, and the Balkan War to the American engagement in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Middle East.

In the early 1970s Ali, a bitter opponent of the 1971 military action in Bangladesh, gave up his aspirations to active politics in Pakistan, and by the 1980s he had given up politics in Britain as well. He became a full-time writer and broadcaster in Britain. In 1989, amid the furor over Rushdie’s Satanic Verses, Ali co-authored with Howard Brenton a teleplay, Iranian Nights, a metaphorical work on the nature of censorship, art, and storytelling, featuring three characters: Omar Khayyam, The Caliph, and Scheherazade. Ali’s plays are often written very rapidly (as was his first novel) in response to political events. Moscow Gold (1990), co-authored with Howard Brenton, revolves around the Soviet leader Gorbachev; Brenton and Ali lampoon Tony Blair and New Labour in Ugly Rumours (1998); and with Andy de La Tour, they provide a biting critique of the Balkan War in Collateral...
In 1990, Ali turned to fiction with his fall of communism trilogy, two volumes of which have been published: *Redemption* (1990) and *The Fear of Mirrors* (1998). His Islam Quintet novels began as a direct response to the ignorance displayed by Western commentators about Muslim culture during the First Gulf War. Ali challenges the concepts of the “clash of civilizations” between Islam and Christianity. All of his books are rich in historical detail, and his “solution for finding a disinterested formula for historical representation is not necessarily to strive toward genuine objectivity but instead to multiply the perspectives.” *Shadows of A Pomegranate Tree* (1992) was published on the 500th anniversary of the fall of Granada in 1492 and describes the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. *The Book of Saladin* (1998) looks at the Crusades through a fictitious memoir dictated by Salah Al-Din (Saladin) to his Jewish scribe Ibn Yakub. *The Stone Woman* (2003) describes the decaying Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century and Turkey’s painful transition to modernity. *A Sultan in Palermo* (2005) tells of 12th-century Sicily and the syncretic Euro-Arab culture of the erstwhile Muslim sultans, which continued under the Norman King Roger (Sultan al-Rujari) of Sicily, but it was steadily and brutally eroded after his death. In the Quintet Ali’s critique of poor governance, social injustice, and religious bigotry (Christian or Muslim) creates a narrative that manages “to look backwards and forwards at the same time” and is underpinned by *The Night of the Golden Butterfly* (2010). It refers to Pakistan as The Fatherland and leads up to a biting comment on military rule, religious extremism, and American strategic interests.

Throughout South Asia, English is regarded as the language of the ruling elite and the professional classes, but with changing patterns of migration to the Anglophone world, English also gave voice to a diaspora minority, regardless of income, education, and class. Hanif Kureishi, the son of a Pakistani father and an English mother, is different from all the writers discussed so far because he is British born. He pioneered a new literature that explored the fissures in British society at a time of great racial tension in Britain. He challenged the stereotype of Britain as a white, mono-cultural nation, and his work influenced numerous second-generation writers in Britain. Bart Moore Gilbert asserts Kureishi’s British identity and says his work “belongs to a tradition of enquiry ‘into the state of the nation’ and the meaning of ‘Englishness’ which dates back to the nineteenth century.” At the same time it is important to remember that Kureishi’s extensive work reveals a continuing need to negotiate his subcontinental inheritance and colonial history.


Kureishi emerged as a playwright in the late 1970s and consolidated his reputation with *Outskirts* (1981), *Borderline* (1981), and *Birds of A Passage* (1983), which dealt with racial politics and provided the seeds for his celebrated screenplay, *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1986). The film revolves around the relationship between Omar and Johnny: they had grown up together, but Johnny joined a violent group of racist thugs. The story is remarkable for its treatment of race, gender, and sexuality and a freewheeling, profit-obsessed society and its portrayal of the nexus between unemployment, social disparity, and racist violence. Kureishi’s subsequent screenplays include *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1998) and *London Kills Me* (1991). In 1997, he developed his short story “My Son, the Fanatic” into a feature film that portrays the conflict between easygoing taxi driver in London of Pakistani origin and his angry, rebellious son Farid, a second-generation Briton, who turns to radicalized Islam. Kureishi’s extensive writings for stage, television, and film include the screenplay *Venus* (2007), a witty and poignant portrayal of desire and old age revolving around Maurice a famous, aging, once-good-looking actor, and Jessie, a troubled young woman.

Kureishi’s first novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, provides an intertextual engagement with many literary texts including Rudyard Kipling, E. M. Forster, and Paul Scott and follows the career and confusions of the British-born Karim Amir. While his father panders to British notions of the Oriental mystic, Karim regards himself as an Englishman despite the attempts of various segments of British society to disabuse him of this notion. Kureishi is the co-author with John Savage of *The Faber Book of Pop* (1995), and references to pop music permeate his novels, including *Black Album* (1995), which is one of the earliest works to describe the radicalization of British Muslims. Kureishi’s work seldom offers a simple answer between right and wrong. In *Intimacy* (1998), he portrays the complex emotions of a successful British Pakistani writer, Jay, who has decided to leave Susan his wife and children and the security of their affluent life for a young unconventional woman who embodies freedom. *Something to Tell You* (2008) revisits themes of racial politics and multiculturalism but leads up to...
In the 1980s and 1990s, a strong alternative theater thrived in Britain and provided an important platform for British-Asian women writers. In 1987, Rukhsana Ahmad co-founded The Asian Women Writers Collective, and in 1991, she co-founded the Kali Theatre Company, in London, to support British-Asian women writers. Her novel *The Hope Chest* (1995) and her story collection *The Gatekeeper's Wife* (2014) revolve around women's lives and their struggle against patriarchal mores, British or Pakistani. Ahmad has also written extensively for the radio. Her many stage plays include “Song for a Sanctuary,” about battered wives, which appeared in *Six Plays of by Black and Asian Women* (1993). Ahmad’s *Annie Besant: Mistaken* (2007) marked the 60th anniversary of Independence and is a historical play of considerable complexity consisting of twenty scenes, united by the voice of a storyteller, which explore Annie Besant’s relationship with India, her role in Indian politics and Theosophical Society, and her belief that the young Krishnamurti was the future Messiah. Farhana Sheikh’s novel *The Red Box* (1991) portrays the exploitation of British-Asian women workers in the garment industry. She went on to become a playwright and co-authored with Adrian Jackson a historical stage play, *Mincemeat* (2010), which unravels the mystery of a nameless dead man employed in a World War II military deception, “Operation Mincemeat.”

**At the Turn of the Century: Poetry**

In the diaspora, English-language fiction, plays, and screenplays received great critical praise in the 1980s and 1990s, but much of this work was not widely known in Pakistan, where the focus remained Pakistan-English poetry. New collections by Pakistan-resident poets included Waqas Ahmad Khwaja’s *Miriam’s Lament* (1991). The six-part title poem incorporates cadences from the Bible (King James version) to provide a matriarchal reinterpretation of *Exodus*. Themes of migration and the quest for The Promised Land also appear in another sequence, “Mayflower ‘88;” set in America. Khwaja, who now lives in the United States (and writes as Waqas Khwaja), would use this leitmotif to greater advantage in *No One Waits for the Train* (2007), the full-length collection about Partition in Pakistani-English poetry to do so. Khwaja’s multi-layered poems use words to great effect: the very use of “train” in the title conjures up images of Partition’s genocide as well as the passage of time, long journeys, and spiritual quests: all of these merge in this remarkable collection.

M. Athar Tahir’s first collection, *Just Beyond The Physical* (1991), draws metaphors from observations of daily life and reveals Tahir’s interest in comparative religions and the mystical experience. He includes poems written in haiku, the Japanese poetic form he develops further in his elegant collection *The Last Tea* (2015), consisting of three sections including “Haiku Aviary” and “Japan Journal.” The former consists of metaphorical verse on different birds, the latter comments on Japan’s landscapes, monuments, and culture. The title poem tells of Sen no Rikyu (1522–1591), the man who refined the Japanese tea ceremony to an art but fell victim to court intrigue. Tahir’s poetry collections include *A Certain Season* (2000), *Body Loom* (2006), and *The Gift of Possession* (2012).

In Britain two Pakistani-British poets, Imtiaz Dharker and Moniza Alvi, soon developed into mainstream British poets. The Lahore-born Dharker’s poetry reflects the experience of Britain where she grew up, visits to Pakistan, and her stay in India during her first marriage and the awareness that she “didn’t belong in one place.” Her first collection, *Purdah* (1988), addresses women’s sexuality and has strong resonances with Pakistan’s Urdu feminist poetry, as does *I Speak for the Devil* (2001), which continues to comment on patriarchal fears and myths. Dharker’s poems challenge the rhetoric of difference and violence, whether in India, Pakistan, or Britain, and she writes extensively on adaptation, change, and cultural conflation. *Postcards from God* (1997) protests against politicized religion and the crimes committed in the name of faith. The terrorist attacks on 9/11 in the United States and 7/7 in London are portrayed or suggested in several poems in *The Terrorist at My Table* (2006). She looks at collective memory and matriarchal lore in *Leaving Fingerprint* (2009), but *Over the Moon* (2014) is a particular unusual work, a rare silent conversation with Simon Powell, her late husband; this poetic interplay of absence and memory, rich in metaphor and nuance, brings Powell to life as an ever-present, living spirit.

The Lahore-born Moniza Alvi, the daughter of an English mother and a Pakistani father, grew up in Hertfordshire. To her, Pakistan was a distant, imaginary land she celebrates in “Presents from My Aunts in Pakistan,” which gives its title to a central sequence in *The Country At My Shoulder* (1993). Alvi’s subsequent trip to Pakistan and India (her first ever) and the combination of excitement and distance permeates *A Bowl of Warm Air* (1996). Hybridity and fantasy run through Alvi’s work, including *Carrying My Wife* (2000), in which she plays husband to an imaginary wife. *Souls* (2002) extends the concept of duality to “the body and the soul, the person and the self.” Alvi makes a strong protest against war and conflict and divisive post-9/11 rhetoric in *How the Stone Found Its Voice* (2005), which includes twelve “creation” poems that engage with Kipling’s *Just So Stories* and
By the turn of the century, the easing of travel restriction in Pakistan and access to electronic media eroded the distinctions between diaspora and Pakistan-resident writing. Hima Raza (1975–2003) revealed a rare talent and forged new directions in Pakistani-English poetry during her short lifetime. Memory Stains (2001) employed experimental poetry; Left Hand Speak (2002) introduced a completely new aspect to Pakistani-English literature with two bilingual poems written in both English and Urdu, each language in its own script, Roman and Arabic. Ilona Yusuf, who is also an artist, creates very visual poems in Picture This (2001), which also addresses growing violence and lawlessness in Pakistan; other poems celebrate the inheritance of her Polish mother. Kyra Pasha’s High Noon and The Body (2007) provides an intertextual engagement with American films and makes a feminist comment on the patriarchal cultures of America and Pakistan, the countries to which her mother and father belong, respectively.

In the United States, Shadab Zeest Hashmi’s Baker of Tarifa (2009) celebrates the cultural commingling of the Euro-Arab culture of al-Andalus and also looks at its lingering cultural and linguistic resonances. In Kohi and Chalk, Hashmi writes of Pakistan and its landscapes but continues to engage with history; she includes ghazals in English, composed in couplets following the traditional Urdu form. Anis Shivani’s cerebral collection, My Tranquil War and Other Poems (2012) comments on past and present and the ideas, words, and images that have shaped our world, ranging from political speeches to the art of celebrated writers, poets, painters, and filmmakers.

Non-fiction

A great deal of Pakistani-English fiction, poetry, and drama has developed in the diaspora, but there has been a very rich and extensive body of non-fiction work by Pakistani-resident writers despite the impediments of censorship imposed by various governments. In 1986, Zamir Niazi (1932–2004) published The Press in Chains, a meticulous record of press censorship in Pakistan. He followed it up with The Press Under Siege (1992), The Web of Censorship (1995), and the posthumously published Fettered Freedom (2006).

Some of the best non-fiction in Pakistan has been written by Pakistani journalists or columnists. This includes the collected editorials of Mazhar Ali Khan (1918–1993), I. H. Burney (1926–1993), and Razia Bhatti (1944–1966) and the political analyses of Babar Ayaz, Eqbal Ahmad, Khaled Ahmed, Maleeha Lodhi, and Ahmed Rashid. The English writings of the British-born Alys Faiz (1913–2003) and her husband, the Urdu poet and English-language journalist and editor Faiz Ahmed Faiz include their collected columns and their letters, Dear Heart—to Faiz in Prison 1951–1955 by Alys Faiz (1982) and the posthumously published Letters from Jail—Two Loves by Faiz Ahmed Faiz (2011). Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Sibte Hasan (1912–1986), both Communists and members of The Progressive Writers Association, were jailed in 1951 and exonerated in 1955 in The Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case as alleged sympathizers of a planned left-wing military coup. Sibte Hassan’s The Battle of Ideas for Pakistan (1986) examines the changing influences in Pakistan from liberal egalitarian ideas to religious extremism.

Pakistan’s English-language press played an important role in support of the highly politicized women’s movement in the 1980s led by the Women’s Action Forum against Zia’s discriminatory laws. This movement in turn involved a growing number of women writers, editors, and columnists. In the 1990’s Moni Mohsin’s popular column “The Diary of A Social Butterfly” employed a hybrid and inventive English, peppered with Urdu and Punjabi, to portray a fictitious Lahore socialite in which real events and public figures are all subsumed into her self-involved preoccupations. The column was the first in Pakistani-English literature to be developed into a novel, The Diary of a Social Butterfly (2007), which was followed by two more “Butterfly” novels. Moni Mohsin’s columns appeared in the weekly Friday Times and alternated with the satirical columns by her sister, JugnuMohsin, which employed a first-person parody of the voice of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and cricketer Imran Khan; the latter is now a book Howzzat?! by Im The Dim (2014).

By the 1990s, Salman Rashid had emerged as Pakistan’s first travel writer, and his extensive writings, which combine history, geography, adventure, and discovery, include his collected columns as well as writings on specific locations. The collected columns of actor Zia Mohyeddin include lively, informative writings on theater, literature, and film, in both English and Urdu and in Britain and Pakistan. Shahrukh Hussain’s extensive writings provide rich reconstructions of matriarchal lore in books ranging from The Virago Book of Witches (1994) to Temptresses: The Virago Book of Evil Women (2000).
In Pakistan, autobiographic writing includes numerous works by bureaucrats, military men, politicians, entrepreneurs, and others, that have socio-historical, not literary, importance. The tragedies that have beset the Bhutto family run through *Daughter of the East* by Benazir Bhutto (1982) and *Songs of Blood and Sword* by Fatima Bhutto (2010), but the “Borgia like” struggle between Benazir (1953–2007) and her brother Mir Murtaza Bhutto (1954–1996)—Fatima’s father—gives the books vastly different perspectives. Fatima also brings to her writing her skills as a poet, journalist, and novelist.

*My Feudal Lord* by Tehmina Durrani (1991) was the first Pakistani-English autobiography to discuss the intensely personal—her experience as a battered wife during her marriage to politician Ghulam Mustafa Khar. Often criticized as racy and salacious, it remains a work of considerable courage that challenges the social hypocrisy and silence surrounding the subject in Pakistan. In 2004, *The Memoir of a Rebel Princess* by Abida Sultan (1913–2004) defied gender roles by any standards. Brought up as the future Heir Apparent of Bhopal, she learned jurisprudence, politics, and many languages; rode, hunted, played cricket, flew airplanes, and enjoyed stunt driving; remained committed to personal and national freedom; and migrated to the newly independent Pakistan.

The columnist Omar Kureishi’s memoirs, *Once Upon a Time* (2000), *As Time Goes By* (2002), *Home to Pakistan* (2003), and *Ebb and Flow* (2006), tell of pre-Partition Bombay, going to college in California, and his career in Pakistan as a journalist, broadcaster, and cricket commentator but reveal little of his private life. In marked contrast, *My Ear at His Heart* by Hanif Kureishi, his nephew, engages with Omar’s memoirs to reveal family history and Hanif’s personal, emotional journey. Recent years have also seen the development of diaspora autobiographical writings including those by Moazzam Begg, Yasmin Hai, Sarfraz Manzoor, and Ali Eteraz.

**Fiction: A New Generation Writes Geopolitics**

In the last decade of the 20th century, the military remained an important political player during the democratically elected governments of Benazir Bhutto and her rival Nawaz Sharif. The powers held by the civilian President were such however, that both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were dismissed twice – taking it in turns to be re-elected into office. In October 1998, General Pervez Musharraf assumed power, and in 2001, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Musharraf reversed Pakistan’s pro-Taliban policy and became an ally in the “war on terror,” but by 2007 he had lost control over the apparatus of state. The exiled Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan to compete in the forthcoming elections, but was assassinated in December 2007. Her party was elected, however, headed by her controversial widower, Asif Ali Zardari, and became the first in Pakistan’s history to complete a five-year term.

By this time, Pakistani-English literature had become a vibrant, politically engaged and diverse body of work, celebrated for its new young writers and actively sought by international publishing houses including those in neighboring India. The new Anglophone audiences that this brought, along with literary prizes and the interaction with diaspora and other Anglophone writers, liberated the Pakistani-English writer from the blanket censorship of earlier times, as did the fact that access to the electronic media made it more difficult to control information.

Geopolitics, racial politics, and egalitarian politics are all themes embedded in the work of a new generation of talented young Pakistani-English fiction writers, many of whom had lived in or been educated in Pakistan and the West. Nadeem Aslam’s poetic novel *Season of the Rainbirds* (1993) describes the growth of bigotry and violence during the Zia regime in a small Punjab and the nexus between a new breed of politicized cleric and the local strongman, culminating in mob violence against a Christian girl. The complicity of the community in acts of violence runs through *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004), which tells of an honor killing in an all-Asian working-class community in Britain. The murdered couple, Jugnu and Chanda, are recreated through the memories of Jugnu’s atheist brother Shamas and his deeply religious wife Kaukab, a woman who cannot cope with alien England. Aslam employs a rich prose, replete with metaphors and intertextual references to Pakistan’s rich heritage, including its literature, music, and art, which became foil to violence and fanatical religious beliefs entwined with superstitions. In *The Wasted Vigil*, set in Afghanistan after thirty years of war and destruction, people with interlinked lives but different nationalities—Russian, American, and Afghan—converge on a villa owned by an English doctor and his late Afghan wife. The novel provides an intertextual engagement with Michael Ondaatje’s novels to provide a discourse on civilization and history, war and violence, and the interconnectedness of nations. *The Blind Man’s Garden* (2013) looks at the spillover in Pakistan of post-9/11 geopolitics and moves from rural Punjab to Pakistan’s border area against the backdrop of growing religious extremism, the American bombing of Afghanistan, and the hunt for al-Qaeda.

Kamila Shamsie’s *In the City by the Sea* (1998) portrays the conflict between military rule and democracy in a fictitious town similar to Karachi and is filtered through an 11-year-old narrator, Hasan. The novel revealed the use of wordplay and the extensive engagement with literary texts that permeate Shamsie’s fiction. Bruce King maintains her novels reveal “how history affects several generations of a family.” Shobhana Bhattacharji writes that they “examine the impact of politics on individuals.” *Salt and Saffron* (2001) draws parallels between a city, Karachi, divided by class and a family divided by Partition and addresses the elision of the matriarchal narratives.
in traditional interpretations of history. *Kartography* connects the ethnic violence in Karachi during the 1990s and the conflict of 1971 that led to separation of East Pakistan through the relationship between the narrator Raheen and her best friend, Karim, the son of a Bengali mother. Shamsie’s novels are permeated by a feminist consciousness. *Broken Verses* capture both the heroic women’s movement against Zia in the 1980s and the increasing brutalization of Karachi through the narrator’s memories of her mother, a women’s rights activist, and the unsolved murder of her mother’s lover, a national Urdu poet. Shamsie expands her canvas with *Burnt Shadows*, a tale of migration, adaptation, war, and violence across the globe from World War II to the present. Revolving around the friendship between two families, the Weiss Burtons and the Ashraf Kanakas, it takes the Japanese-born Hiroko Kanaka from Nagasaki in 1945 to colonial India and post-independence Pakistan to post-9/11 New York. *A God in Every Stone* connects history, archaeology, colonialism, and the independence movement through the lives of an English woman archaeologist, a Pathan soldier wounded in World War I, and his younger brother, a bright young schoolboy.

Mohsin Hamid is another strongly political novelist. His debut *Moth Smoke* (2000) is framed by a historical Mughal fratricide—that of Dara Shikoh by his younger brother, the Emperor Aurangzeb. This becomes a metaphor for India and Pakistan’s fratricidal nuclear race and the bitter rivalry between the rich corrupt Ozzie (Aurangzeb) and his best friend, the orphaned Daru (Dara). Hamid cleverly uses several narrators to reconstruct the story of the incarcerated Daru. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) employs a single narrative, a tight sophisticated monologue in which the Princeton-educated narrator Changez chats to an American stranger in a Lahore teashop: it is never quite clear whether he is to be believed or not and “that is the point of the form. Its one-sidedness actually performs that archetypical novelistic trick taking us inside the head of the character but, in so doing, refusing the normalizing consolation of a dialogue.” How To Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia (2013) parodies the modern self-help book and is addressed to “You”; this becomes the vehicle to recreate the rags-to riches story of an upwardly mobile man in a nameless country (similar to Pakistan).

The Story of Noble Rot (2001) by Uzma Aslam Khan tells of child labor, social inequality, and exploitation. In Aslam Khan’s novels Pakistan’s landscapes and natural life “contain[s] secrets that can redeem humans or reveal their base, petty and constricted natures.” Trespassing (2003) links Karachi’s violence of the 1990s with global politics through Danish, a doctor’s son, Dia, the daughter of woman silk farmer, and Salaamat, a displaced fisherman. *Geometry of God* revolves around the discovery of a rare fossil near Islamabad. In the religious extremism of the 1980s, the elderly scholar Zahoor is tried for teaching the theory of evolution. Soon each of the three narrators—Amal, Pakistan’s first woman paleontologist; Mehwish, her blind sister; and Noman, a young mathematician belonging to an officially sponsored group of religious fanatics—is caught up in events beyond their control. The impact of political violence on the lives of ordinary citizens also runs through *Thinner Than Skin* (2013), set in spectacular mountainous Hunza, Gilgit, and Kaghan, where a group of Pakistani tourists and their personal conflicts intrude into the timeless world of a nomad family, as does the police hunt for a notorious terrorist.

### Fiction in the New Millennium

At the beginning of the 21st century, new writers emerged in rapid succession, including Feryal Ali Gauhar, Saad Ashraf, and two talented Pakistani Australians—Wayne Ashton and Azhar Abidi. The Pakistani-English novel continued to diversify. Musharraf Ali Farooqi made his debut with a rambunctious magic realist satire *Passion in The Time of Termites* (2000) but chose to employ brevity, a tight prose, and a quiet wit in his next two novels. *The Story of a Widow* captures a woman’s simmering emotions, desires, and turmoil as she moves away from traditional restrictions of widowhood. In *Clay and Dust* (2012), tradition and age-old customs provide the certainties that two friends, a wrestler and a courtesan, can no longer find in the nameless, brash, newly independent, newly modern South Asian country in which they live. He is also an acclaimed translator of Urdu poetry and prose. The Scottish-born Suhayl Saadi’s story collection *The Burning Mirror* included short fiction combining the inflexions of Scottish, English, Urdu, and Punjabi. He developed this to great effect in his novel *Psychoraag* (2004), in which Zaf the narrator hosts an all-night, multicultural program on Radio Chaandni in Scotland. The novel is rich in references to mythology, as is Saadi’s second novel, *Joseph’s Box* (2011).

Sorayya Khan’s *Noor* is the first novel in Pakistani-English literature that centers on the 1971 conflict and portrays the carnage in East Pakistan. The gradual unraveling of memories is impelled by the uncanny drawing of the teenage Noor in peaceful Islamabad during the 1990s where her mother Sajida has been brought up by her foster father Ali. The portrait of amnesia and traumas suffered by Sajida, a Bengali orphan, and Ali, a West Pakistani soldier in East Pakistan in 1971, parallels that of Pakistan. 5 Queen’s Road tells of another division—Partition—through the story of Dina Lal a Hindu, who decides to stay on in his Lahore home but rents half of it to Amir Khan, a Muslim migrant from India. The interconnectedness of nations and of people and the multiple identities that her protagonists carry, is a theme which runs through Khan’s work. In *City of Spies* (2015), a Bildungsroman set in 1979, the 11-year-old narrator Aaliya, daughter of a Pakistani father and Dutch mother, having grown up in Holland, tries to negotiate a space for herself in Islamabad and is befriended by Lizzie, an American girl, with a mysterious family life.

Mohammed Hanif’s debut *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) is the first full-length work of political satire in Pakistani-English fiction and revolves around the last ten days of General Ziaul Haq, who was killed in a mysterious airplane explosion. The novel revolves around that unsolved mystery and asks who killed Zia. The narrative is an example of where “fiction becomes the only means to fill in the gaps of a genuine historical event" and gives everyone motive, including the fictitious Ali Shigri, a Pakistan Air Force Cadet. Hanif’s *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) is a very different work, a black comedy centered on Pakistan’s Christian minority and the hospital wards of violent Karachi.

Daniyal Mueenuddin’s collection *Other Rooms Other Wonders* (2009) gave a new dimensions to the Pakistani-English short story, with a series of rich, powerful, and multi-layered, interconnected Chekovian tales, which vividly capture rural Punjab to portray its power structures including feudal lords, their dependents, and the lives and struggles of ordinary people. In 2011 the octogenarian Jamil Ahmed (1931–2014) broke new ground with *The Wandering Falcon*, a collection of interlinked stories that provides a rare portrait of tribal life in Baluchistan and Pakistan’s western border areas and the conflict between age-old customs and traditions with the demands of the modern state prior to the 1980s. There have been notable collections by the Pakistani Americans Imad Rahman and Anis Shivani. The latter has also published a novel, *Karachi Raj* (2015), in which the dreams and aspirations of the burgeoning city of Karachi are intertwined with that of its inhabitants, ranging from university professors and socialites to slum-dwellers. Notable novelists included Roshni Rustomji, Shandana Minhas, and Ali Sethi.

H. M. Naqvi’s witty novel *Home Boy*, set in post-9/11 New York, tells of three young Pakistani men who imagine themselves to be New Yorkers, only to be set upon by thugs and arrested and interrogated by the police as possible terrorists. There are many post-9/11 novels by Pakistani Americans, including those by Shaila Abdullah, Ayad Akhtar, Maniza Naqvi, and Nafisa Haji.


Promising fiction writers continue to emerge with great rapidity, including Irshad Abdul Kadir, Rosie Dastgir, Ali Eteraz, Shazaf Fatima, Shahrain Hussain, Kanza Javed, Sophia Khan, and Murtaza Razvi (1964–2012). There are a growing number of works representing different genres, such as the popular fiction of Tehmina Durrani, the romantic fiction of Nadya A.R. and Qaisra Shahraz, and the thrillers of Saad Shafqat and Omar Shahid Hamid.

**Drama in the New Millennium**

Pakistani-English drama is confined almost entirely to the diaspora, where it has developed rapidly in recent years. In Britain, Ayub Khan-Din emerged as a major playwright with his play *East Is East* (1997)—later a film—in which the Muslim/Pakistani identity and customs that the overbearing Pakistan-born George imposes on his English wife and four sons leads to great conflict. *Last Dance at Dum Dum* (1999) looks at group of Anglo-Indians in Calcutta who find themselves increasingly marginalized in a post-independence India, particularly with the rise of the right-wing Hindutva movement. *Notes on Falling Leaves* (2004) is a spare, haunting work that describes the interaction between a son and his mother, who is suffering from Alzheimer’s. *Ratta Ratta* (2009) is an adaptation into a modern British Asian ambience of Bill Naughton’s play *All In Good Time* (1965) set in all-white northern British working society in 1960s. Khan-Din has also adapted E. B. Braithwaite’s 1959 autobiography *To Sir With Love* (2013).

In the United States, the development of Pakistani-American drama is directly related to 9/11 and its aftermath. Akbar S. Ahmed’s work *Akbar Ahmed: Two Plays* (2009) begins with *Noor*. In a fictitious Muslim city in a constant state of siege. Noor, a young woman, is abducted by unknown uniformed men while her three brothers try to rescue her. The conflict between a tolerant inclusive Islam and that of religious extremists runs through both plays: *The Trial of Dara Shikoh* revolves around the debate between Dara Shikoh, an intellectual and a mystic, and his fanatical brother Emperor Aurangzeb. Wajahat Ali’s *Domestic Crusaders* (2010) portrays the problems in the aftermath of 9/11 of a professional Muslim family of Pakistani origin living in the suburbs. Ayad
Akhtar’s much-praised Disgraced (2013) is set in New York, where a corporate lawyer, Amir Kapoor, finds that his Muslim identity is regarded as alien to a multi-cultural American identity. The play revolves around a dinner party given by Amir and his artist wife Ella for his black American colleague Jory and her boyfriend, the Jewish-American curator Isaac. Akhtar’s new play Invisible Hands (2016) has received great praise.

Maniza Naqvi’s Leftist and the Leader (2008), consisting of an imaginary dialogue between Benazir Bhutto and Tariq Ali, has had readings in Pakistan (no other Pakistani-American or Pakistani-British play has been performed there) where the only Pakistani-resident, published playwright today appears to be Usman Ali, in 2014, the establishment of a new Centre for Pakistani Writing in English at Kinnaird College, Lahore, is indicative of the growth of the genre since 1947 and will influence its critical discourses and its continuing development in the future.

**Review of the Literature**

In the 1960s and 1970s nationalistic definitions of Pakistani-English literature were linked to the discourse on idiom and the need to validate the inclusion of English-language writing as a Pakistani literature. Alamgir Hashmi was the first Pakistani critic to discuss a universalism in Pakistani-English literature beyond nationalistic paradigms. Rahaman developed this further in *A History of Pakistani Literature in English* (1990), which focused on literary criteria, not patriotism, and traced many rare and forgotten books in different genres. My book Hybrid Tapestries: *The Development of Pakistani Literature in English* (2017), expands this to look at the rich, multi-cultural traditions that have forged this growing, increasingly accomplished, and varied body of work from pre-independence influences to the new voices in the new millennium.

Since Pakistan is located on the cusp of India and the Islamic world, it shares the history and the literary traditions of both. As such, Pakistani-English literature has been invariably discussed in the context of South Asian English writing, as it is in *English Language Poetry by South Asians* by Mitali Pati Wong and Syed Khwaja Moinul Hassan (2013). However, in the post-9/11 era, the stereotyped images in the West of the impassable divide between “Islam” and “the West” has led to an increasing number of critical studies. Many of these aim to “participate and intervene in critical debates surrounding representations of Muslims and representations by Muslims.” This includes *Culture, Diaspora and Modernity in Muslim Writing*, edited by Rehana Ahmed, Peter Morey, and Amina Yaqin (2012), *Imagining Muslims in South Asia and the Diaspora: Secularism, Religion, Representations*, edited by Claire Chambers and Caroline Herbert (2014), and Rehana Ahmed’s *Writing British Muslims: Religion, Class, Multiculturalism* (2015). These writings place Pakistani-English literature, such as the novels of Aslam, Aslam Khan, Hamid, and Shamsie, and the short fiction of Aamer Hussein and Mueenuddin within the context of Anglophone-Muslim writing from different lands.


There is a small but growing number of critical studies on major writers, including *Structures of Negation: The Writings of Zulfikar Ghose* by Chelva Kanaganayakam (1993); *Zulfikar Ghose: The Last Son of the Punjabi* by Mansour Abbasi (2015); *The Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa* (1996), edited by R. K. Dhawan and N. Kapadia; *Hanif Kureishi* by Bart Moore-Gilbert (2001); and *Two Sided Canvas: Perspectives on Ahmed Ali* by Mehr Afshan Farooqi (2013). More studies are needed on the growing oeuvre of younger writers. There is also a paucity of critical studies focusing on Pakistani-English poetry, short fiction, drama, and life writing—particularly the memoirs and essays of Pakistani residents; furthermore, the focus on the political post-9/11 Muslim Pakistani-English novel has meant that very many other accomplished writers have been ignored.

There are, however, several important literary histories that provide insight into Pakistani-English writing in a wider Anglophone context, such as *The Internationalization of English Literature* by Bruce King (2004); *Black and Asian Theatre* by Colin Chambers (2009), and *Through Muslim Eyes: Literary Representations 1780–1988* by Claire Chambers, which looks at fiction, memoirs and travelogues. Recent years have also seen special
issues on Pakistan in academic journals such as The Atlanta Review, The Journal of Postcolonial Writing, The Journal of Postcolonial and Commonwealth Studies, and Vallum; meanwhile, since 1965, The Journal of Commonwealth Literature has maintained a continuous record of Pakistani-English literature in its annual bibliography issue. Other books of literary criticism on different aspects of Anglophone literary production by writers of Pakistani origin include works by Fawzia Afzal-Khan, Dohra Ahmad, Ambreen Hai, and Anis Shivani.

Further Reading


Notes:

(1.) This article is based on Muneeza Shamsie, *Hybrid Tapestries: The Development of Pakistani Literature in English* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), in which the section on Kamila Shamsie is written by Dr. Shobhana Bhattacharji.


(4.) Bruce King, “From Twilight to Midnight: Muslim novels of India and Pakistan,” in *Worlds of the Muslim Imagination*, ed. Alamgir Hashmi (Islamabad: Gulmohar, 1986), 244.

(5.) Various translated as “Red Hot Coals” or “Burning Coals” or “Embers.”


(8.) Tariq Rahman. *A History of Pakistani Literature in English*, 2–10, draws interesting parallels between debates on the use of English as a creative language in South Asia and in Africa and the Caribbean and their emphasis on nationalistic rather than literary content of this literature. He also details pre-Partition debates on whether “Indianness could be expressed in a foreign language.”

(9.) See Frances Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and Its Critics* (Karachi: Oxford University Press,


Pakistani English facts for kids. Kids Encyclopedia Facts. Pakistani English, is the type of the English Language as it is spoken in Pakistan. It is recognised as one of the official languages of the country. Although British rule in South Asia lasted for almost two hundred years, the areas that are now Pakistan were some of the last places to be taken over by the British. Punjub (which included the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) was captured in 1849, Sindh a few years before; while Balochistan was Pakistani English or Paklish or Pinglish is the group of English language varieties spoken and written in Pakistan. It was first so recognised and designated in the 1970s and 1980s. Pakistani English (PE) is slightly different in respect to vocabulary, syntax, accent, spellings of some words and other features. Although British rule in India lasted for almost two hundred years, the areas which lie in what is now Pakistan were amongst the last to be annexed: Sindh in 1843, Punjab Pakistani English literature refers to English literature that has been developed and evolved in Pakistan, as well as by members of the Pakistani diaspora who write in the English language. English is one of the official languages of Pakistan (the other being Urdu) and has a history going back to the British colonial rule in South Asia (the British Raj); the national dialect spoken in the country is known as Pakistani English.