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GUFTUGU

Thori guftugu hojaye?

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Note from the Dean

Welcome to the latest edition of MGSHSS' bi-annual magazine, Guftugu. While the last edition was still dominated by covid and its impacts, this time round it seems that we have moved on from the pandemic towards some degree of normalcy or at least equilibrium where we have learnt to live with covid. There will be years of adjustment to a changed world but along with the unfamiliar there will be familiarity as well which will certainly help.

The newsletter itself is becoming more and more inclusive of the entire MGSHSS community. We have news and contributions from faculty, staff, alumni and students and these contributions are becoming more and more diverse. There are some excellent student reflections on topics as varied as gardening, gendered experiences of public transport in Lahore, pollution and stubble burning, the diffusion of MP3 music in Pakistan, the highs and lows of supporting the Pakistan cricket team and a personal account of learning how to swim at LUMS. This is what university experience and learning is all about – you learn all the time, on a variety of topics and in a range of different situations.

We hear from faculty and what they have been up to during the year in terms of their research and other projects which have included making jigsaw puzzles in the dean's wing. Some of these faculty members are just starting their career at LUMS and others have been with us for over 30 years. We also have a note from afar with Asma Faiz telling us about her fellowship in Oxford. There is an overview of the many events that MGSHSS holds through the year, and which highlights the Gurmani School as the academic and cultural heart of LUMS. The two departments, Economics and HSS, held very successful annual international conferences. There were also numerous workshops and seminar series throughout the year. It has been a high intensity year, but we are thankful to be returning to a vibrant academic environment.

Ali Khan



Note from the Editor

While 'Guftugu' is a name that was given to this magazine way before I came into the picture, I feel that it fits perfectly, especially for this particular issue. As I went through the content, it didn't feel much like I was reading written word, it felt more like having a freely flowing conversation with a very insightful friend.

What makes this issue even more special to me is the enthusiasm with which everyone contributed to it. The faculty proudly shared the works of their students, the students generously sent in their super creative pieces, and the interviewees talked beautifully about topics that they clearly love. And being an amalgam of all these people's stories and ideas, this magazine shows a very raw and real view of life, it's ups and downs, and making it through.

This note, and of course this magazine, would not be complete without my two lovely interns – Fatima and Saadia. I genuinely got lucky the day Fatima, the most put-together and skilled first year student I've met, emailed me saying that she wants to design something for the School.

Saadia is one of those people who interviewed so well last year that I remembered her still and called her in. Both of them not only gave life to this magazine, but also made this semester easier and happier for me.

Thank you to all those who contributed and thank YOU for reading – enjoy!

Sophiya



Meet the team

Saadia Shahid

You'd want to grab a cup of chai before you start reading this edition of Guftugu. Perhaps sit at one of your favorite spots in the Academic Block, or at the Khoka.

It's been a wild ride for the majority; from two years in COVID, to a hybrid system while fear prevailed and to finally a delayed but full experience we all were meant to have. My relationship with LUMS has been much like a teen YA novel; an enemies-to-lovers trope. Under lockdown, it was about burning your eyes in front of your screens and pulling all-nighters as you grapple with a new style of learning while drowning in textbooks and coursework. That's not the university experience everyone talked about. Coming back on campus, in a sea of unrecognizable masked faces, it continued to be a lonely journey for many including me.

Once again caught in the academic rigor, I wished for university to end and I would've graduated in 3 years if I could. But that's the thing about us humans I suppose, we continue to splash around under survival mode, to do anything to feel and stay alive. Before I knew it, I was randomly exploring projects on campus and applying away to anything I could to salvage something from my leftover time at LUMS and set out on unfamiliar paths. One of which landed me as an editor for Guftugu **laughs**

The intention with the magazine this time was clear to me and my co-editor, Fatima. With our hearts on our sleeves, we wanted this magazine to feel like a hug to the readers and bring a range of experiences to all. From conversations with professors beyond academics, to advice on how to navigate the maze of life at LUMS with a mix of confidence and utter cluelessness - we're embracing and embodying the multifold experience at LUMS.

Saadia

Syeda Fatima Binte Aziz

All I knew when I came to this 'liddul' bubble of LUMS eleven months ago is that I needed to create tangible memories I'd cherish forever. What you're reading right now is a hallmark of that very sentiment, one that included amazing food and tea sessions with my incredible editor, Sophiya, and my co-intern Saadia.

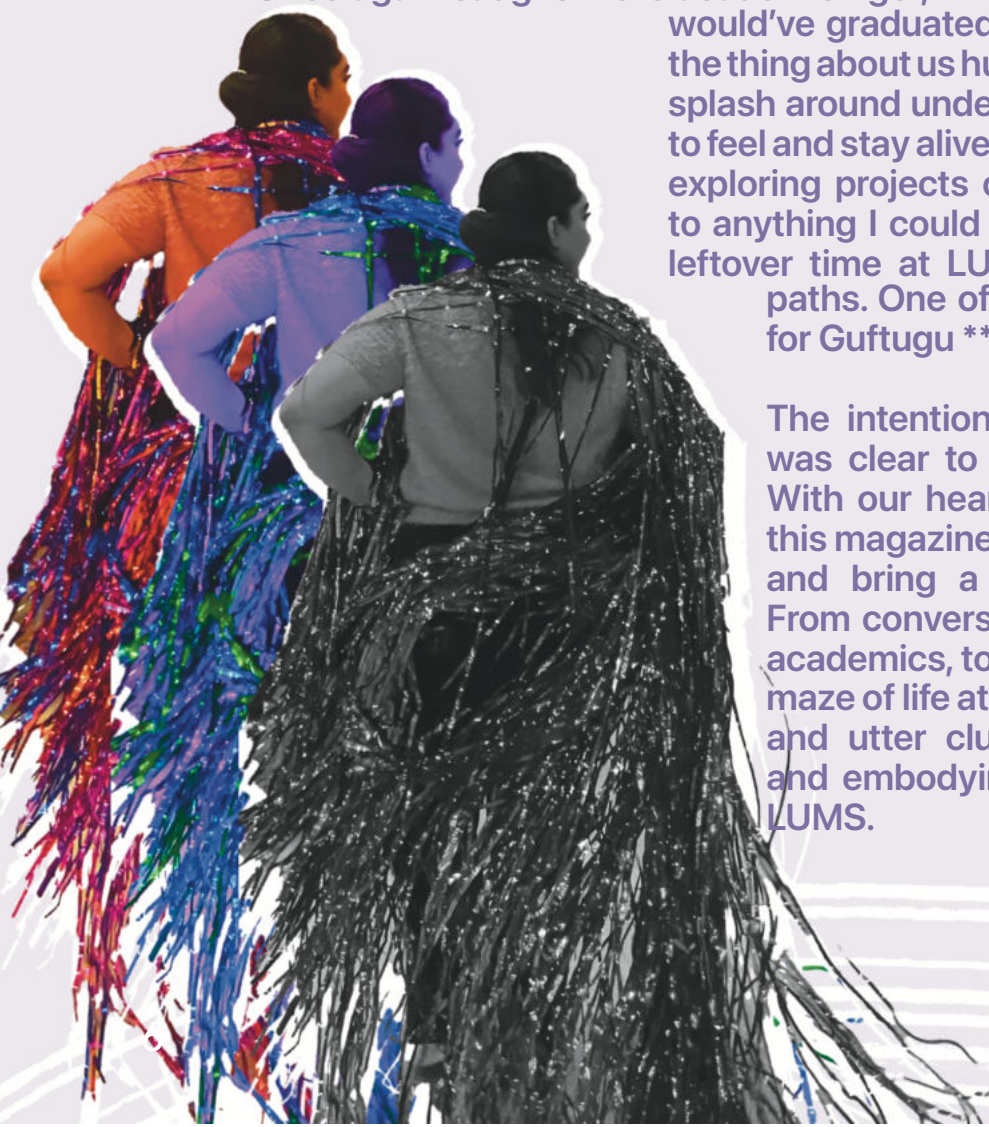
The recipe for the perfect bi-annual school magazine is very simple, indeed. Much simpler than I expected — really. All you need is a vast underestimation of all the blood, sweat and tears that go into creating a magazine from scratch, two lovely people to rely on and correct your typos at 03:04am, and a slowed and reverbed Frank Ocean on repeat!

But seriously, I am so excited to finally share this with you. Even more than a magazine, Guftugu has been my creative outlet — every page of this issue has been carefully crafted and designed bespoke from every pencil stroke to every pixel. Getting the chance to interview the incredible faculty at MGS HSS was the cherry on top of this experience, one I will always remember very fondly — from discussing education reforms and poutine with Dr. Bari, Robbie Williams with Professor Natasha, the efficacy of Model UNs with Dr. Ameen to Joyland with Professor Tabish.

Alongside, it serves as a little teaser for the merch designs Sophiya and I had the opportunity to work on, and it all came full-circle really. We hope it can be the same for you — a chance to reflect on all of that has been going on at MGS HSS, and more.

I hope you enjoy Guftugu as much as we loved creating it!

Syeda Fatima





A Conversation with Dr. Faisal Bari

...where we talk about everything we get wrong (and right) about education, how LUMS has transformed, and poutine!

Fatima: Thank you so much for agreeing to do this, by the way, and I know you are a very prized person at LUMS, so I'm really honored to have you for this interview. Thank you so much. Okay, so the first question is basically that when I was reading about you and everything, I actually found out that you're a Rhodes scholar and you have actually taught at Yale as well.

So how has your experience been outside of Pakistan in terms of education and maybe you can tell us about the difference between UK and US education because you had an experience of both?

Faisal Bari: I completed my undergrad at Oxford and my PhD at McGill in Montreal, Canada. I also taught as a visiting professor at Yale for a year, which allowed me to compare the differences between the British, American, Canadian, and Pakistani education systems.

In Pakistan, students tend to become independent much later than their counterparts in the US, Canada, and the UK. In general, Pakistani students' first time away from home is when they join university, often become hostelites for the first time, and don't manage their own finances until later. Whereas in the US and Canada, once a student moves out of the house, they become independent and take care of their own finances.

Another significant difference I noticed was the style of learning. In most schools in Pakistan, students tend to rely more on rote learning and reproduction of knowledge. On the other hand, in the US, Canada, and the UK, creativity and originality are highly valued, and students are encouraged to synthesize and create.

Pakistani students tend to reproduce knowledge instead of internalizing it and creating something new. I believe that the education system in Pakistan needs to encourage more creativity and originality to develop students' full potential.

Fatima: So I read your recent article in Dawn, which talked about the three most popular modes of exams in Pakistan, the IB, metric and O/A levels. What if you could create another mode of examination that would aim to do everything that you want children to be able to do, synthesize and apply creativity, critical analysis. So what would it look like?

Faisal Bari: I strongly believe that examinations and assessments are different. There are multiple ways of assessing children, including oral assessments, performative assessments in class, drawing, writing, and standardized tests. However, in Pakistan, our entire system is dependent on standardized tests, which are largely high stakes and do not have many other ways of assessing

children. This narrow focus on standardized tests is a great disservice to our students.

In my opinion, we need to enrich the system of assessment so that we can get a better sense of what children are learning and how they are developing. Standardized tests are just a small part of what a child can do, and there are many other things we are interested in beyond their performance on a test. We should focus on a much broader range of assessments that become a very integrated part of the learning process. We should focus on in-class assessments and what happens in class, making them much lower stakes.

I believe that we should move in the direction of activity-based learning, project-based learning, and creating a portfolio for each child to assess their performance in many different areas. This approach would be a much better reflection of what children are capable of and what they are learning. It would allow us to get a much more nuanced understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.

Fatima: In your role at the School of Education, what's the light at the end of the tunnel in terms of education reforms that you would want to bring?

Faisal Bari: That's a hard one because I think the light that we are seeing is a train coming our way right now. It's not really the light that you were mentioning. I think education is in a very difficult place in Pakistan right now. We were doing very poorly even prior to covid, both in terms of access and quality.

Then came covid with large learning losses, school closures, student dropout. I don't think we did a very good job of remedial education. After that, we were hit by the floods, which also had the same effect, especially in some, most parts of Sindh. And certain parts of Punjab.

And now we have this amazing financial and economic crisis, which is making it very hard for children to stay in school and for parents to keep them in school. So there's an entire, I think section of our society that when they're facing this persistent high inflation is going to be forced into making very hard choices about which schools or colleges can they send their, still send their children to, or can they send them to school, college at all or not.

And if a parent takes a child out of school or impacts their schooling in any negative way, that impact is not restricted to the child or the family alone. It affects the entire society. And so I'm really quite concerned about where education is right now. And also very concerned about the fact that the state is not doing anything to address what I think are very major concerns about how this will impact the future of the country.

Fatima: And you must have read the UN report that said that over 60% of Pakistan is 30 years or less. So that brings us to a very pivotal point in the learning crisis, the whole country. So in terms of the youth, what would you wish that we engaged in more?

Faisal Bari: I think that at the base level, both society and state have to change their priorities.

Look, in my estimation, state priority has never been education. And the society has also in some ways internalized the feeling that yes, the demand for education is very high across Pakistan, but most parents feel that they can't demand quality education from the state.

If they can afford to, they go to the private sector. If not, they go to a public school. If not, they don't send the child to school. But there is no pressure, electoral or otherwise, of the society and civil society, for the creation of a push for the government to respond and provide access to quality education for all children, as has been promised in the Constitution under Article 25 A, and this was done in 2010 article 25, which is the right to education.

In most of the world, at least up to grade 12, people think that the responsibility for provision of quality education is that of the state. And so it doesn't matter what country you go to, you always have a very good, very big state sector, which is often in many countries very good as well. Then of course, poor people also have a choice, a real choice.

Children and parents here are usually like okay, what's the point of being in school for 10, 12 years when at the end of it you are not going to get anything out of it either in terms of quality education or in terms of economic returns? So I think this entire calculus and state priority and society priority has to change, but I don't have a change lever in mind because it hasn't for the last many years.

Fatima: So going back in time a little bit, I know that your first, at least to me, your first interest was economics. How did that become a part of your life? When did you first discover economics?

Faisal Bari: Economics I took in A levels.

I found the way economics thinks about problems of the world to be quite effective and interesting.

And then I did philosophy as an undergrad at Oxford and I just fell in love with philosophy. I would probably have done a PhD in philosophy had it not been for my mother who said, "If you do that, you're never going to come back to Pakistan so please do change your subject."

And since economics was very close to my heart after philosophy, I decided to do economics. But I still read in both areas. I teach in both. Education became an interest as a research interest, but now for the last 15 years, most of my research has been in education. But I use the same philosophical and economic lenses to look at education as I would do in other areas of research.

Fatima: If you could recommend any course from the education school, which one would it be?

Faisal Bari: That's a tough one because I think there are a number of very good courses being offered at the undergrad level. It depends on a student's interest. We have a course called Critical Debates in Education, so if you have a practical interest, maybe that's the one that you should be taking. If you have a more philosophical interest, take Philosophy of Education one.

But then there are many courses being offered that are much more applied sometimes yes, on learning, on pedagogy, on in class, out of class. And education is a field. It's not a subject as such. So it applies to almost everything in anything, right? You can have so we have a huge variety of courses.

Then there are courses about teachers and how teacher development and there courses about inclusion there, courses about social justice courses. Because educational concerns go across. So how do you teach math? How do you teach science? How do you design better courses?

Anything that has to do with learning comes under some, in some ways in education, right? So there's a very wide variety of courses you offer. I think the key to that is to figure out what your interests are and then decide which courses to take. But the philosophy of education and critical debates are core courses, and for people thinking about getting an exposure or doing a minor they have to



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do those two for sure, and then you can pick others.

Fatima: And so if we were to narrow our scope down to LUMS, and I know you've been at LUMS for a long time, what has been the major difference in terms of student attitude or the general environment and everything that you saw throughout your years?

Faisal Bari: So there's some factual things that have happened which I think have an impact on LUMS. So I've been here, I joined as a RA in '91, so I've been here now 32 years, almost. Almost a lifetime, I'm sure. Way before you were born.

One is that the size has increased a lot, right? I remember our first undergrad class, et cetera, was very small. I think I've taught batches of 200 overall undergrads coming in 250 or something like that. And now we take about 1200 students every year.

So that in itself has changed it tremendously. With that, of course the schools have increased, the offering has increased. In a normal semester, we have something like 400 courses being offered.

And the faculty has increased a lot more. So certain things happen when size increases. Now the classes are very large and usually there's so many students that they are not able to take, for whatever reason, multiple courses with me. When I started teaching in 98 after my PhD, I think I was teaching four or five courses in econ, and most of the students would take at least two or three of those courses. So I got to know students very well. There was a lot more interaction with them and so on. That by itself because of the size issue has changed.

I also think people have cracked A Level and O Level systems and now maybe there's some grade inflation that has also happened. And I suspect there is some easing in the curriculum as well. They've brought down or reduced or whatever the curriculum in many subjects as well. I feel that the quality of education in general has gone down.

I also don't find students to be as well read. I find them struggling. The base level of smartness hasn't changed, but it's the training, et cetera, that has changed. So that is still there, but it stops at reproduction.

It doesn't go beyond that, and I feel the nature of society has changed a lot as well. Pakistan has become a lot more conservative. I think it has become a lot

more closed over these years. I think students are coming out of our education curricula, et cetera, have become a lot more indoctrinated.

As I said, on state lines. Many other things. I think language acquisition has become poorer, even at languages which is sad because without language, learning gets very low impact.

So on the whole with larger numbers, with more probably variance in faculty quality, also with more variance in student quality student earlier learning experiences. I find that we are in a, and with my feeling is with dropping interests also in academics in learning in general as well.

I think at least I find myself to be less satisfied with the outcomes on the other side, and I'm not referring to grades et cetera. Compared to learning then, I would say 15, 20 years ago. Now that might partly be the conservatism of old people, but I do feel it. There's more to it than just my way of looking at it.

Fatima: And one thing that I personally noticed in my year of switching to undergrad from a level system and everything, I found that my learning techniques or study techniques, no longer work over here. So it's the way that the courses are designed where they wanted to go above and beyond what you already know. So in terms of that, what would you offer to students as a bit of advice? Should we read more, should we ask questions more? What is the sequence?

Faisal Bari: All of those. So you need to be very self aware of your learning process. You need to be a lot more reflective of your learning process. What is it that you want to learn from a reading course at LUMS or a specialization, and then, very consciously and reflectively construct how that learning is going to give you care. It'll have techniques of learning as well.

You need to learn how to learn.

People should be able to do a bit of Googling, at least on that side of things. But how you internalize that in your practice is what matters, right?

And so this is a road that gets made while you are walking on it, so I can tell you 15 different things that you should do. Yes. Read more. Read more different kinds of books.

But read deeply, take notes, make sure that you understand. Do a lot of summarization of what you read, talk to people about it. Watch interesting programs, movies, et cetera. Practice, try to put some learning in practice.

So I can tell you a hundred different ways which will vary with each person also. But more than that is the willingness to go down that route, which as a teacher, I can only say, okay, and I can take you to water, but your decision, it is your decision whether you want to drink it or not.

And that I think is the part where probably we are failing a lot more and might have to do with intrinsic motivation that we are somehow not able to kindle.

Fatima: And in terms of a student's perspective, what I feel students complain about a lot is the time deficit. No one ever has time, but how did you tackle that when you were in our, like at our age?

Faisal Bari: What else was there to do? I feel, what else is worth it? There was plenty of time to go. I was a full-time student. I would read and study as much as I wanted with obviously some social interaction and some sports and so on as well, which are important.

But I never felt what students might feel now, and that might partly be because my experience was at Oxford, which had a three year degree where exams are at the end. Rather than this system that we've developed in Pakistan, where there are 20 instruments for each course, and you have four courses or five courses running. So every week you have two or three instruments whether it's a quiz or an assignment or a homework assignment or whatever. And then midterms and finals and whatever.

I think there are just too many instruments that we have in each course and each and four, five courses that undergrads do in a semester's worth of time. To me, that doesn't allow you to go deeper. What it does, it just gives you a lot of info. You store it for a short time, and then you get rid of it once you are past the assessment.

So to a certain extent, it's because of the nature of how learning is being devised that way. It might also be student interest and so on, because I'm sure there are undergrads who feel that they have plenty of time to study

while some others might feel they don't have enough time.

Fatima: Last question. In terms of all of the places that you've been to, which one has been your favorite? Like maybe it's your hometown or maybe it's Montreal. What is it?

Faisal Bari: Montreal for sure. So if I was to live a life other than what I have lived, I'd settle in Montreal.

Fatima: Did you have poutine over there?

Faisal Bari: Many times.

Fatima: Really? Do you love it?

Faisal Bari: No, I didn't. Don't love it, haha. I've had it many times. But I couldn't develop a passion for it.

Fatima: Got it, haha. Thank you so much!

45 Minutes with **Dr. Ameen Lutfi**



As Fatima and I entered the office, we were greeted with a warm smile on Professor Ameer's face. Being HSS majors, Fatima and I had questions burning at the back of our minds about social science majors – little did we know we would walk out of the Professor's office with a new perspective on not only social science majors, but also about the importance of social scientists amidst the emerging trends in Pakistan. This interview goes beyond generic questions regarding academia and dives into the life of Professor Ameer, his experiences, lessons, and advice for students and faculty at LUMS.

Professor Ameer has a rather unique academic journey. After completing his early education in Karachi, he went on to pursue an undergraduate degree in Accounting at the University of Texas-Austin. Over time, his interactions with the faculty there convinced him to opt for humanities and social sciences, and upon trialing multiple research positions, he was convinced he'd never work as an accountant for a day. He found himself interested in pressing questions about Pakistan as a changing society and wondering about the larger shifts in global culture. What he thinks challenged him the most at that time was striking a balance between his new-found interest in humanities alongside maintaining his accounting degree. He found himself consumed with worries about his grades in the business school while it was a different story with the humanities courses; he valued the journey and end result much more which was an indication about where his heart was at that point in time.

What probably helped him the most in this shift were his mentors and the community; though he never doubted his decision, he found it to be immensely helpful to receive support from his peers going through similar circumstances and from the community at large so that he wasn't worried much about the practical implications his decision may have.

He added on as an afterthought with a laugh that his parents took a while to grapple with his academic transition.

He went for his Ph.D. at Duke, in Cultural Anthropology but with an interdisciplinary approach with History. He recounted how the research he started with was about the electoral systems in Punjab but by the completion of the research, the question had changed entirely, and he was glad his advisor pushed him to change it. He mentions how this shift in research question brought about a fresh perspective for him to view the world with – even things he was familiar with now held more depth and allowed him to explore newer ideas. For him, when tackling new questions, it's crucial that one frees oneself of their older concerns, and be willing to change and rethink existing ideas.

Professor Ameer's academic journey doesn't end at Duke. He pursued a post

doctorate in Prague and worked for 3 years in Singapore before coming back to Pakistan. He holds his time in Singapore close; his research there allowed him to rethink and question his fundamental assumptions about what he knew. His love for venturing into interdisciplinary fields led him to working as an International Relations Expert at an academic international relations institute where he prepared briefs and designed training sessions for foreign ministry and government officials.

He found the learning curve fascinating because of the sense of accomplishment he was able to derive via his initial struggle, experience, and his incredible time in Singapore.

Fatima and I were now curious; what brought him back to Pakistan considering he lived in the States for quite some time and why did he choose Lahore over his hometown Karachi?

The professor mentions how the U.S. feels like a second home to him, but because of the global academic community's increased connectivity, whereby everyone is now a part of similar debates, conferences, and publishing, the difference isn't as large anymore. The key reason he states for coming back to Pakistan and specifically Lahore is to remain close to his passion – research. To him, geography has a profound impact on the sort of questions undertaken during research. The location not only provides better context but makes

the stakes in the research clearer to him. He believes that the sense of responsibility and context is better as compared to when working from the States.

Though he extensively studies topics like transnational movements and the Indian Ocean which make Karachi a prime location to be established in, he finds that there is no better institute than LUMS across Pakistan to undertake his research in. While proximity to the field is a priority, what takes precedence for him is the access to the faculty and academic community at LUMS, and the ability to engage in conversations with them – he feels LUMS is the only institute that incentivizes research and publishing.

What comes along with being at LUMS is the opportunity to teach which Professor Ameer has found to be quite an interesting experience. His course, "Putting Social Science to the Test", which he co-taught with faculty from both anthropology and economics departments, has led him to learn more about his field rather than just being a student of the discipline. Professor Ameer also found student engagement levels to be high in the course. Well..what's the secret?

It's surprisingly simple – Professor Ameer found that elucidating the stakes involved in the students' research projects, making them realize the impact of their contributions to the communities around them,

and pushing the students to think outside the university and taking their “training wheels” off seemed to do wonders for his course.

Quite a few of his students wanted to keep up with their work and are still engaged with their projects. He shares how the data collected by students is currently being used in a political science department at Yale. Students from LUMS are helping with contextualizing the data and producing a paper that will be later sent for a review and publishing.

Professor Ameem goes on to talk about newer projects in the pipeline and they seem quite promising to say the least! He, along with the social sciences department, plans on introducing a course in collaboration with other universities in the global south. The idea is to have the same research conducted with different groups so as to attain insights into the differences in data and perspectives. The professor goes on to mention how even though he has taught at Duke and Habib University, students at LUMS are far more engaged and invested in their work at LUMS.

He shares another plan that is to develop an “ethnography lab” for social science majors. These ethnography labs will enable students to go beyond simply reading and critiquing texts, and test any of their frameworks, create an archive of student projects and a network whereby students can move beyond the LUMS boundaries to conduct their research and have more meaningful interactions with the communities around them. He believes going out in the field is just as important as

going to the lab is for the natural sciences - without it, one can only be a student of the subject without being a researcher. At this point, Fatima prompted the next question as if reading my mind. She asks “I sense that you have an inclination for educational policies and reforms, do you think you’re going to get into this?”

Professor Ameem smiled widely and shared how in a recent conversation with a friend, he discussed a similar topic and found that from a book on mercenaries to suddenly writing about the education system seemed too big of a jump suddenly.

“These things come naturally, you don’t go chasing them,” he said.

He continued talking about a project instead of the change in educational trends in Punjab and shared a surprising statistic; the number of women in Masters programs in several disciplines is nearly twice the number of men. Amongst his current projects, he intends on pursuing such questions, understanding these gendered differences by using new methodologies. He plans on incorporating the research participants not only as samples, but also as research partners by asking them to share personal diaries and requesting for regular voice notes from mothers and principals. This would let them have greater control, make them a concrete part of the research, and will allow the research to be a longitudinal one.

He finds that this is perhaps one of the perks of working from a research perspective, to be able to tackle difficult questions that may make other parties such as NGOs uncomfortable since these trends

fail to fit into the existing frameworks of understanding. Bringing the topic back to LUMS and its community, I asked the professor to share some advice for the students. He talks about how students in LUMS are put on “training wheels” for too long and the faculty don’t realize how far we’ve pushed this.

He added on “at some point, we need to stop doing model UNs” with a laugh – and urged for students to dive into areas unexplored and immerse themselves in experiential learning.

He goes on to share insights from a conversation he had with a recruiter once; the recruiter shared that though many LUMS students are knowledgeable and exceptional at writing but when it comes to practical work, they fail to perform and the lack of real world application becomes apparent. Professor Ameem shares the concern that especially with the rise of artificial intelligence, LUMS students may not be able to differentiate themselves in the job market with their writing skills as they may face competition from students from other universities who can replicate the quality of work via these AI tools. “What would the USP be now?” asks the professor and answers the question himself; “The USP is now engaged learning”.

He elaborates how there is a need for experiential learning opportunities for social science students, creating a system whereby responsibility is placed on the students, reminding them of the impact they can create as the privileged elites of the society, and forming natural incentive structures at LUMS.

With this, our conversation dwindled to an end. As Fatima and I prepared to leave, he greeted us with the same warm smile and we walked out with more answers than questions.

A conversation with **Natasha Barlas**

...the professor with a zen garden for an office talks about applying to Fulbright on a whim, discovering her love for psych and fangirls over Robbie Williams movies!



Fatima: Okay, awesome. I know these are like the most annoying questions, but can you start off with an introduction of yourself?

Natasha: You know my name. I've been with the HSS department for a year now. I started teaching in the fall, but I've been in LUMS since forever.

I did my undergrad here and then after my master's, I started working at what is now the OSA. I set up the advising and student success department. So I've been working with LUMS since 2020 and then I moved to teaching last year. I teach psychology, I'm an educational psychologist and behavior therapist, so I do therapy on the side as well.

Fatima: Awesome. So starting off with the whole tangent of being in LUMS forever, what is the first change you witnessed being in LUMS as a faculty member rather than a student?

Natasha: Students now are a lot more empowered, and ambitious, and in a good way.

So when we were students, we hung out during our free time and we would just be sitting at the academic block side, literally that's where you would find us between classes. But now I have students who are influencers, who are running side gigs, who already in their sophomore year have businesses set up.

They're doing really well in school and they're doing really well professionally and have a really charismatic social life. And I feel that's something that has really changed with probably Instagram and access to making money virtually.

In terms of my experience as a faculty member, it's definitely nice to be on the other side. It's funny because a lot of times when students email me, especially for concerns, extensions, et cetera, a lot of times I now start acknowledging, oh, faculty life is also very similar to student life. Like, I would have a student email me, oh, ma'am, is this question important in the final? And then I realize, oh, shoot, I haven't made the final and I will just do it the next day. So the faculty is struggling, for lack of a better word, just as much, with deadlines as students are. I have a lot more humanistic empathy for faculty now.

Fatima: So, segueing mostly from your post-grad experience, I know that you started off with ACF and then you went into psychology. So what was the shift like? Did you ever feel

like an outsider in the field or anything?

Natasha: I honestly, I felt like an outsider. I got into SDSB my first year. I realized I cannot do this. Everybody who comes to LUMS comes from a school where they're the best. Like they're toppers in their school. So imagine all the head boys of all and head girls of the country just come to one place.

So that puts you in a lot of identity crises. And then, in my second year, I did realize that ACF isn't for me. I think I took a literature course and I really enjoyed the way humanities looked – very interesting.

And I remember I spoke to my father about this, that I'm thinking of transferring. And I remember my parents came to visit me, they took me out for lunch and my dad said, 'I knew you are not meant to do accounting. Your brain is too creative and structured for that... so you should transfer to computer science.'

And I just found that so funny. I've never taken sciences in my A-levels and you want me to now switch to computer science or physics?

Anyway, I remember I just went to Adnan Zahid's office because I took a course from him and I just knew that he's very welcoming and I just broke down. And he said 'Okay. Okay. It'll be interesting if you think you're the first child who's crying over here because of parents' expectations.'

And then he told me his story and asked 'Why do you need to transfer? Take courses that you want to take. Don't transfer out. The beauty of LUMS is that it lets you take courses from all discipline to figure out what you like.'

He told me how to balance things, and that I think was very pivotal because then I stopped worrying about my grades per se and started figuring out what I like. So I took psychology, education, literature, history, et cetera. And I realized I really enjoyed Psychology. And then because I was in a lot of societies, I would meet a lot of people, have interactions, SRP - whatever the programmes are where you go work in schools. I went on those international trips. I ended up becoming that person that people come to for their problems. That made me think that this is

something that I do enjoy doing. And I stumbled upon education. This is what I wanted to do, this is what excited me.

A final assignment for this course I took asked us to make 5 and 10 year plans for your ideal life. And everybody just randomly put stuff in but I took that so seriously. I put in a lot of like investment into an ideal world and I discovered psychology through that research. And I submitted it.

Then I remember I called my dad around graduation cause our friends said, did you apply for internships, et cetera? I was so confused because I had no clue. I was giving the tests but I wasn't sure if I want to do it, not sure if I would get permission to move to Karachi, it was a bit of a mess. Then I heard that they extended Fulbright's deadline by a week so I just decided to apply. I submitted my application on the last day at five, right as the post office was closing. That was the last year they required a post office submission.

I think that's like my summary of how I figured it out, and that's I think where my luck shifted - I got the Fulbright, which I wasn't expecting cause I wasn't applying with any intention of getting it. But then I went into the program, took a course, realized they put me in a program I didn't like, and I forced them to switch my university. So there has been a lot of switching if something doesn't make sense to me, which can be turbulent but that really helped me be in a place that makes sense and I love.

So I think my career trajectory was all about doing something and figuring out I don't like to do it. Even when I did the LUMS admin position, I realized, okay, no. I don't like admin jobs. I don't want to be taking meetings all day. I want flexibility.

So I switched to teaching and therapy. I would say last year when I taught your course is when I realized, okay, this is something I feel I can do everyday and not get bored. This is my third semester and I still love coming to class and meeting with students. And I love going to therapy and meeting my clients too. Of course, it comes with its own challenges. Of course, everybody around you looks like they have it all figured out.

But I do speak from experience now. I have enough experience, I'm a lot more passionate about what I want to do than my peers because of the exploration. Like now I know very clearly this is what I want, in terms of my therapy work too. So I think that's how, I don't know if that answers your question, but that's how my shift was very figured out, transformational.

And I think that's what I keep telling you guys as well.

If you don't like something, that's actually a good sign because you're moving towards something that you'll eventually like.

And I feel since last year, my career has picked up quite a bit as well. Because once you know you're really passionate about something and you like it, things happen. And once you like something, you will find opportunities and things come full circle.

My dad's very happy. He wanted me to be a doctor and somehow for him, psychology is very close to being a doctor, and sometimes people even call me a doctor, which I think is very funny.

Daddy's approval bhi ho gaya. Yeah, I'm happy with my career. So I think that's how my transformation has happened, it takes a while, but I feel like it's worth it in the end.

Fatima: Wow. So that was like a huge trajectory in the sense that it wasn't like just one thing that you just went off of and like you were just like, okay, let's do this.

But what I really appreciate about your story is the fact that you had more of an active role, in the sense, that even when you were placed in your Fulbright university, you were just like, you know what? I don't like what they're doing. I wanna switch. A lot of the people that I know, they would just be there and they'd be like at least it's Fulbright, we'll just make this work somehow. And they would have a miserable year. So how did that work? Like how did you build your attitude and face that challenge in a way?

Natasha: No, if I don't like something, I need to take an active role against it, rather than just being like, okay, just swim along and just pass through it. I think this is a personality fault in a way. I am by default a fixer, which can sometimes not be the best thing. For example, all my friends reach out to me to talk to customer service for them. I can't just let things be and sometimes there's peace in letting things be, accepting how things are and being comfortable.

But that personality trait came in where I would be like, I'm really miserable. I need to talk to them. I know some people who call it not being content. I need to make sure I fight to get things to be perfect.

If you ever have to argue with customer service, you know who to ask. I've written so many strongly worded letters to make sure people get their refunds. That's my superpower as my friends tell me.

Fatima: I think that's an incredibly valuable role - I think everyone needs someone like you in their life. Also, I know that you've also worked in education psychology over here and you work as a therapist too, what's something that you feel is lacking in Pakistan in this field? Is there still stigmatization or has it toned down a bit or anything?

Natasha: I think the stigma has definitely toned down in terms of awareness. I still think a lot of people who come to me are very privileged. I mean, therapy is expensive. Healthcare does not support therapy. Not everybody can afford to pay - a good psychologist costs as much as 6,000, 5,000 a session. So I don't think there is a stigma that limits people from seeking support. People do think there's a problem. People definitely acknowledge there is a problem.

Maybe they can't afford to go to therapy, so they may want a quick fix. And also most of the times when parents bring their kids to me I feel it's the parents that need therapy more. The parents would come in with a bigger problem. And a lot of the time that problem can be mitigated if the parents see the child as an individual and not just a child who just does what they want them to do.

I've had parents come and be like, 'fix him, he does not study etc.' And I am like that's not the problem here, it's your pressure.

So I think that parental awareness of acknowledging children as individuals on their own has a long way to go.

Fatima: I remember that in our course you mentioned that like with Freud's, like outrageous ideas, he actually had one thing that actually contributed a lot to the field, which was that a lot of women got into psychology to debunk his theories. So what's it like in Pakistan? Is there an imbalance of gender?

Natasha: No, I think there's definitely a gender imbalance favoring women. They're not as many male psychologists. I know people attribute it to women's personality, their intrinsic characteristics. They're a little more warm, et cetera, et cetera. You would see mothers and female friends being a lot more conversationalist about emotions and feelings and problems.

Whereas for the male population, the majority of Pakistan are still inhibiting emotions, generally. So I feel that also translates into maybe lack of approval if you go in that profession. I don't want to say it's like an unstable career. I feel like there's a lot of potential because mental health is the need of the hour all the time.

Maybe men generally feel like they probably don't connect to that type of content, like certain traits of emotional intelligence. I'm not gonna say men are incapable, but I definitely think there may be pitfalls in their nurturing which contributes to this imbalance.

Fatima: So on the topic of psychology, like what would you say are the most common challenges that children face?

Natasha: I would say that the most common thing parents end up doing is approaching their children's personalities in a very one-dimensional way that only favors academic validation and success. Nobody really thinks about how you are as a person. Whether you know you are a polite kid or an honest kid. Or a kind kid. So if you are a very shy kid who's doing really well in academics, your parents will probably not think it's a problem.

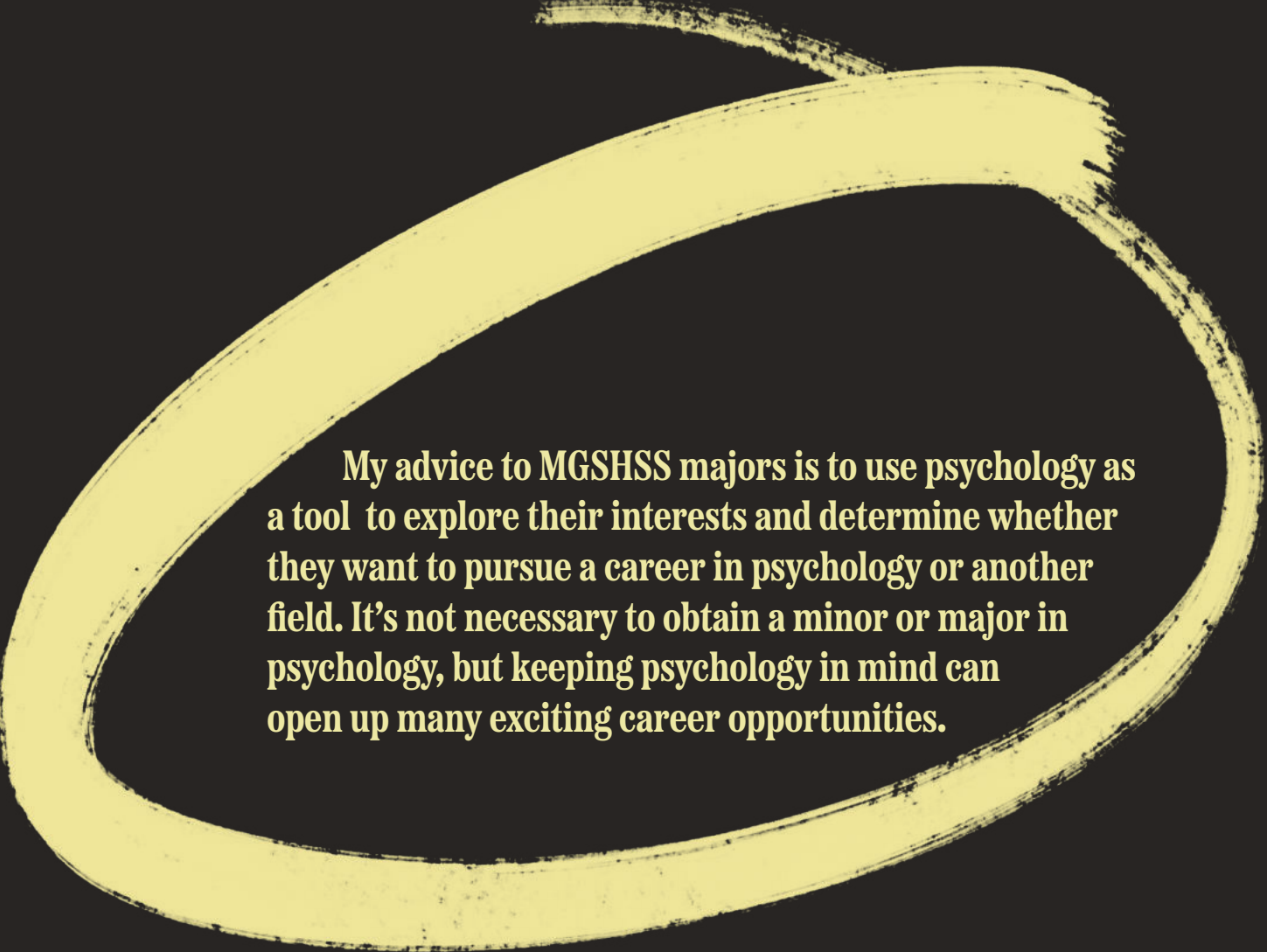
But if you're a shy kid who's also struggling in academics they will notice alarm bells. So I think that's a parent's perception. And I do feel a lot of concerns exist because parents are unable to understand the needs of their child. Children rebel or act out - but they don't act out because they're bad kids, they act out because they're not heard or something else is going on.

But I don't want to be unfair. I think there is a long way to go, but I do think progress has been made. Parents are more accepting and readily cognizant of the child going through dramatic changes like the parents' divorce, loss or a traumatic incident.

Fatima: If you talk about the perspective of LUMS students, especially from the HSS department, what would your advice be for them if they wanna pursue psychology, because we don't have a psychology major over here yet. So what, how could they make the best out of a psychology minor?

Natasha: I think for a humanities student or even like any student, the real beauty of psychology is that it's applicable in every field. Essentially psychology is understanding humans and how humans behave and operate. So you can use that in the corporate sector to understand how people think in terms of purchasing products, how people think in terms of economic policies.

It can be a valuable tool in any field that requires interaction with people. By taking an introductory psychology course, students can explore the many facets of psychology and see how it can be applied to their future careers. So, whether one is inclined towards business or working with children, psychology can provide a useful perspective.



My advice to MGSHSS majors is to use psychology as a tool to explore their interests and determine whether they want to pursue a career in psychology or another field. It's not necessary to obtain a minor or major in psychology, but keeping psychology in mind can open up many exciting career opportunities.

Fatima: Couple last rapid fire questions. I know you've traveled a lot. So what's been your favorite place that you visited and why?

Natasha:.. Like I think my favorite place to visit as a tourist and this does sound cliché, is Interlaken, Switzerland. I've seen the Eiffel tower and I feel okay. This is a monument. It's fine. Like even Rome. But Switzerland is one place where I feel like the pictures and the postcards and everything just do not do justice to how beautiful that place is. Just the vibe of that place. So I think that's definitely a place I can frequently go to because they know that it's truly the most beautiful place on earth.

But I think that's it, I can't think of a more beautiful place. I think I'm also very biased to DC. Washington - DC because I think just in terms of being my home, second home, I've lived there. So DC is definitely very close to my heart.

Fatima: And any favorite movie, favorite book, something you recommend to everyone? Maybe an animated movie.

Natasha: My to-go movie really is Good Will Hunting. And Dead Poets Society. These are my to-go movies. I'm a huge Robin Williams fan. I can watch any of his movies. I am also a huge Harry Potter nerd and everybody knows that if they've been in my office!



TABISH HABIB



Joyland, San Fransisco and Magic

ft. Tabish Habib



Saadia: I think first we'll start with the basic run-of-the-mill questions like about you, your academics, what's your background, where you're from..

Tabish: Sure. I did my undergraduate degree from the University of San Francisco. My major was media studies and I double minored in business and film. So that's how I got started with filmmaking. I had no desire to be a filmmaker to start with, I was studying Business. I took one film course and that changed everything for me. I made a couple of short films in college. They were part of these small festivals, and that created a trajectory for me.

After that I moved back to Pakistan. I worked at a few TV channels but wanted to start my own company. It was at Piphany Productions where I made music videos that garnered a lot of viewership on Social Media.. I did music videos for Mai Dhai, Jimmy Khan, Takatak, Janoobi Khargosh, Shorbanoor and Natasha Noorani. Then I moved into more commercial work such as Advertisements, corporate documentaries and development work.

I switched to fiction filmmaking 3 years ago when I went for my masters to Met Film School which is located in London's Ealing Studios. Ealing Studios is one of the oldest running studios and has been around since 1905, so that was a really really good place to learn my craft. Since then, I've worked on a bunch of short films and a feature-length film. I wrote and directed a film called May I Have the Seat? which was very well received in the Film Festival circuit and was even submitted for a student Oscar and BAFTA. I also got to work on Joyland which eventually went on to be Pakistan's official submission for the Oscars. So yeah, that I guess is my summary. I'm actually originally from Islamabad but I've been living in Lahore for the last 10 years.

Fatima: So like, you said that you were a business student, and then you switched to filmmaking, it was kind of like an abrupt change. So when you look at artists' histories, people always say that "oh they had an eye for design", "they had an eye for art" and you kind of have a natural inclination towards these things. Because even me, like I do design, and I do think that there is some sort of an instinct that comes naturally, and you can choose to build on it or not. Were you cognizant of that instinct in yourself?

Tabish: So I was always creatively and musically inclined, and I always had a fascination with characters and stories.. I used to watch a lot of films - my father

was an immigrant in The U.S and he had a handful of part time jobs to make ends meet. One of those jobs was managing a cinema, so he would watch a lot of movies and in turn showed me a lot. Some of those movies a father maybe shouldn't show their child. Hitchcock movies like Vertigo, Birds and Rope, when I was 11 or 12. So that obviously played a huge part. I did have a fascination for storytelling using visual imagery from a young age.

I had musician friends and I used to make videos of them performing and jamming. But these were just little creative exercises that I used to do for myself. I mean, back in those days, social media wasn't a prominent thing. I imagine if I made those videos now as a teenager, the experience of creating them would be very different.



But yeah, in short, I was always creatively inclined. I wanted to study business because there was pressure from my family to earn and maybe choose a more stable life path but when I took that film elective course, it just seemed like the right thing to do. I actually do credit my teachers there for pushing me. They said "you know you do have a talent for this and you should pursue it or at least try it" and that really encouraged me.

So there is a certain level of creativity that I guess I don't know if it's inherited or nurtured but it was always present.

Saadia: I think one thing that you mentioned was family pressure and having to be doing a certain degree. That really hits home for me and for a lot of other people on campus. I have a lot of friends who are just pushed into certain degrees because "oh, they have a scope in Pakistan". In something like filmmaking, there is this perception that only a few artists are lucky and not everyone can make it. What was the journey like for you?

Tabish: In that sense I've been very fortunate. I mean, I went for my Masters in my late 20's. It was largely self-funded, so there was extra pressure to succeed. I'm also a male so I think that also makes things much easier in a country like Pakistan. Family pressure for young men versus young women is entirely different. I can't speak about what women have to go through with family pressure but one thing I will say is, being an artist is a turbulent road and it's not an easy path to pursue.

Having said that, if you have the need to express yourself creatively and it's in you, there's no way you can deny it. You could go for a different career path, whatever it is that you think or your family thinks might be stable, but then you find yourself really feeling left wanting. And one should really follow their truest instincts and passion. At least that has been my experience.



Most artists that I know, let's take the crew that worked on Joyland for example. They have all been toiling away at their craft for years and are all very accomplished in their own respective field. Whether that be the producers, the art directors, the choreographer, the actors, they are all a vital part of filmmaking. I think a lot of these artists come from a certain level of family pressure as well. So I mean if you stick to your guns and believe in yourself and stay resilient, you will be successful.

I remember I was working as an AV technician during my University days and would often be working 12 hour days to make ends meet. When I came back [to Pakistan] where I was living with my parents and had a comparatively comfortable life. I became a bit complacent and went through a period of unemployment. My father during that time would bring an employment form from a bank and just put it on my bedside table while I would be asleep and I'd wake up to that and wonder "What? What is this? When did we talk about this?". But the day I started earning as a creative practitioner was when he realized that "okay, you know what, he's going to be fine, he's on a decent career path".

That's very important for creatives in this day and age. Being the kind of artist that makes art for the sake of art is important, but you have to balance it with how you earn for yourself and sustain yourself. If you just stick to creating your own art, yes, there is

an audience for that, yes, there is appreciation for that, but it's also important to think about the other side of what it is to be an artist.

Saadia: I remember this session we had with Saim and after the session, I asked him what was it like for you with your parents and especially with the sensitive topics in Joyland, because he did mention he had some pressures. And I wonder what it was like for you once Joyland was released and the backlash started rolling in.

Tabish: So, one thing that my mother said, which I really like... because my mother herself, is a very successful Jewellery designer...

She said that she has never seen a Pakistani film that is so truthful in how it depicts society. And I think if you watch Joyland, I don't think there is anything in there that would necessarily offend anybody before they start realizing that "oh, this is just showing us things that we already see all around us". It's not doing anything you don't see.

I mean, you guys are going to get done with this interview. At some point, you're going to go home. You're going to see all kinds of characters that are represented in the film, whether they be Khawaja Sira characters, or families living in Gawal Mandi, or butchers, these individuals are all a very prominent part of the social fabric of Lahore.





Behind the scenes on the set of 'Joyland'

It's very easy for a student to be like, "Sir bas kerein," but they're actually putting in all the work. And I think just being able to impart that knowledge and seeing younger people be as passionate about film as I am, that's one of the reasons why I'm here. And LUMS itself as a university is fantastic.



Tabish Habib at the Cannes Film Festival 2022

So yeah, my parents are very proud. I think everybody that is involved with the film is, because it's a huge achievement. And it's also coinciding with the fact that it is a Pakistani film that has had a considerable amount of success Internationally.. So you're making your country proud as well.

Fatima: Definitely. And like on the topic of filmmaking and movies, what are the artists that you are currently looking forward to? I know Jordan Peele is on the rise, and I'm personally a very huge fan of his.

Tabish: So it changes all the time? There's loads and loads of filmmakers that I love. But I would say the three that I'm really obsessed with these days are Paul Thomas Anderson from the US, Asghar Farhadi from Iran, and Lynne Ramsey, this wonderful Scottish filmmaker. She's excellent. So these are my three..

Fatima: These are people for me to just obsess over for the next few days. Find out everything about them.

Tabish: For sure.. I would start with Aswath Farhadi if you haven't seen his work. Honestly, if you want to talk about the local film scene, we do have a tendency to copy Bollywood. And Bollywood has also evolved into this whole other beast. But I think instead of looking to the left of the map for inspiration, we should look towards the right, because Iran is really where it's at. You have this rich history of storytelling, literature and the kinds of films they're making have universal appeal. They have this amazing ability to tell stories that deconstruct human existence. So yeah, I would start with Asghar Farhadi. Watching Paul Thomas Anderson films is the equivalent of going to film school at home. You learn everything about filmmaking by just watching his films. So that's where I would start. Lynne Ramsey is just a modern day force to be reckoned with. But her films are thematically very happy. I'd say proceed with caution.

Saadia: I think having discussed your whole career around film and your interests, my question is what brings you to teaching? Because you could have just simply gone into that field in entirety and not have ever looked at teaching so what brings you here?

Tabish: Well I'm still in that field, I'm just teaching at LUMS at the same time. One of the things that I enjoy about teaching here is I get to share my love for film with young students who also have a passion for film which is a great feeling.

One of the things that moves me most is when a 20 year old student wants to discuss films by Ingmar Bergman and Satyajit Ray and I find myself wondering, "where did they even find these films"?

Just being able to share my passion for film and for filmmaking is very enjoyable. Even right now, I'm teaching a web series course and my students are working so hard. They're coming in and they haven't slept because they're looking for a location or casting, or scheduling and it's great to see them work with so much passion.

It's very easy for a student to be like, "Sir bas kerein," but they're actually putting in all the work. And I think just being able to impart that knowledge and seeing younger people be as passionate about film as I am, that's one of the reasons why I'm here. And LUMS itself as a university is fantastic. The fact that we're doing this interview right now is a perfect example. The whole campus is brewing with optimistic student energy. It's been a great experience being a part of the faculty here.

Saadia: Since we're also talking about art forms and all, Eid is around the corner and we know what kind of movies are released on Eid, we know it's those run of the mill Bollywood-esque movies. And that's what the majority of the audience prefers. Has that sort of ever pushed filmmakers like you in the industry to change routes, or pursue something different to sort of better realign yourself with the public?

Tabish: So, I don't think that's necessarily what the general public likes. I think that's just what they're given to watch. So let's look at this Eid release model. You have maybe 10-15 films come out in a year. First of all, that's nothing. You should have at least 100 films coming out in a year. If you have a hundred films, then you can get data where you can actually see what the public likes.

Then you don't have to release them on Eid. It's like you have four films that are coming out, they're all going against each other. Why don't you spread them out since the amount of films released is so low? How is this helping the films do any form of legitimate business? I think that happened last year with films like Legend of Maula Jatt, Joyland, and Kamli. Kamli did pretty well at the box office, considering it was an art film, clearly showing there is a demand for such films. You have to trust the intelligence of your audience. Commercial cinema in Pakistan tends to shy away from that approach.

Even with Joyland, I know so many people who don't come from privileged backgrounds who went with their family and friends to watch the film and were so moved by it that they went for repeat screenings. And you see this all the time in India. Look how big their industry is and how many cinemas they have. They're all not just watching the big Akshay Kumar blockbuster. They're watching films that provide an honest representation of their society, discussing themes that they relate to and these films make decent returns. It's because they're releasing so many films and it's because their government realizes that their film industry is a reflection of how well their society is doing both economically and socially.

By the way, this is true for any country, whether you're an Islamic country or not.

A successful film industry often reflects a successful economy. I think it's something that should probably get more consideration from the government, especially if your films are getting international recognition, rather than appeasing right leaning politicians.

Now you've gotten me started on Censorship.



Fatima: No, no, haha, go ahead. That was my next question already.

Tabish: Okay, great.

So the biggest problem with censorship in this country is when you make a censor board even if you have qualified, level-headed, unbiased folks heading that censor board, even if the film is approved by the censor board, any citizen of Pakistan can go to court and say, "I want this film banned" and the film will be banned.

This is what happened with Joyland. Three censor boards were formed to look at this film and they all approved it. Yet the film remains banned in Punjab.

So anybody can ban anything whenever they want - which is a huge problem and a lot of filmmakers have suffered in Pakistan dating back to the 70's.

In other countries you have rating systems. A film goes through the rating system, it gets a rating. It's rated R, PG 13, or G. Once that rating is there, the distributors have to follow that rating - there's nothing anyone can do. In Iran, because they have a more comparatively evolved film industry, they appoint religious scholars who review films and that person decides whether a film should be banned or not. They have somebody specific from their clergy to watch the film. My point is the censor board is a ridiculous concept, and it's designed to create complications that help nobody involved.

Fatima: So is all of this, like, you know, I would say red tape, in getting your film approved, does it ever make you demotivated in the sense that "I guess I didn't make it". What are the priorities of the system right now and how does it affect the way that you think about movies? Does it ever hit you?

Tabish: No. Not at all. If anything, it motivates me.

When you're making a film, the last thing you should think about is whether this will be banned.

So what I tell all my students is, it's a step-by-step process, right? There's pre-production, there's production, there's post-production, then there is release.

When you're at the writing stage, you think about what your audience is and what you want to say - you're not making a film entirely for yourself. So I think Joyland is a film that kept both local and foreign audiences in mind. That's how I go about writing my stories. I don't want to make a film just for Pakistan. I don't want to make a film just for abroad. I don't want to be any of those things. I want to make films that relate to people on both sides of the coin.

With regards to the banning, no. I don't think that's something that I should ever be concerned about because right now is actually a very interesting time. This industry has opened up Internationally for South Asians. In the West, where they have more developed industries, they are looking for international stories. Parasite won the Oscar for Best film a couple of years ago. Even this year, Joyland was part of the shortlist for the Oscars. There is a demand for these stories now.

And I think one of the positives that we have is that foreign audiences don't really know what Pakistani stories are. When I showed "May I have this seat?" to an audience in London, one of the compliments that I got, I mean I take it as a compliment, was that we've never seen faces like this before. They weren't sure if Pakistanis are like Indians or Saudis.



We're very diverse as a country, I think we find all kinds of people, if you go from the north all the way down to Sindh, you will see all kinds of faces and they go through their own trials and tribulations.

Every person that you see in this country has their own story and for me, the motivation of finding out what that story is and bringing it to an audience is way bigger than my fear of being banned or being silenced.

Obviously it's a terrible reality. It's not nice to experience something like that, but no, I don't think that things being banned should stop you from doing what you want to do. That's one of the fundamental things that I would say to my students.

The seeking of truth in storytelling is very, very important.

Saadia: I think I want to bring back the conversation to LUMS and students here. Obviously, a part of this interview is to share your experiences and your learnings with the students at large. What other advice would you have for creatives, not only in film making, but creatives in general? She's a creative. I'm a creative in the sense I love makeup, I would love to pursue makeup as an art but that's a matter of support. So just in general, what advice would you have for creatives?

Tabish: I would say if you pursue whatever creative interest you have, like let's take something like makeup, you can make a decent living pursuing that field.. It's not like it was 25 years ago. With the growth of the fashion and film industry, makeup artists can make a decent living, it's just the industry is very competitive and one has to be very hardworking and resilient to achieve success. The fashion industry for example is huge in Lahore. If you keep at it and get yourself involved in shoot after shoot, you'll make your mark on the industry. Be smart about freelancing.

That's what I would say to young creatives. Be very smart about freelancing and know your worth and your value, there's enough work going on around the country where you can make a living for yourself as a creative. I don't think it's impossible in any way.

You'll start off not getting paid as much, might even have to work pro bono, but as you keep working, you will get paid more. People have a tendency to compare the opportunities here to the ones abroad without really realising how competitive it is over there. Not to say that people can't make it there, but it's way more competitive. It is easier to get work where you can express yourself creatively here and I think people, especially young students, don't really understand the value of something like that. I have benefited so much from being able to express myself creatively in Pakistan.

If I was still settled abroad, I don't think I would have had the opportunity to experiment and find my own voice as a storyteller. My understanding of being a Pakistani and the stories I want to tell and the creatives I've worked with are all based here.

This is why I would say if you have a creative passion for something and you want to pursue it, you will find ways to make it happen. Most families are a bit apprehensive about their children going into a creative field but I personally feel that the mindset is changing. I think the professionalism that has come into the creative industries and the success stories that have been unearthed as a result are a big reason for that.

Fatima: That's all for the interview. Thank you so much for your time, this was fun!

Tabish: Thank you for having me.

humanities
degree ka



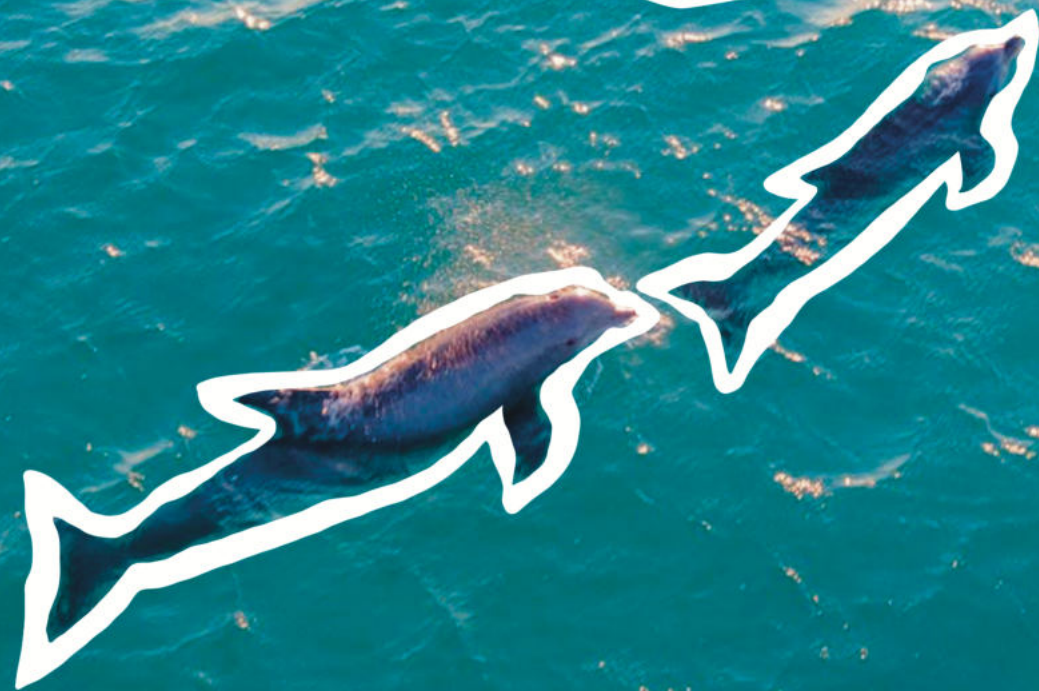
hai?

bohat
scope hai bhai



Swimming with the Water: *an Essential Guide*

BY URWA FATIMA



*sink or
swim?*



Disclaimer: This guide will be the most useful for students learning swimming at LUMS aquatic centre. It might not teach you how to swim, but it will definitely teach you what your swimming instructors would not.

Part I: Befriending Water

This requires some depth, so bear with me.

A polite greeting:

You will be surrounded by water for the next hour, so why not make it your friend? Now slowly lower yourself into the water. Make sure you pause the moment your toe greets the water. Ponder for a split second on the temperature of the water. Is it too cold? Is it too hot? Or is it just the right amount of hot and cold? Hate to break it to you, but it will always be too cold for you. So, remember, only a split second, it is rude to keep the water waiting, and you don't want to give your brain enough time to convince you not to enter the pool at all.

The first impression:

When you are fully immersed in the water, feel it, feel the water. Does it lie smooth and serene as it traces its fingers along your body? Or does it have the sharpness and stinginess of chlorine? Is it excited to have you and keeps licking your cheeks and burbling? Or does it roil like an angry spirit and sweeps you away? Is sad? Can you feel the loneliness? Or does it not respond at all? Which means you have loads to work on. Whatever it is, it's your home, so start flowing around and make it yours.

A Game:

Here is a game you can play with water: There are three different colours of the pool. List all three of them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In the shallow, it's light blue, and in the deep, it's dark blue. Easy to spot. But what about the third colour? That requires some effort and a little help from our friend, water. You would have to put on your goggles, stick your head in, and explore the unknown. You would circle around the edges; you would have to know how to swim to go any further in. And you could keep on circling the edges for hours on end but couldn't find the third colour. A point would come when you would start to believe that there is no third colour, that this guide just wanted to make a fool out of you. But trust me, if anything, it is to help you.

So here is a trick:

There are two pool lane dividers in the pool that you always thought were candy canes. Grab the second last one and make your way through the water until you reach almost the centre.

Here is how you will know you are exactly at the centre:

It is calm there and a little warmer, too, almost as if the water has taken you in its embrace. From high above, sunrays fall on you as if you are on stage and in the spotlight. You start to feel magical, and it indeed is because you are at the heart of the water, and you can feel it beating in smooth rhythms. You will lose yourself in this place. You will feel like it's just you and water and no one else, not the twenty other students trying to swim as they splash their way into the water, not the instructors yelling at the students as they catch their mistakes. It's just you, water, the sunray, and the smooth beating. Here, the water shares its secret with you: the third colour.

If you look deep into the water's eyes, you will see, behold, the third colour.

Part II: A journey together

Now teaching you how to swim isn't really this guide job; what are your instructors for if not to turn you into a ruthless swimmer? So, let's jump to the part where you know how to swim. At least somewhat.

To further strengthen your bond with the water, you have to go on a journey together, from one end to another.

The first breath:

You stand there on the dark blue line that runs the pool's length, ready for your first-ever lap. Inhale. Do it deeply. Exhale. Do it all at once and trap the rest in your mouth as you inflate it. Simultaneously take a push from the wall behind you and propel forward. Let your body loose, as light as a piece of paper, until it springs to the surface and floats. At this point, start kicking your legs and moving your hands like a row of a boat. Swimming is just like dancing. It's all about coordination. Move your legs and hands gently through the water; you don't want to slap the water with your hands and feet not long after becoming friends with it.

You catch the sun rays in the water, and the water even whispers into your ear, and your lips stretch into a simile. Water washes away all the stew that was cooking in your head after that bad economics quiz you just gave and makes you focus on only and only itself. You keep on moving ahead and think about nothing but how peaceful it is being in water's lap.

The second breath:

You are lost in the reverie until you realize you have lungs instead of gills. You have travelled almost one-third of the distance and have started to feel the hands of water get tighter around your neck. It gets darker, and you feel alone. And the friendly whispers turn into poisonous hisses.

You need to breathe. But you don't breathe. You are too scared that water will invade your lungs.

You steal a glance to your right, and it looks like angry clouds of grey, and you don't know where they end. You continue to kick your legs and sploosh your hands, but now you are above the machines at the base of the deepest part of the pool. Oh, these machines. You have always imagined these machines would suck you in, and you would be there at the very bottom with some body part of yours stuck in it, dying gradually as you fight the water for some air.

Breathe before it strangles you! Exhale! Blow in and push the water away! Breathe! Turn your neck towards the right and along with your right arm, take your face out of the water.

Remember: when you take your face out to breathe, it's very important to look up directly into the blinding light. After this much darkness, you deserve the light. Only when you look 180 degrees will you be able to dodge the water and inhale. And instantly put your face back on it. You will lose balance for a second; your body will start to tremble, and you will feel like you are being engulfed by water, but listen, don't stop kicking!

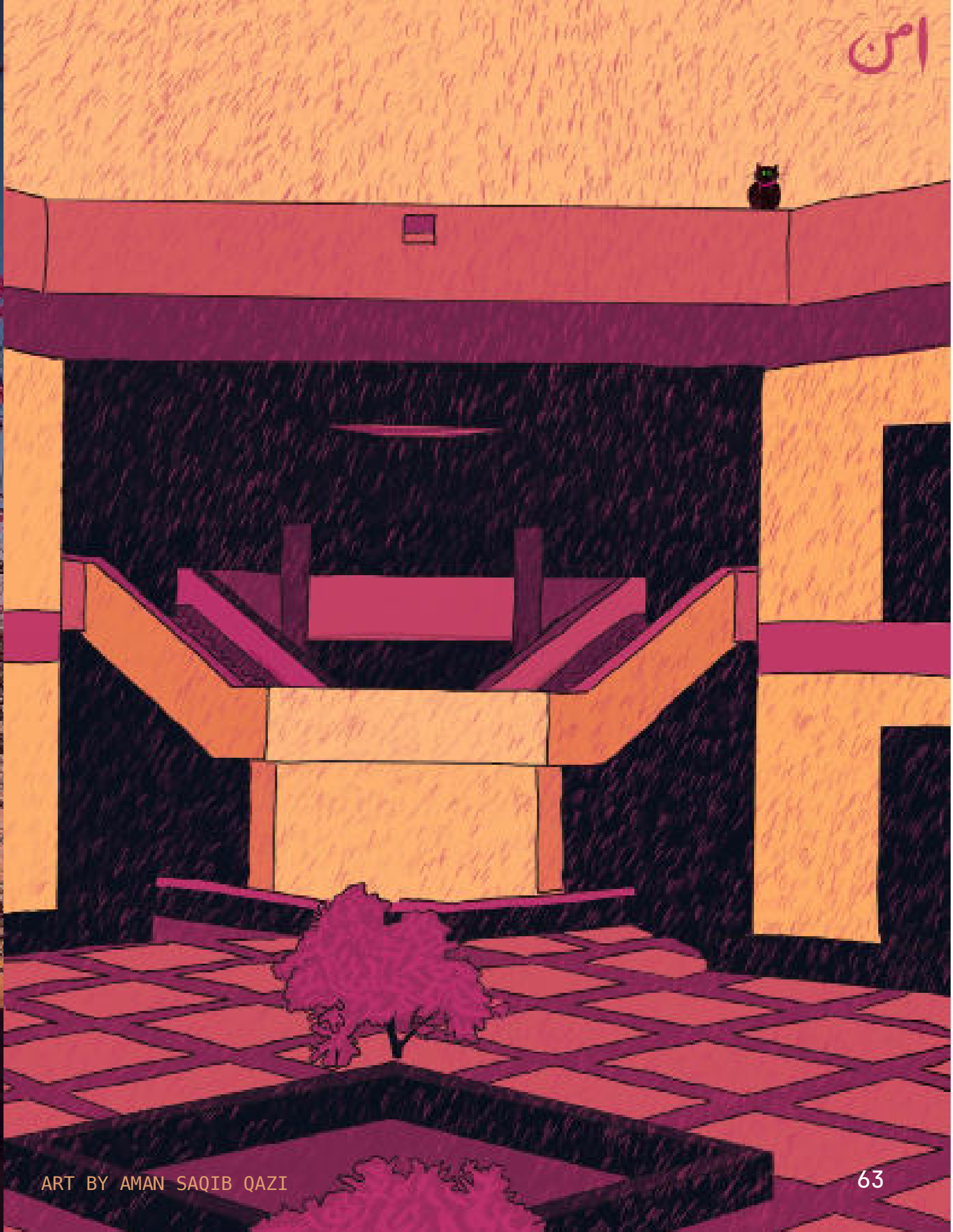
And the many to follow:

With renewed energy, you are back on pace, flowing through the water as you can see the floor again. You can even see the shadows of the ripples as water smiles and greets you at the other end. It stretches a hand and pulls you through the last few inches so that your hand touches the other end of the pool.

And that's how you will complete a lap. Your first-ever lap. Together with water.

Part III: A Celebration

Don't be shy to celebrate your small victories. And this one particularly calls for a dance. But you don't know how to dance, so water teaches you its special water dance. There are important steps: you clench your fist and move your arms in a horizontal circular motion. Then you start moving your body in circles, and you start jumping. Then you are doing a lot of things simultaneously and forget the order. You do what it feels like: wobbling and wobbling in water as the water swirls in excitement around you.





NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

You're gonna graduate and it's gonna be
fine. Don't sweat it too much. Enjoy!

— Sana Tahir
20020165



NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

Be kind to each other
and don't compare your trajectory
with your hatch fellows. Try not to
control everything and enjoy the
flow. I am sure things will
work out. Good luck!



NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

Things work out eventually,
just ~~keep~~ enjoy your time
while you're here!



کسی کی سوچ کے سانچے میں ڈھل نہیں سکتا
میں ٹوٹ سکتا ہوں لیکن بدل نہیں سکتا

یہی تھا میں کہ اُلجھتا تھا آسمانوں سے
یہی ہوں میں کہ زمیں پر سنبھل نہیں سکتا

جو ٹھان لی تھی، میں گامزن ہوں اس طرح اس پر
بھٹک تو سکتا ہوں، رستہ بدل نہیں سکتا

بلا کا حوصلہ آیا ہے گر کے اٹھنے سے
اگرچہ سب کو لگا تھا سنبھل نہیں سکتا

میں آندھیوں کے مقابل بھی آج انور ہوں
کہاں ہیں وہ جو سمجھتے تھے جل نہیں سکتا

Faculty Travels: Asma Faiz, Oxford

Being the Rangoonwalla fellow at the Contemporary South Asia Program at the School of Global and Area Studies has afforded me a great opportunity to be part of the academic community at Oxford during the Trinity Term 2023. My participation in the academic activities of the South Asia Program includes regular interaction with the faculty, discussion on scholarly research in progress and meetings with Masters, M. Phil. and Ph.D. students specializing in South Asian studies. In some sense, the academic environment at Oxford overlaps with LUMS in terms of topics and themes at the heart of teaching and research.

I have come across research projects covering issues such as archiving partition; the division of heritage between Lahore and Chandigarh museums in 1947 and beyond; space and conflict in Karachi and the Indo-Chinese strategic rivalry.

Of course, in addition to commenting on the on-going research projects of colleagues and students at Oxford, I am expected to present my own research here. This involves my on-going work on politics of populism which I will be presenting at King's College London as well as at St. Antony's Oxford this month. I look forward to completion of a productive stay in Oxford and its relevance for my continuing engagement with the life at LUMS back home.





For the past two semesters, the start of a semester has meant a new puzzle for the Dean's Office - Dr Ali brings in a 1000 piece story for everyone to put together. Everyone, including the Dean himself, the career services executive, advising unit, social media person, the managers and the office support staff, is heavily invested in the project, using every break (and sometimes staying overtime) to get the job done. Visitors in the office are always intrigued and welcomed to help as well. We have now successfully completed the World of Frankenstein and the World of Dracula - stay tuned to find out what puzzle we solve next!



House of Memories

ALUMNI CONTRIBUTION - MANAAL AHMED

I am at LUMS and it still feels like home. I have not been to my dorm in more than a month but LUMS is still home. It's comfortable and I can sit anywhere. It is like an instinct to know where to go, and what to do. But for how long? I remember when I used to visit my school and it still felt like home. Then one day it wasn't. LUMS became my new home. My school hadn't lost its charm though, it just felt more like a memory than a possession. I still have LUMS. But for how long? How long before I feel uneasy again? Before I forget where to go? Before they change some small thing that makes it look too new. Not like my LUMS?

I guess the good thing is you can always build new homes. I know I will make a cosy little corner anywhere in the world. I just wished that I didn't have to lose to gain. I could keep all my homes and build new ones. Just sort of freeze every place exactly as I remember it and go off and explore. When I come back it's exactly the same. But nope. Time wants to move.

It moves and meanders and changes; everything all the time.

**I have been trying to teach myself to let myself go along with it.
Just float on its tide and see where I go.**

But every island I reach is a milestone. Every island is home and for a while, I feel like I have finally stopped drifting. I found myself an anchor to withstand the waves of time. But nope. It's always time to move again. And I slowly see my little island disappear. God knows how many homes I've constructed and lost. Some succumb to the sea and are lost forever. Some remain but are changed forever. All that remains are memories of how things once were.

All we have are memories we collect like little rocks from the beach are trinkets to have and to hold. To wear proudly or hide away. Sometimes to throw away in disgust. I wonder how many memories people have of me. If they hear me in their favourite song? Do they think of me when they see curly hair? Do they say, "I wonder what Manaal would say right now?" Do they remember my laugh? I know I do. In the end, there is nothing you can do but let go. Float on ahead and think of all that you've lost and all you are about to gain.

I guess there is nothing more to say. Just, if all of life is but an act of remembering, then *promise me a place in your house of memories?*

تیرے حسن کی بھی کیا وضاحت کروں
مجھے وہ الفاظ ملتے ہی نہیں
جن سے تیرے رخسار کی رعنائی کو
بیان کر سکوں

تیرے ہونٹوں کو داد دے سکوں
تیری آنکھوں کا جام پی سکوں
تیری زلفوں سے انصاف کر سکوں
الفاظ کم پڑ جاتے ہیں

یہ بتانے میں
کہ تیری پلکیں بے مثال ہیں
اور تیرے ابروؤں سے

ترتیبِ جہاں ہے
تیرے یہ ہاتھ یدِ بیضا سے
کم تر نہ روشن ہیں

تیری باہیں میری پناہ گاہ ہیں
مگر فقط یہ الفاظ تیرے حسن کو
بیان کرنے کے لیے
موزوں نہیں

تیرے حسن کے کتنے ہی پہلو ہیں
سب کو یکساں کیسے تولوں
کن کن لفظوں کا انتخاب کروں
یہی اندیشہ رہتا ہے
کہ میں اگر بحرِ حروف سے ایسا
گوہر نہ لا سکوں
جو تیری خوبصورتی سے
مطابقت رکھتا ہو
تو تیرے حسن کی کہیں
گستاخی نہ ہو جائے
تیری نزاکت، تیرے جمال کا
جب جب چرچا چلتا ہے
میرے تخیلات، میرے کلمات
اک

زندادان میں قید ہو جاتے ہیں
اور
ان کی رسائی
محدود ہو جاتی ہے

باغبان

STUDENT VENTURE FEATURE: ABDUL MOEEZ

Baghban spurred from a First Year's yearning for the vacation time he used to spend with plants before coming to LUMS. I had always had this urge to tell others about the "extraordinary" that nature hides beneath the cloak of the "ordinary", to point excitedly towards the somewhat exotic plants or insects that I'd come across on the roadside or greenbelt while taking a stroll with friends or family, and to tell others about the new leaf that my monstera is trying to push out! This love for nature, combined with a sense of financial responsibility and a wish to put a shovel and a watering can in everyone's hand led me to the conception of *Bāghbān*. Today it's a small business bringing joy on people's faces with cheerful plants in pretty pots, but it aspires to be a small shop with a garden, a library, and a tiny bakery on the side!





NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

It's always so good to be part
of the MASHS school. Everyone
from the staff & faculty are
so welcoming. I have made great
friends here: Sophiya, Hanan,



Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmami
School of Humanities and Social Sciences



NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

Had some of the best time here! Always great to be
back! Thank you for making me the person I am today!



Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmami
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

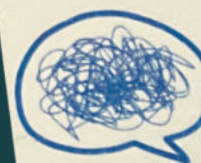


NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

Please don't forget to exercise.
You will never get enough space to walk
again.



Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmami
School of Humanities and Social Sciences



NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

Don't let anyone tell you what you
should be doing with your life and
career - most of all your own
pre-conceived notions about what
success looks like for you. Explore different
possibilities, and allow yourself to dream
of things you don't even dare to
right now.

And BE KIND to everyone!

Zinnia B.
Batch of 2011



Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmami
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

reflections of an
ENV-102
student



Reflections of an ENV-102 Student

A PROJECT ON STUBBLE BURNING

These were the concluding days of our ENV-102 course, and Dr. Sana Khosa, our instructor, had already provided us with the guidelines for our final project.

Our group sought to tackle an issue that resonated with most of us, and what could be more relatable and relevant than the smog in our own city of Lahore?

Thus we started to explore various aspects and causes of air pollution in Lahore. To our surprise, we stumbled upon an issue that significantly contributed to air pollution but received inadequate attention in public discourse. This issue was stubble burning.

Stubble burning is the common practice of burning crop residue, left over after harvesting. This is done to get rid of unwanted crop waste and to clear the lands quickly for the next crop but its consequences are disastrous. This false practice has become a major environmental issue, with far-reaching consequences that affect not only the health of the people but also the economy and sustainability of the region.

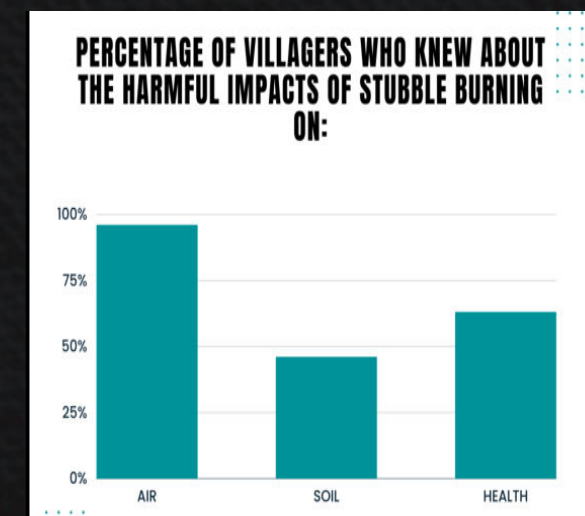
According to a comprehensive source apportionment study conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in 2018, crop burning accounts for 20% of air pollutant emissions in Pakistan. According to an estimate, the share of stubble burning in Lahore's pollution is around 38-40% which is quite significant. Besides contributing to air pollution, stubble burning also degrades the quality of the fertile soil by damaging the healthy microflora and microfauna present in soil. Moreover, vital nutrients are lost due to this practice. In addition to this, stubble burning further leads to serious health implications.

Dr Saleem Uz Zaman Adhami, The Head of Pulmonology Department in Shalamar Hospital, told us that during the period of harvesting of paddy and burning of straw, the air quality is severe. This can cause symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, runny nose, and sore throat. In some cases, individuals may experience more severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, wheezing, and chest pain. Carbon monoxide - a poisonous gas is released due to paddy straw burning. The smoke caused by stubble burning contains fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), volatile organic compounds and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. These are known risk factors for lung cancer. Respirable particles cause asthma, cough and cancers in children and pregnant women.

After learning about all these disastrous effects of stubble burning, our group set out to find solutions to this pressing problem. We met with Dr Khalid Mehmood, Assistant Director Agriculture Khanewal, to understand the government's initiatives in this regard. He told

us about different campaigns and policies of the government including the anti-stubble burning law in Punjab. We met with Choudhary Rameez Zafar, Assistant Commissioner MianChannu, to discuss the challenges faced by law enforcement agents in implementing this law. He told us that section-144 is imposed in Punjab from October each year and a fine of Rs 50,000 is imposed on the culprits.

While stakeholders often blame farmers for these detrimental activities, our investigation did not end there. We recognized that there must be an underlying cause behind this problem. To comprehend why farmers resort to burning straw and stubble, we conducted surveys in the villages. Firstly, to assess farmers' awareness of the harmful effects of stubble burning, we administered physical questionnaires consisting of three simple questions. The results, depicted in the graph below, were surprisingly astonishing.



We spoke directly with villagers and farmers. Their insightful perspectives shed light on the underlying reasons behind this detrimental practice. They candidly expressed the financial hardships they face, compounded by the lack of efficient government policies. The high costs of fuel and labor were major concerns they highlighted. Additionally, they lamented the absence of modern technology and efficient machinery for harvesting, making it challenging to adopt alternative methods that could prevent stubble burning. Moreover, the unavailability of funds further hindered their ability to transition to better and more sustainable harvesting practices.

During this whole research the main issue that we observed was that farmers deem stubble as a waste and therefore resort to burning it whereas we firmly believe that there are numerous efficient and sustainable uses for stubble and straw.



One such application involves incorporating them into the soil to enhance its fertility. Additionally, the straw can be utilized by paper mills for the production of paper and cardboard, reducing the demand for virgin materials. Furthermore, it can be processed in feed mills to manufacture nutritious animal feed, addressing the needs of the agricultural sector. By exploring these alternative avenues, we can not only mitigate stubble burning but also tap into the potential of this valuable resource for various beneficial purposes.

In conclusion, the underlying culprit in the persistent practice of stubble burning ultimately boils down to a lack of awareness.

This awareness gap encompasses two critical aspects: the limited understanding of the detrimental impacts of stubble burning on our environment, and the unfamiliarity with the various efficient and beneficial uses of stubble and straw. It is crucial for governments, stakeholders, and society as a whole to prioritize spreading awareness about this pressing issue, particularly among village farmers. Initiatives must be taken to educate them about the negative consequences and the alternative methods available. Additionally, concerted efforts from the government and private companies are needed to address the supply chain issue and foster the incorporation of stubble into useful practices that would ultimately stop its burning. By raising awareness and implementing practical solutions, we can collectively strive towards a more sustainable and responsible approach to agriculture, safeguarding our environment for future generations.

As part of our research, we took an active role in raising awareness among village farmers. By engaging with these farmers directly, we aimed to empower them with knowledge and practical solutions. It is through such collaborative efforts that we can collectively bring about a positive change and encourage sustainable practices that benefit both the environment and the farming community.



Author's Introduction:

This project was led by Aalian Ubaid, a student of the Medical Enrichment Program i.e. the 6 Year Dynamic MBBS Program of LUMS and Shalamar Medical College. Aalian possesses a unique blend of medical expertise and a deep-rooted passion for environmental concerns.

Driven by a strong desire to make a difference, Aalian has a strong inclination towards the courses offered at MGS HSS. In his own words, "At LUMS, the school where I feel the most at home is MGS HSS."

Acknowledgments:

Aalian completed this project along with his group mates:

Minahil Zahid, Alishay Azim, Ali Asim, Laiba Abid, Preet Abbasi, Daima Hassan.



Of Sufferings and Joy: Cricket Fever in Pakistan

SAIF AHMED

In a country where crises, intolerance and hatred encapsulate only a fraction of the realities felt by its citizens, it only becomes a matter of time that our grievances find a temporary escape in one unifying force, cricket. Such is the strength of this force, that even the slightest of our differences, over which we are prepared to shed blood, become trivial, and we suddenly begin living up to a third of our motto we so passionately chant.

A unianmous roller-coaster like experience

Even though I find myself pondering over how cricket still hasn't been deemed the national sport, I can't help but be mesmerized by its ability to invoke such a diverse array of emotions within us, and how it, admittedly, is part and parcel of our identity. Every Pakistani household can relate to the euphoria we all have, at some point, experienced, as we witness scenes of ecstasy on our television screens and laud our country's triumph. Conversely, we all have borne the uncomfortable silence that accompanies the anguish we experience seeing our countrymen falling short in a closely contested match. A silence, so ironically deafening, that it appears to strike at the very core of our being. (Source: ICC)

Being an avid cricket fan for as long as I can remember, I can testify to the duality of the experience; I've had my fair share of witnessing both exemplary and dreadful performances by the men in green. And given our team's inconsistent pattern of victories, which has rightly earned us the title of the 'unpredictables', it would be wrong to say that we feel these highs and lows infrequently. As English commentator Nasser Hussain once aptly remarked: "Pakistan Cricket at its best! One minute down, next minute up."

Are we masking our woes through cricket?

But where once I viewed my passion for the sport as solely a consequence of my 'love for the country', I now am confronted with questions and confusions challenging this notion: Should the reason behind our infatuation with cricket be simplified merely to hyper-nationalism or has it been moulded by the social context around us? Was it the crippling state of the economy or the rise of rampant extremism that left us deprived of any source

of contentment, with the hues and cries of reform eventually dissolving into silence? Or was it the fall of our once flourishing cinema industry, or worse yet, the declining state of Hockey and Squash, in which our countrymen once reigned supreme? Have our failures compelled us to grapple onto the one thing which we have held dear for generations? After all, you truly crave something when you feel incomplete. And it's certainly no secret that amidst the air of melancholy, cricket is that one knot which invariably ties us together. Perhaps that's the reason why we're prepared to invest our time and emotions, sacrifice work and school, and divert our attention away from the ensuing turmoil, in hopes that we see our country emerge victorious. (Source: Geo.Tv)

The Way Forward

What perplexes me, however, isn't merely the immense satisfaction we derive from cricket; rather, it's the sense of harmony, of togetherness, that is felt across every nook and corner of Pakistan. That the very same streets where people spew expletives and express their animosity for one another in broad daylight, can be engulfed by a wave of jubilation by dusk. And all that you can see from the distance is an enigmatic bundle of green, signifying a glimmer of hope- that we too can co-exist amongst ourselves- as a fraternity. It's rightfully a matter of shame, that a mere game of bat and ball is all that was needed to instill the slightest bit of humanity within us, and it made me reflect on how low we have stooped to reach where we are. Yet, we can be inspired by the immense power it holds to connect each and everyone of us. So while we find ourselves overwhelmed by despondency, cricket serves remind us that we possess the ability to cherish each other's company, to embrace our differences, and to grow collectively as a single community, as one Pakistan. That is, after all, what Jinnah would have wanted.

‘Live as one and you shall prosper, for in unity, you have a force unparalleled.’

Women in Cities: *An In-depth Study of Lahore's Orange Train and the Changing Ecology of Urban Space*

JAVARIA AHMAD
LAIBA ALI

“Zara Socho bachay: Hum auraton ki kia zindagi hai? Ghar sam-bhalo, khana pakao aur safai karo, aur phir apnay walid, shohar, aur betay ka intezaar kro k humein sheher mein kahin le jayen kiun k safe nae hai. Ye sheher humaray liyay thori hain, balkay mard hazraat ka raj hai. Hum sheher mein bahir ghoomnay nae jaa sktay. Pr mein kehtin hon bas, buht hogaya. Ye ab orange train buht achi option hai. Train pakro aur jao ghoomo phiro poora Lahore dekho!

(just think about it: what is our life like? Stay at home cooking and cleaning, and then, wait for our fathers, husbands, and sons to take us out or accompany us in our own city because it is not safe. These cities are not for us, but men rule the urban spaces. We can't access the city spaces for recreational purposes. But I say: enough. The Orange Train is a great option now. Get on the orange train and explore the city of Lahore. Enjoy!). (Ali, Interview, April 27, 2023).



This is not just the story of Shehnaz Ali, a housewife, but millions of other women in the urban centers of Pakistan who have failed to develop a relationship with their own city because their mobility is limited based on several factors, including finding the public transportation system unsafe or unreliable.

Cities are designed by and from the point of view of male planners that suits their needs and makes cities gendered, including commercial and public spaces, parking lots, public transit, and office buildings.

Mass transit is one major part of city planning, which excludes women from this realm, making it difficult for them to access the urban space, especially at nighttime. Across the globe, public transportation is the hub of victimization of women on a daily basis where “84% of Bangladeshi women experienced staring, deliberate touching, groping, and sexual comments while traveling” (Mazumder and Pokharel 2019).

Similarly, in Pakistan, many women, including students and employees, who have no alternative mode of transportation have to rely on the public transportation system, where they become victims of harassment in the form of groping, catcalling, and inappropriate touching, including by bus conductors and other passengers. The cultural norms of Pakistan dictate that a woman should remain in the domestic sphere, unlike men, who are free to occupy any space in the city corner and do not fear using public transportation both at day and night to access those places. However, women are concerned for their safety while using public transport at all times. A medical student shared, “I used to take a local wagon to my college because we don’t own a private vehicle. Believe me, the driver would keep staring at my face and then shift his gaze to my breasts even though I wore a big chadar. He would play songs with dirty lyrics. I felt uncomfortable, especially when there were fewer women during the ride” (Rehman, Interview, April 27, 2023).



Figure 1 and 2: Women at the Ali Town Station without any male guardian

On a bright sunny day, at 10am, we entered the Ali Town Station, covered in dupattas in order to avoid drawing unnecessary attention for our own safety, to observe and engage with women who have used traditional modes of public transportation, including qingqis, rickshaws, wagons, and buses but have now shifted to the Orange Line train for daily commute. Women entered and exited the station and the train, alone and in groups as we stood there, taking notes primarily to understand, analyze, and showcase how the new public mass transit system has influenced or changed women’s experiences and interactions with the urban space.

At 11.10am, we decided to board the train and ride till Dera Gujran, the last station, thereby completing the entire train route. The journey unveiled how the Orange Line train has modified women’s ecology with the urban space across multiple levels, including affordability, safety and security, comfort, commute-time, and accessibility. The functioning of the Orange Line train in Lahore has drastically changed public transportation, as this new system of mass transit is safer for women, of all age groups, traveling alone. It is also friendly for women from lower income households and makes their commute easier with air-conditioned and clean cabins. While we sat down on the stairs to take a break and grab a quick bite of the sandwiches, we had packed for ourselves, we delved deeper into the question: have women finally found the right solution to their mobility problem? The answer lies in the unpacking of the stories, experiences, observations, and random conversations on the train.



Figure 3, 4 and 5: Local van, Qingqi and the new OLT - Google Images

The Nexus between Accessibility and Mobility

“In the given transit infrastructure in Pakistan, the only possible mode of transport that is considered ‘respectable’ enough for women is using personal transport” (Masood 2017). However, while a semi-private transport like using an Uber gives a sense of a ‘private’ space, owning a car and being able to consistently pay for an Uber or rickshaw is a luxury for many. The train stopped at Thokar Niaz Baig station. Women made their way into the cabin. One held a medical toolbox in her left hand and her purse in the other. We approached her to find out that she works as a nurse in a clinic.

She shared, “they have changed the policy now. First it was 40 rupees, but now, based on the distance, the fare ranges from 25 to 40 rupees. Imagine how easy it is for me to travel to the hospital daily in an air-conditioned train. Pehle mein 2 wagons mein dhakay khati thi (before this, I had to switch between two wagons to reach my destination). I don’t earn a lot monthly, and if I take rickshaws, so much of my income would be spent there” (Hameed, Interview, April 27, 2023). The train is not only accessible for

women who are in their 30s, but younger women also share the same sentiment, “I use this to go to NCA daily. My fare is only 40 rupees, and as a female student traveling alone, it is extremely accessible and safe for me. Before this, I would take a rickshaw, and it would cost me roughly 450 for a one-way commute. I can afford a rickshaw and Careem, but personally the Orange Train is more accessible for the same route” (Ashraf, Interview, April 27, 2023). This highlights that despite the differences in age and social class, women have developed a preference for the train for its accessibility in terms of both fare and route.

An important accessibility advantage of the train is that it has proper stations and arrangements for people who have disabilities. Public transportation such as qingqi and local buses do not have ramps, wheelchair access, or proper stations, and people have to wait on the roadside bus stop or qingqi points. According to Saima Anjum, a 50-year-old housewife, “my younger daughter is on a wheelchair. We have to do monthly hospital visits. We use the station elevator to access the train and where this cabin has space for a wheelchair.

Ab mard ki zarurat nae humein hospital leke janay ki (we don’t need a man now to take us to the hospital).

Pehle bari takleef hoti thi beti ko rickshaw mein leke janay mein (it was not convenient to take her in a rickshaw). There is no space for the wheelchair, and we can’t afford to call a car.” She added “ mery apni Kamar mein itni dard rehti hai pr isme safar araam say hota hai poori seatein hain khuli (I also suffer from chronic back pain, but here I can travel easily because of spacious cabins)” (Interview, May 5, 2023).

In terms of accessibility and mobility, from a housewife dropping her son off to school, to a working woman going to her job, to a woman traveling to the ID card office, to the girls going to take their grade 10 board exams, the train caters to different age groups of women from different social classes. They all had different experiences when traveling on local buses, wagons or rickshaws. Moreover, the new Orange Line connects important job hubs in Lahore, and the train has helped females take up new employment opportunities.

Sabeen Faisal shared “pehle meray miyan kehte thay tumne nae krni job. Itni dour mein zimedari nae le skta har roz chorne ki aur ab aap dekhein muje eik saal hogaya hai mene job shuru ki hai khud ati jati hon train pr. Rickshaw ka kiraya ziada banta tha aur wagon mein meray miyan akele Janay nae dete halaat ki waja say (my husband used to say no to me taking up a job because he didn’t want to give me the pick and drop duty. But now it’s been a year that I travel on my own on the train. Rickshaw fares are a lot, and my husband doesn’t let me use wagons alone)” (Interview, April 27, 2023).

It has also increased the mobility of women to take up more than two employment opportunities. One such example is that of Muqadas Aslam, a house help, who shared that she had started working at two houses. She takes the train from Ali Town to Canal View, and then at 1 PM goes to Samanabad using the same train for less than 100 rupees.

However, mobility does not only mean increasing women’s access to workplaces, but also for recreational purposes. While the train is not typically used for social purposes, many women also do that for, e.g., Ayesha Rehman shared that she saw Shalimar Bagh with her female friends, for the first time, and they used the Orange Train; “We packed picnic snacks in the nice weather in November and went to Shalimar Bagh. We had never seen it before” (Interview, April 27, 2023). Therefore, the train is helping women develop a bond with the city by exploring historical sites and urban spaces that women usually do not access.

Women’s Only Cabins: New Communal Spaces in Public Transportation

We had just crossed the Sabzazar station. We noticed two women talk to each other. One of them, a middle-aged woman stood up from her seat and in an authoritative voice said: “Please jayein yahan sey bahir, yeh sirf aurtoon ka section hai, yahan paar mard nahi aa saktay hain, ap mardon walay cabin mein kharay hon (Please go from this cabin. It is only for women. Go and stand in the men’s cabin)” (Naadia Ali, Observation, April 27, 2023).



Figure 6: Cabin for Women

For us, as researchers, it was quite interesting to note how a woman was guarding and protecting her space from outsiders. She was standing up on behalf of other fellow female passengers to stop men from entering the women-only cabin in the train – the only space that offered women privacy and freedom on this mode of public transportation.

Daphne Spain introduces us to the concept of making and reclaiming spaces, and in this scenario, we see a woman protecting and making the space not only for herself, but also for fellow women commuters in the public train. The segregated women’s cabin/compartment in the Orange Line Train serves as a social and emotional communal space. The separate compartment dominated by only women functions as a secluded and safe ‘zananna space’ for them.

As Kothari (2005) suggests, feminists have argued that the women only- ‘zananna space’ “...is not only sociable but may also be liberating in certain respects.”

The ‘zannana’ space, this cabin, it serves to change not only bodily, but behavioral dispositions of women commuters present in the train. We observed that women occupied the space very differently, which was visible from the way they sat and interacted with each other. In these friendly, yet so effortless interactions, women are given the opportunity to



share their everyday worries, tensions, sorrows, and happiness with each other. As one of the commuters said:

“Chalo, train mein kissi kou apnay dil ka haal suna deti hun, jaisay appkou sunaya, ab yeh jinnah hospital sey patti karwai hai, beta dua karna theek ho jaoun mein.

(I can speak my heart out with someone in the train like I shared it with you. Pray for me that I feel better soon)” (Imtiaz, Interview, April 27, 2023). The women-only train section serves to create a friendly, trustworthy, and close knitted space, that yet is a very mobile and temporary community that renews and reforms itself with changing stations.



Figure 7: A woman sitting very comfortably in Orange Line Train's 'zannana' space



Figure 8: women cramped with their children in a small seat of the Qingqi/ Google Images

In comparison to the Orange Line Train, traditional modes of transportation rarely allow women to sit in a relaxed and comfortable manner. Local vans and busses, which are used by the majority of our working-class women, are male dominated, unsecure, unsafe, and dangerous spaces. This is due to the fact that no CCTV cameras are installed, drivers and conductors also make women uncomfortable, and women are cramped up in a small space, which increases the chances of getting harassed.

While the Orange Line Train has freed many women from the tensions and concerns of safety, traffic jams, noise, and on-road accidents, it also offers many women to become flâneuse, which literally means to become a wanderer and observe the city space. “Notably, the flaneur (or flâneuse) favors places where the crowd is in a state of constant flux, because this allows him/her to be a voyeur, observing strangers without being observed”

(Mattioli 2014). The Orange Line train, with its transient yet stationary nature and design, provides many upper middle-class women to 'flaneur' around the city space. One such example is when we interviewed a third-year student from NCA who told us, "I have come with my university friends to explore Anarkali and the Railway Station. As an artist, I am really interested in Mughal history, paintings, and architecture." (Ashraf, Interview, April 27, 2023).

Moving Towards more Safe and Secure Modes of Daily Transportation

"Orange Line Train aik bohat achi saluhat hai, menay iss pay bohat safar kiya hua hai, mujeh kabhi daar nai laga (The Orange train is a great facility. I have traveled a lot on this and never felt afraid)" (Rehman, April 27, 2023).

Another woman listening carefully to the conversation moved near to us and added: "Beta, yahan paar security bhi bohat sakht hai, kissi kou bhi checking kay beghair andar nai anay detay. Agr young larkiayn akeli hon wo female guard k pass jakay khari hojati hain takay safe rahein (The security here is very tight. If young girls are alone, they go and stand next to the female guards and feel safer)" (Majeeda Qureshi, April 27, 2023).

There are a number of factors that add to the safety, security, and comfort on a particular transit system, including convenience, travel time, fare, staff behavior, CCTV cameras, and security checks.

The train stations have been planned, designed, and crafted very carefully, taking into account the issue of women safety and security, e.g., they are brightly lit up with security guards (male and female) present at both entrances and exits of different stations. Other safety features include the reserved train cabin for females, big CCTV cameras installed at the center of each station, and multiple brochures pasted on walls, with the helpline highlighted.

These features have allowed women to interact with the city space with less worry, more safety, and greater security. Given the issue of safety and security, it is important to recognize that an unaccompanied woman is more likely to face verbal (use of foul language), non-verbal (constant stares), and physical harassment (touching). This was pointed out by a middle aged-housewife who stated, "it is very difficult for a woman in Pakistan to travel on public transportation because you are constantly stared at, but, here, in the train, at least, there are many females who can protect each other in this cabin separate from men " (Ali, April 27, 2023).

Our interactions show that the Orange Line Train is transforming women's relationship with the urban space, offering them accessibility and freedom to wander and explore the city.



This train, in our male-dominated society, positions itself as a beaming light that offers multiple women the possibility to navigate what is otherwise a dark tunnel in which thousands of eyes gaze, stare, and examine women from head to toe, where countless hands emerge from every corner to touch and grope the female body.

Every woman walks with extra care, she looks left and right, adjusts her dupatta, and squeezes herself close to other women to make herself more secure. Even though the Orange Line has granted women more safety and security to travel, one must recognize that in this male-dominated society, for a woman it is an anomaly to be mobile without a man. A man must be there, even if he is present in the separate compartment of the train.

Just the presence of a man matters as the protector, guide, and savior of 'his' woman. Despite efforts to make transportation facilities women friendly, one cannot overlook the fact that in Pakistan, a woman is still seen as a man's honor (izzat), who needs to be protected, controlled, and saved. While some women take the train to hang out with their friends, such simple and relaxing entertainment is likely to be available to an upper middle class woman, but not to a working class woman who, as Saqib et al. argues, suffers from 'time poverty,' because she 'alone' has to bear extra burden of paid, unpaid, and emotional labor work.

As women, we question, is it too much to ask for: to feel safe in our own city space, to walk freely in our city, to feel safe on the public transportation? As one of our interviewees put it, the question then becomes:

“Kia auratein aisay ghar bethay ya bus mein dhakay khaati apni zindagi guzar dengi? Bahir niklna haq hai humara tou phir public transportation mahfooz kiun nae? Kon banayega inhe mahfooz humaray liyay, kon dega humara haq?”

(Will women spend their lives sitting at homes or suffering in buses? Getting out of the house is our right so why are not public transportation modes safe for us? Who will make them safe for us? Who will give us our right?)” (Ali, Interview, April 27, 2023). While we sift through the notes, recalling the stories of women, reflecting on our experience as two young female students in Lahore, we realize that the Orange Train is only a glimmer of hope; it is not the complete solution.

True change, true freedom, would only exist if efforts are made to make all modes of transportation accessible and safe for all women, who have the same right to the city as the men living in it so that they can reclaim and make space for themselves in the urban centers.



The Diffusion of MP3 Technology as a File Format for Music: A West vs. Pakistan Comparison

SHAANZEH NADEEM

This Spring, which was my last semester at LUMS, I had the opportunity to take HIST 3314 - Technology and Social Change with Professor Waqar Zaidi. Honestly, between the many classes on the campus grounds in pleasant weather and the lengthy discussions on cyborgs, this turned out to be the most intriguing and enjoyable history course I have ever taken (I would like to admit here that I am not what one would consider a fan of the subject itself so this was new for me). Given my own interest in music, I decided to look into technologies of music for my final paper. I ended up doing a comparative analysis of the diffusion and trajectory of the MP3 file format as a container for music in the West and in Pakistan. The topic was intriguing, yes, but I did my fair share of panicking when I realized that there was barely any information available on MP3 diffusion in Pakistan. While my research on the Western patterns relied on academic journals and books, for Pakistan, I set out to conduct my own research which included a questionnaire with 44 participants and 8 in depth interviews with both musicians and non-musicians. I also conducted an interview with a shopkeeper at one of Lahore's most popular CD stores in the early 2000s.

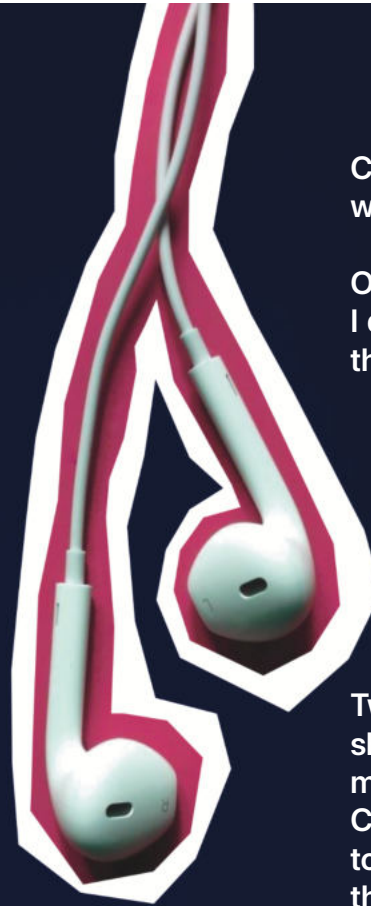
The interviewees I chose were from various socio-economic backgrounds and varied in age and gender.

I aimed to show that there were some ways in which the spread of this technology in Pakistan was similar to its diffusion in the West but certain socio-economic and cultural factors made its trajectory in Pakistan different.

To this effect, I looked into various factors including the digital divide between the two regions, class dynamics, religious beliefs, gender dynamics and outlook towards music piracy.

As anticipated, the reception of MP3 technology in Pakistan was quite different from the Western model. The first people to discover/adopt it were either involved in tech or musicians who kept up to date with new music technologies on the horizon. Most people found out about the MP3 file format by word of mouth.

While the Western reception of this technology was partially awe-driven, in Pakistan it was based mostly on its convenience and in some cases, consumers were just following a trend.



Curiously, there was barely any media coverage in Pakistan; no articles spotlighting what was, in the West, received as the latest game-changer in music.

One particular finding that I came across was so (for lack of a better word) random that I did not consider putting it in my paper until a second interviewee mentioned the same thing.

Apparently, the time period when the majority of consumers switched to MP3 for music, in Pakistan, can be traced back to 2003 and the release of “Aadat” by Jal The Band with renowned vocalist Atif Aslam.

Two interviewees, when asked about when exactly the general public at large began to shift to MP3, recalled this particular song's release. With this song, he was one of the first musicians in Pakistan to release a single entirely online in MP3 file format. With no official CD available at the time of release, the fans who had access to the internet, flocked online to download the song as an MP3 file and began circulating it amongst friends and family in the first few days following its release. Catchy melody and emotional lyrics aside, the fact that one specific song triggered something like this was fascinating.

Generally, the musicians in Pakistan who were already popular were affected negatively because people began downloading their music for free in MP3 format. However, underground musicians considered this a positive change because now they could release music independently online and reach more people. They were of the opinion that at least people were listening to their music (a sentiment I can relate to wholeheartedly being a struggling musician myself). At the time, most musicians in Pakistan primarily made money not through their CD sales but through their performances. Even though musicians lost money in sales, they gained popularity and were more likely to be approached for paid performances.

CD stores in Pakistan underwent a transformation with the rise of MP3 music. CD sales continued but because MP3 CDs can accommodate more songs, less CDs were being sold per customer. When MP3 players came about, CD sales began to decrease.

While the same thing happened in the West, this overall switch to MP3 devices was slower in Pakistan because not everyone had access to computers to download songs onto their devices and so CD sales persisted longer.

Nevertheless, I am sure we can all recall a time when iPods became the be-all and end-all of every privileged teenager. The shopkeeper I interviewed said that over the years, they have had to shift their merchandise to accommodate the changes and developments in consumption patterns. They had to slowly incorporate MP3 players and then phones. They still sell CDs but most of their products are gaming consoles, other video gaming equipment and phones now.

Despite there being some similarities in the Western and Pakistani diffusion model, there were some factors that not only affected the diffusion in Pakistan but also limited it to certain pockets of society.

One of the most prominent factors was the income disparity in Pakistan between various people as well as the unequal access to technology and digital literacy.

Naturally, in the early years of MP3 diffusion in Pakistan, few people had computers in their homes and one had to physically go to a CD store to get their music burned onto CDs. I know, it's unfathomable. Anyway, it was much later, when people had access to PCs that they started transferring the music to blank CDs themselves. One of the interviewees from a low-income background was a woman in her late twenties who grew up in Multan. She shared that few people in their neighborhood had access to technology. Around 2009, her brother purchased an MP3 player from a vendor at a local mela and the person who sold it to him taught him how to use it. Devices like this were brought in from bigger cities like Lahore and Karachi to be sold at these local melas in Multan. It is likely that MP3 music consumption was greater in larger cities than in smaller ones because these devices were more accessible there.

Moreover, when MP3 technology was gaining popularity in Pakistan, a vast majority of women were unable to partake in the diffusion process because of circumstances that kept the technology out of their reach. It was mostly upper-class/middle-class women with different family dynamics (allowing them the luxury of access to technology) that had a role to play in the diffusion of MP3 music in Pakistan. Another aspect that tied in with gender was religious beliefs. While Pakistani society, in general, does include people who consider music un-Islamic, the interviewee from Multan recalled that the women in her family were particularly discouraged from listening to music while her brother was allowed.

Moving on to a phenomenon that you will find is not entirely unfamiliar: piracy. Pirated CDs with MP3 music were sold in abundance in Pakistan. Stream-ripping sites and free MP3 music downloading websites were wildly popular.

If we are being entirely honest, they are still popular and there is little chance that you have never used one. Unlike in the West, there was no moral outcry that came about as a result of this piracy in Pakistan, not for a long while.

There was very little concept of these music downloading sites being illegal which I find both interesting and amusing because the more you meditate on the subject, the more illegal it sounds. Unlike the students being arrested in the US and Napster being sued by artists, there were no big organizations like the RIAA to protect artist rights in Pakistan. Whatever measures were eventually taken to curb piracy in Pakistan were noticeably inherited from the ongoing Western outrage at the time.

As for the future of MP3, you might be surprised (or not) to find that it is still being used as a format for sharing/downloading music by consumers and musicians. It has lost a lot of popularity with the switch to streaming services like Spotify, especially in the West. Spotify, as you probably know, has only recently come to Pakistan but a large amount of people have already switched to streaming on the platform.

However, a lot of people apparently still share and, on occasion, download music as MP3. It seems as if it will still be around for a few more years, at least in Pakistan, before it becomes obsolete.





NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

This is probably going to be the best
time in your life. Make the best
of it and carry it with you.

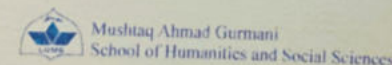
Love,
Hanana Noor Zaka.
Batch of 2014.



NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

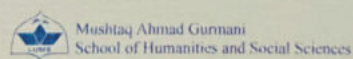
make all the mistakes
you have the capacity
for - now!

♥ Sarah
batch of 2011



NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

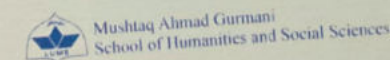
Eat your protein.
You'll be okay!



NUGGETS OF WISDOM, WORDS OF ADVICE,
COMPLIMENTS, AND AFFIRMATIONS WELCOME

HSS helped me grow into myself.
Believe in your ideas and potential
- you'll be okay.

Noor Bokhari
class of 2022



AAMNAH
MANSOOR



MGSHSS student achievements!

TAHA
QADRI



ZOHA
MIRZA



NEHA
RAMCHAND



MGSHSS Student Hall of Fame

Acceptances:

Muhammad Tasmir Aziz (MGSHSS 2022): Admission into Oxford (MPhil Modern South Asian Studies Program)

Aleena Khan (Anthropology and Sociology 2023) University of Oxford for an MSc in Social Anthropology

Tanveer Saleem (MGSHSS 2022) was selected for admission to Penn State University's Master of International Affairs (MIA) degree program within the School of International Affairs.

Heer Cheema (BA History 2022) has been selected as the Pakistani Rhodes Scholar for 2023. She'll be going to University of Oxford to research Colonial History with a focus on South Asia.

Aamnah Mansoor (BA English 2022) was accepted into University of Cambridge's Master's in Creative Writing program for 2023-2025.

Zoha Mirza (MGSHSS 2022) has been selected as a Fulbright Scholar and will be completing her M.A Politics with a focus on Political Economy New York University's (NYU) Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) starting in fall 2023. She has also been given a tuition scholarship by NYU.

Syed Taha Qadri (MGSHSS 2023) has been selected by the University of Oxford for the Oxford-Weidenfeld and Hoffmann Scholarship and Leadership Programme (first person from LUMS to receive this scholarship). He has secured admission to Oxford for the MSc Economics for Development program. aha also received two other scholarships - one in France (Eiffel Excellence Scholarship) and one in Italy (Bocconi Graduate Merit Award).

Noor Fatima Bokhari (MGSHSS 2022) has been accepted into University of Texas at Austin for MA in Humanities, Health and Medicine under the Fulbright Scholarship.

Aiman Rehman (MGSHSS 2023) has been accepted to MA. English at St. Andrews University.

Tehreem Malhi (MGSHSS 2023) has been accepted in MLIT at University of Warwick and Queen Mary University of London.

Nihal (MGSHSS 2023) has been accepted at Master of Arts Program in the Humanities at the University of Chicago with funding.

Asra Jafferey (MGSHSS 2023) has been accepted in MA English Language and Literature at University of Edinburgh.

Maroof Taj (MGSHSS 2022) got into the MPhil program at Oxford and an MA program at EHSS in Paris for fall 23

Other Achievements:

Neha Ramchand Novlani (Bsc. Anthropology and Sociology 2023) won the prize for the best senior project in Sociology and Anthropology. Her Senior Project on Hindu Guru Culture in Sindh under the supervision of Dr. Ghazal Asif was chosen from a strong short list of projects by a committee.

Huzaifa Farrukh won the prize for best Senior Project in History, Mahnoor Lali in CLCS, and Niha Nazar for English (Raazia Waseem Award)

In Fall of 2019, Tehreem Anwar and Maham Munir, along with three other ANTH/SOC students, started a field research project studying the lives of female mental asylum patients in Lahore. Their fieldwork led to the development of strong bonds with some of their interlocutors, and Tehreem and Maham both wished to continue their research further. In Spring of 2021, Tehreem and Maham initiated a Directed Research Project under my supervision. They wished to employ multimodal research methods in order to create an animated book of shorts stories, collaborating with the asylees to imagine what their lives would be like if they weren't in the asylum. After almost two years of seeking out publishers, Tehreem and Maham were thrilled to have their work published in Sapiens, an editorially independent anthropology magazine of the Wenner-Gren Foundation & University of Chicago Press, titled "What it means to be human in an asylum."

MGSHSS Faculty Hall of Fame

Dr. Waqar Zaidi (Associate professor and Department Chair, HSS) has been awarded the prestigious International Committee for the History of Technology's 2022 Turriano-ICOHTEC Prize for young historians, organized by ICOHTEC and sponsored by Fundación Juanelo Turriano, for his study titled: Technological Internationalism and World Order. Aviation, Atomic Energy, and the Search for International Peace, 1920–1950. This is a prize for best first/early career book in the history of technology. For details: <https://www.juaneloturriano.com/en/news/2022/12/05/turriano-icohtec-prize>

Dr Ayesha Ali (Assistant Professor, Economics) and Ihsan Ayub Qazi's proposal, "Gamifying Media Literacy Interventions for Low Digital Literacy Populations" has just won the prestigious Meta/Facebook Foundational Integrity Research Award 2022-23. This is the third time that they have won this highly selective award. This award provides an unrestricted grant of USD 50,000 to develop game-based digital media literacy interventions for countering misinformation. For details: <https://research.facebook.com/research-awards/2022-foundational-integrity-research-request-for-proposals/>

Research Grant

Dr Ameem has been awarded the 'Engaged Research' grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation. This prestigious grant recognizes projects that demonstrate a commitment to engaging with marginalized communities not just as research subjects, but as partners in a collaborative effort to 'expand anthropological knowledge, combat inequality, and help communities flourish.'

Fellowship Award

Dr. Asma Faiz (Assistant Professor, HSS) has been awarded the Rangoonwala Visiting Fellowship for Pakistan at the University of Oxford's Contemporary South Asian Studies Programme within the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies for 2023. Dr. Hadia Majid has been appointed as Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in the Department of International Development from 01 June 2023 to 01 October 2023. During her visit, she will be working on her projects on the political economy of development in urban slums with faculty at LSE.



Report Publication:

Asma Faiz (Assistant Professor, HSS) published a report titled "Language, Nation and State in A Federal Pakistan" in the Forum of Federations: The Global network on federalism and Devolved Governance.

Report Link: <https://forumfed.org/document/language-nation-and-state-in-federal-pakistan/>

Book Publications:

Salman Rafi (Assistant professor, HSS) published a book chapter titled "Ideology and Identity: Pakistan's Ideological Engineering and Baloch Nationalism" in the book Pakistan at Seventy-five: Identity, Governance and Conflict-Resolution in a Post-Colonial Nation-State (2023)

For details: <https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/doi/book/10.3828/9781789761894>

Asma Faiz (Assistant Professor, HSS) published a book chapter titled "The Peculiar Case of the Pakistan People's Party as An Opposition Party", in The State of Opposition in South Asia, Carnegie Endowment for International Democracy, (2023).

For details: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/01/24/state-of-opposition-in-south-asia-pub-88835>

Sadaf Ahmad (Associate Professor, HSS) published a book chapter titled "A Minority within a Minority: Senior Ranked Policewomen in Pakistan." in the Exploring Contemporary Police Challenges: A Global Perspective (2022).

For details: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003136965>

Hadia Majid (Associate professor and Department Chair, ECON) published a book chapter titled "Public Goods Access for the Poor" in The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Problems (2022). (upcoming)

Asma Faiz (Assistant Professor, HSS) published a book chapter titled "From Hard to Soft Power: Chinese Policy Diffusion in Pakistan in the Age of CPEC", in the book Brazil and China in Knowledge and Policy Transfer: Agents, Objects, Time, Structures and Power.

For details: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-09116-2>

Journal Publications:

Dr. Ayesha Ali (Assistant Professor, Economics) co-published journal article titled "Digital Literacy and Vulnerability to Misinformation Evidence from Facebook Users in Pakistan" in the Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media, 2022

For details: <https://doi.org/10.51685/jqd.2022.025>

Shayan Rajani (Assistant Professor, HSS) published article titled "The Four Nationality Thesis: A Conceptual History of a Forgotten Idea" in the Journal of Sindhi Studies (2022).

For details: <https://doi.org/10.1163/26670925-bja10008>.

Syed Zahid Ali (Professor, Economics) co-published article titled "A Note on the Neo-Fisher in the New-Keynesian Model" in the Macroeconomic Dynamics (2022).

For details: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1365100522000578>

Dr. Hadia Majid (Associate Professor and Department Chair, Economics) and Syeda Warda Riaz (Pre-Doc Associate, ECON) co-published journal article titled "Unconditional Cash Transfers and Women's Labor Supply in Pakistan" in the Journal of Development Effectiveness (2022).

For details: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2022.2029539>

Dr. Ayesha Ali (Assistant Professor, Economics) co-published journal article titled "Validated Digital Literacy Measures for Populations with Low Levels of Internet Experiences" in the The Journal of Engineering in Economic Development (Development Engineering), 2023.

For details: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.deveng.2023.100107>

Dr. Farah Said (Assistant Professor, Economics) co-published journal article titled "Changing Mindset to Foster Non-cognitive Skills and Academic Achievement: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Pakistan" in the Journal of Asian Economics (2022).

For details: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asieco.2022.101499>

Natasha Sohail Barlas (Teaching Fellow HSS and Project Lead Leadership Development, OSA) co-published journal article titled "Can social-emotional learning programs be adapted to schools in Pakistan? A literature reviews" in the International Journal of School and Educational Psychology (2022).

For details: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2020.1850374>

Afsheen Salahuddin (Adjunct Faculty, HSS) co-published article titled Enhancing Confidence in Students' English-Speaking Skills by the Use of Interactive Practices" in the VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences. (2022)

Read full article here: <https://vfast.org/journals/index.php/VTESS/article/view/957>

Syed Zahid Ali co-published article titled "Consumer Choice in Residential Mortgage Market: An Islamic Mortgage Contract" in the Journal of Real Estate Research.
For details: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08965803.2021.2003509>

Ayesha Ali (Assistant Professor, Economics) co-published journal article titled "Cognitive reflection is associated with greater truth discernment for COVID-19 headlines, less trust but greater use of formal information sources, and greater willingness to pay for masks among social media users in Pakistan" in the Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review, 2022.

For details: <https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/article/cognitive-reflection-is-associated-with-greater-truth-discernment-for-covid-19-headlines-less-trust-but-greater-use-of-formal-information-sources-and-greater-willingness-to-pay-for-masks-among-social-media-users-in-pakistan>

Farhana Shahzad (Teaching Fellow, HSS) published an article titled "An Essay on Investigating Factors Influencing Comprehensibility of World Englishes by Critically Evaluating Studies in the Domain" in The British Journal of Arts and Humanities.
For details: <https://doi.org/10.34104/bjah.022072078>

Hadia Majid (Associate professor and Department Chair, ECON) co-published an article titled "Transformative Digital Spaces? Investigating women's digital mobilities in Pakistan" in the Gender and Development.
For details: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2022.2130516>

Salman Rafi (Assistant Professor, HSS) published op-ed titled "Pakistan will need yet more rescues unless it embraces reform" in the Nikkei Asia
For details: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Pakistan-will-need-yet-more-rescues-unless-it-embraces-reform>

Rasul Bakhsh Rais (Professor, HSS) published op-ed titled "Old book hunting in Pakistan" in the Arab News.
For details: <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2224501>

Umair Javed (Assistant Professor, HSS) published op-ed titled "Ignoring the state" in the Dawn.
For details: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1728281/ignoring-the-state>

Faisal Bari (Associate Professor, Economics) published op-ed titled "No one to guide them" in the Dawn.
For details: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1727814/no-one-to-guide-them>

Rasul Bakhsh Rais (Professor, HSS) published op-ed titled "Road safety in Pakistan is the not-so-silent killer everybody is ignoring" in the Arab News.
For details: <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2243801>

Rasul Bakhsh Rais (Professor, HSS) published op-ed titled "Pakistan: the largest cabinet in the world" in the Arab News.
For details: <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2233261>

Umair Javed (Assistant Professor, HSS) published op-ed titled "Greener pastures" in the Dawn.
For details: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1730700/greener-pastures>

Umair Javed (Assistant Professor, HSS) published op-ed titled "Painful for whom" in the Dawn.
For details: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1733091/painful-for-whom>

Hadia Majid (Associate professor and Department Chair, ECON) published op-ed titled "The Prejudice of Climate Change" in the Development Advocate Pakistan Vol. 9, Issue 4.

Hadia Majid (Associate professor and Department Chair, ECON) published op-ed titled "The Pakistan's Economic Recovery: The Way Forward" in the PIDE Discourse 2023.

Hadia Majid (Associate professor and Department Chair, ECON) published op-ed titled "How Would Avoiding Child Marriages Affect Human Capital Outcomes in Pakistan? CDPR Insights for Change."

Hadia Majid (Associate professor and Department Chair, ECON) co-published op-ed titled Digital Technology & Women's Labor. Dawn Newspaper.

MOVIES &

staff and faculty recommendations

BOOKS

1. *Jaws* – the original summer blockbuster remains Spielberg's best film

2. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* – The first and best Indiana Jones. Bound to be better than the newest one due out this summer.

3. *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* – Forthcoming sequel to the brilliant animated feature 2018 *Into the Spider-Verse*

4. *This is Spinal Tap* – Funniest 'mockumentary' ever made

5. *Spider-Man (2002)* – Sam Raimi's brilliant first spider-man film is still the best spider-man origin film

6. *Rear Window* – Hitchcock's masterful thriller with Jimmy Stewart and Grace Kelly

7. *Emmet Till (2022)*, a touching movie on the tragedy of Emmet, a young boy murdered in 1955 Mississippi/US by lynching after he allegedly whistled at young white woman.

8. *Children of Heaven*

Celestial bodies – Jokha Alharthi

A Fine Balance, Rohinton Mistry

A woman is no man – Etaf Rum

The Tiger's Wife – Tea Obreht

A place for us – Fatima Farheen Mirza

A little life – Hanya Yanagihara

The White Tiger – Aravind Adija

Half of a yellow sun – Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

Accidental Death of an Anarchist - Dario Fo

Event Recap:

Salam Award

TAIBA ABBAS

To be a new writer in Pakistan, today, can be as thrilling as it is disheartening.

Positioned as we are on the fringes of a global literary culture, where the selective, nominal role of representation is favoured over the myriad stories that are lived and told. Enriched by a vast tradition of fusion and transition, we keep witnessing a new indigenous literature emerging in newer, more powerful, more confident ways – yet the majority of local talent remains lost to the world.

In the midst of such gaps and dissonance, writers often take it upon themselves to find ways of creating new platforms to promote writing and publishing opportunities in Pakistan, through committed and impassioned endeavours, to counter the absence of structural reach and support in existing cultural-literary spaces. The Salam Award Writers Workshop has been one such endeavour – a writing residency for science fiction, fantasy, and speculative writers that took place in Lahore earlier this month, hosted by the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). A writing workshop organised and fuelled by the passion and dedication of Tehseen Baweja, Usman T. Malik, and Nur Nasreen Ibrahim, furthering the vision of the Salam Award that was co-founded by Tehseen and Usman in 2017, to promote Imaginative Fiction in Pakistan.

The workshop was an intensive week-long exploration of the nuances of craft and creativity, the first of its kind in Pakistan, interspersed with panel discussions, and sessions modelled on the Clarion/Milford method which involved an in-depth and rigorous exchange of critique between students over their work, along with one-on-one sessions with the instructors – writers Elizabeth Hand and Mary Anne Mohanraj who had flown into Lahore from the US. What is the purpose of a writing workshop? Rather, a question that haunts the minds of readers, writers, students, and teachers alike: Is the writing impulse something that can be taught? Can that elusive, amorphous state of receiving and conceiving a story's spark of inception be grasped enough to be relayed through an academic exercise? No, it cannot. But keeping the unique mystery and intangibility of the writing act intact, can an environment be created that eases the transition of that solitary act into an engaging, sensitive, and vibrantly receptive space of public sharing? Yes. By all means. And that is something that the Salam Writers Workshop achieved.

When I asked Tehseen – a Microsoft professional with a long-held love for speculative fiction – what he cherished most about his experience of the workshop, he told me it was the sense of community and togetherness engendered between all fourteen participants and the instructors over a span of seven days – an association that will continue long after this workshop, and grow into a sustaining bond to encourage, promote, and celebrate each other's work.

I agree with Tehseen. Community is key. Even for the most indrawn and retiring writers among us. Elizabeth Hand, the instructor of the workshop and the bestselling author of eighteen genre-spanning novels and five collections of short fiction and essays, shares the same sentiment. "I think the most amazing thing for me was to witness the creation of a community of writers," she told me,



“Here you have fourteen people who, on Day One, were complete strangers to each other. A week later, they’d formed a family of artists bound by a shared love of and commitment to their work, not just their individual visions but a broader notion of what they and other Pakistani writers could create: a literature of their own, centred on their own experiences but, like all of the best speculative fiction, with great resonance for the wider world of readers.”

A literature of one's own. But whose story is it? Where are we in a literature incessantly in search of itself? A protean literature still picking up the pieces, still adjusting itself between the fractures, the silences, of a Pre and Post Partition identity, still throwing off the yoke of an all too simple Postcolonial nomenclature – to discover, understand, and dismantle a universal colonialism that invades our bodies, our utterances. That's where our literature resides. When we re-map our physical realities through personal

landscapes and mythologies, giving flight and form to our vulnerabilities, experiencing new topographies of the mind to break the fourth wall of language – that is where a literature of one's own can be found. And between the shifting lines of craft and creativity, that is what this workshop sought to explore, through the permeative and genre-bending truths that speculative writing allows.

“Every day I felt as though I was entering one new world after another, worlds I could not have imagined before reading these stories,” says Elizabeth.

“The writers were extraordinary... with an entire range of creative styles, from fable-like stories to dark humour to noir-esque cyberpunk to dreamy utopian fantasies, and everything in between. I was struck by the high quality of the writing – I can honestly say I've never encountered a group where the submissions were so strong. I was also struck by a certain stylistic elegance that informed all the stories, along with a spiritual depth that one doesn't encounter in most Western fiction. It was exhilarating to read so much work that, to me, felt utterly new and exciting.”



An experience equally reciprocated by the students: “The instructors blew my mind with their level of care, attention, and investment. To be able to learn from them was such a gift. More than craft they also taught us the value of generosity and kindness in teaching and critiquing, the art of persistence, to keep going, to give ourselves the permission to keep doing this thing that we love.” Where do we take our stories from here? For writers living and writing in Pakistan the question of publishing is never an easy one to answer, yet one that was assessed and revisited throughout the workshop.

The choice to seek foreign publishing remains a contentious one – where the divide between a literature produced at home and its representation abroad signifies a wide precarious leap.

But this is where the need for more writers' workshops of this kind makes itself felt. To bridge the gap between reading communities across diverse regions and experiences. To create an eclectic, inclusive, individual space where the aim is not to seek validation of one's work, but to gain the necessary right of self representation, decentralising all assumption of a singular literary identity.

Only then can our stories truly find the home they deserve – as Elizabeth rightly says, “In Pakistan first and foremost, and then the rest of the world.”

Author bio:

The writer Taiba Abbas is a teacher and the founder of the publishing house Àla Books and Authors. She is the co-author of *The Night In Her Hair*. She tweets @BibaT_Abbas



CLCS Happenings

CLCS Open House

The faculty of Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies (CLCS) held the program's first Open House since the launch of the major in Fall 2022. The information and tea session, held on 16 March 2023, was an opportunity for students to learn more about the major and the CLCS experience. Faculty members introduced the program, and shared future plans for CLCS along with their own journeys and experiences. Video messages from past students now studying and working in Pakistan and abroad were also played during the event, giving current students a window into life after graduation. The Open House, which is being planned as an annual event, is a chance for students and faculty to interact outside of the classroom and discuss the exciting opportunities offered through the program and the work being done by CLCS students.



Post-Production Filmmaking Workshop

The Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies (CLCS) Post-Production Filmmaking Workshop was conducted by filmmaker, producer, and CLCS faculty member Tabish Habib (writer and director of *May I Have This Seat* and associate producer of *Joyland*) on 7 April 2023. Participants were introduced to the principals of storytelling in the post-production phase of filmmaking whether that be in fiction, documentary, social media, or YouTube blogging content. Attendees were shown examples from Mr. Habib's own award-winning work and given footage which they had to assemble into a fully formed narrative. The workshop was open to the LUMS community and the response and feedback were fantastic with many of the attendees requesting follow-up workshops which are already being planned for the Fall!



Reel Pakistan's Short Film Competition

The screening and award ceremony for Reel Pakistan's Short Film Competition, organized by CLCS faculty members, was held on 14 April 2023. The 3rd edition of the Short Film Competition invited submissions from LUMS students, alumni, faculty, and staff. The event included a film showcase of the six official selections as well as the award ceremony for the selected films, special mentions, and the jury award. The jury consisted of Dr. Rabia Kamal (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, HSS), Sameer Shami (Assistant Director, The Legend of Maula Jatt) and Qasim Abbas (Assistant Director, Joyland). Dr Rabia Kamal and Sameer Shami presented the awards and expressed their appreciation for the selected films. The event was well attended by students, faculty, staff and the friends and the families of the filmmakers being recognized. We congratulate everyone on their fantastic work!



Jury Award

The Monitor – Directed by Muhammad Ibrahim Mohsin, Minahil Aftab & Asim Munir

Official Selections

Joota Chupai – Directed by Abraham I. Khan (Abe)

Just Write Maddy – Directed by Mahnoor Aziz

Nice Dream – Directed by Adil Rahim Hyder & Raahim Nadeem

Showk – Directed by Ibraheem Khan & Muhammad Anas Kashmiri

The Monitor – Directed by Muhammad Ibrahim Mohsin, Minahil Aftab & Asim Munir

Yaar – Directed by Minahil Noor

Special Mention – Focus on the Environment: Nice Dream – Directed by Adil Rahim Hyder & Raahim Nadeem

Special Mention – Visual Achievement: Joota Chupai – Directed by Abraham I. Khan (Abe)

Special Mention – Documentary – Social Issue: Inaam – Directed by Farhan Mazhar (and Participant Award)

Special Mention – Artwork: Minahil Noor

MGSHSS: A Walk Down Memory Lane

- Launch of The World Bank's latest Country Economic Memorandum 'Swimming In The Sand to High and Sustainable Growth' featuring the World Bank's senior economists Tobias Haque and Gonzalo Varela (10th March, 2023)



- The three panel talks organized by our department at the EconFest by PIDE at Alhamra featuring Dr. Hadia Majid, Dr. Sher Afghan Asad and Nazish Afraz from our department (March 2023).



- The TEXEcon Seminar organized by the Teaching Excellence Initiative at the Department of Economics (15th May).



- HSS Annual International Conference (13th -15th March) with the topic of "Pakistan: Revisiting the Past, Reimagining the Future" was organized by Dr Asma Faiz and Dr Nadhra Khan



- The MGS HSS Alumni Gala was organized by the Dean's Office on 19th March. It featured performances by alumni Hassan & Roshaan and Maanu. Over 150 alumni, faculty and staff members enjoyed the evening reconnecting.



- The Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies program hosted the Second Annual Syeda Mubarak Begum Urdu-Farsi conference on the 3rd and 4th of March 2023. The conference brought together scholars from Tehran, Kabul, Boston, Delhi, Dushanbe & Tashkent in an intense two-day program to discuss the classical Indo-Persian poet, Amir Khusrau's legacy for South Asia and the surrounding regions.



- Syed Babar Ali and family hosted a dinner for MGS HSS alumni Saim Sadiq (BSc Anthropology and Sociology 2014) and Rasti Farooq (BA English 2016). Saim is the director of the internationally acclaimed film Joyland and Rasti played the lead role in the film. The dinner was also attended by Imran Ahmad Khan (BSc Politics & Economics 2014), Sarah Hayat Malik (BSc Anthropology and Sociology 2017), Dr. Ali Khan, Dr. Sadaf Aziz and Dr. Faisal Bari.



- The Dean's Office organized a start-of-the-semester movie night, screening "School of Rock".



- The department coordinators along with the MGSHSS Academic Advising Unit organized an information session about pursuing Minors in the School



- MGSHSS hosted the annual batch farewell for the graduating batch of 2023.



- Research and Capacity Building Workshop for Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty led by Dr Furrukh Khan that focused on 'Cultivating the Humanities and Social Sciences and Supporting Under-Represented Scholars of Asia'.



- The MGSHSS staff celebrated Women's Day with a lunch at a women-led café and cards of appreciation.



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