

Khurshid Alam & Waseem Anwar

Teaching Transnational Poetics Interactively through the South Asian National Poets

Abstract

One of the worldwide means to celebrate nationalism is the assumption of a country's National Poet category. South Asian countries also follow suit to declare their national/literary pride. This paper attempts to explore how such proclaimed National Poets be taught and interpreted as representatives of regional cosmopolitanism. Based on how teaching of scholarship may conflate with scholarship of teaching, we pick on Allama Muhammad Iqbal from Pakistan and Rabindranath Tagore from India to research what they may develop as transnational poetics beyond any socio-political lines of bifurcation. Our concern as researcher-teachers of transnational poetics is to investigate whether deeper understanding of cross-cultural/cross-border dialogic in the works of these poets affects mutual human relationship? On what artistic grounds such translatable transnational poetics, though apparently filled with nationalistic derivatives, may help transmit attitudinal change, and connect the posterity of the region for shared values, dissolving resultantly the myopic ideologies that obstruct greater goals? Based on some "Interactive Teaching" methods, its experimental and emancipatory spirit, our findings may permit us ask questions like: What is the gender of South Asian nationalism, and why do we not have any female National Poet? How then the colonial/postcolonial patriarchal cum patriotic orders express the feminizing of homelands as motherlands? We may not find solutions to such issues but raise awareness about how transnationalism, once taught interactively through the works of national poets, may help us think critically in broader terms, facilitating us also to develop a promising futuristic and inclusive professional citizenship.

Keywords: Transnational, National Poets, territorialized nationalism, Hybridity, Hegemony

E.mail:khurshid.english@pu.edu.pk
waseemanwar@fccollege.edu.pk

Main Body

One of the worldwide means to commemorate nationalism is the assumption of country's National Poet category. South Asian countries also follow suit to declare their cultural and literary pride. This paper attempts to explore how such proclaimed national poets be taught and interpreted as representatives of regional cosmopolitanism. Based on how teaching of scholarship may conflate with scholarship of teaching, we pick on the scholar-poets Allama Muhammad Iqbal from Pakistan and Rabindarnath Tagore from India to research what their work may develop as transnational poetics beyond any sociopolitical or geographical lines of bifurcation. Transnationalism, as we know, generally implies interconnectivity and increased functional integration among people beyond the nationalistic agenda-based sociopolitical, socioeconomic or sociocultural boundaries of nation-states.¹Our concern as researcher-teachers of the transnational poetics has been to investigate whether deeper understanding of cross-cultural or cross-border dialogic in the works of the South Asian poets we teach affects mutual human relationship? On what artistic grounds such translatable transnational poetics, though apparently filled with nationalistic derivatives, may help transmit attitudinal change, and connect the posterity of the region for shared values, dissolving resultantly the myopic ideologies that obstruct greater goals of human togetherness?

Based on various experimental and emancipatory modes of our interactive teaching, thinking and learning, we as researcher-teachers basically tried to survey how the Pakistani and Indian national poets collaborate on commonalities that may address some basic humanitarian concerns. Knowing that interactive teaching applies diverse range of methods from a teacher's lecturing to students-centered communicative interface in form of discussions, debates and even audio-visual discourses, the overall objective of our methodology remained inclusive. In this regard, our aim has been to trace the relevance of national poets for imagining homelands as transnational spaces, so that we inculcate among our learners more tolerable spirit of coexistence. Though based on our supervisory activities, we identified action-research as a major feature to result in what John E. Henning et al refer as 'self-reflective ... strategies' for improved instructions by watching 'how students respond ... think' and react, and therefore question the situations emerging during their learning process (4-5, 7).

In our interactive sessions, the jig-saw of integrated communicative activities would mostly supplement and reinforce reflective reviews, comparative as well as contrastive. The learners would engage in a higher level debate to result in communicative evolution. Given the classroom stimuli and schemata, our role as researcher-teachers have been what Perc Marland highlights, 'information processors' who follow the 'cyclical process of observing students behaviors, judging whether students' behaviors are within acceptable limits, and then deciding whether to continue or change the teaching process in line with plausible alternatives' (210). Already an alternative to the traditional methods, the outcome of our overall subject-matter-based critical thinking related to interactive teaching approaches led to theorize and analyze if not completely apply our conceptualizations. Given the teaching conditions in an ideological state like Pakistan and because of the sensitive nature of the topic, one important component of our interactive process has been careful reading of the primary and secondary materials for meaning search and meaning research. Much of the activities were thus based on what is termed in Palincsar as 'scaffold' instructions, so that the foci of student thinking may qualify for the sophisticated responses, questions and comments that may enhance integration.

... scaffold instruction ... [as it supports what] is adjustable and temporary ... in acquisition and mastery of the strategies [predicting, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying] through the use of explanation, instruction, and modelling ... [even through peer tutoring] is challenged to use the strategy independently as [the student] he or she displays increased competence with comprehension. (774)

Reading, reviewing, researching and rethinking Iqbal from the transnational perspective at a comprehensively competent stage of questioning and clarifying offered us the challenge to explore nationalism in Iqbal's works under two phases. The first phase was before moving to Europe for higher education when Iqbal believed in the modern Western mode of nationalism. We termed this Western mode as territorialized nationalism. Territorialized nationalism, we adjudged, indicates that the people sharing same geographical boundaries are members of one single nation, which in Pakistan's case can also be termed an ideological nation-state. Here the ideological differences between different communities within one imagined national or geographical space may not matter because in such an imaginary nationalistic space, territorial locations take precedence over other forms of human subjectivities that are expressed through different historical and mythological structures.

Within the context of Iqbal's pre-Partition poetic exposures, we then explored that the Indian National Congress on the one hand and the Indian *Deoband* scholars of his time on the other hand a corresponding political alliance over Indian nationalism. Both these factions opposed Iqbal by positing that the idea of a nation based on commonalities of religious ideologies was against the basic Islamic tenets.² Our analysis foregrounded that in the beginning, Iqbal was also in favor of such a romantically idealized form of national identity: 'We are Hindis and Hindustan is our beloved country', connoting that 'Hindustan' is the best of the orchards in the world, and its inhabitants are its ever-singing nightingales. But later on we see Iqbal expressing his reversion from the idea of such territorialized nationalism. In his *Baang-e-Dara* in *Iqbal's Collected Works*, for that matter, we find a detailed description of Iqbal's evolving ideas on nationalism:

Country is the greatest of new gods
Its tunic is the shroud of religion
This idol carved by the new civilization
Is the destroyer of the Prophet's House?
You whose hand is strengthened by Tauhid
You Mustafawis whose country is Islam
Show this world a hidden sight
And smite this idol into dust
Being land bound is destructive
Live free like fish in the sea

.....
A country is something different in political words
And something else in the Prophet's words.
The friction amongst nation is because of it
Politics without truth is because of it
The destruction of the weak is because of it
It divides God's people into nations
It cuts the roots of Islamic nationhood. (187)

The above quoted verses from *Baang-e-Dara* explain Iqbal's concept of nationalism in a newer dimension. This may be termed as the second phase of his growth. For him, the modern Western concept of 'land bound' nationalism that was also replicating in form of South Asian 'Hindustan' was an idol that modern civilization had created to divide the humanity into different categories. And the sole basis of this division, he considered, was an unfathomable love for geographical territories. As a result of this manmade division, humanity would engage with almost a Darwinian power struggle for survival in the name of arbitrary symbols and narratives. Iqbal proposes the title of '*Mustafawi*' as the possibility for resurgence of a Muslim identity. For him, the term '*Mustafawi*' means any Muslim who has faith in the ideology of prophet Muhammad (SW). Thus, in response to a secularly territorialized version of the Western nationalism as well as the Islamic oligarchy, Iqbal had to bring forth a de-territorialized and democratic Muslim subjectivity that may attach more importance to the ideological commitments rather than the blind following of territorial nationalistic demands. At this juncture, Iqbal is faced with the most complex of political paradoxes regarding how to reconcile the needs of a modern nationalist territorial state against the transcendentalist Islamic notion of being a '*Mustafawi*'? Because for Iqbal the answer lies in the tradition of migration practiced by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he enjoins Muslims to resurrect that tradition. For Iqbal, thus, it is the only possible political way of testifying the truth of prophesied ideologies.

Given the context of national confinements and the possibilities of crossing such confinements, we assessed that Iqbal celebrates the idea of Islamic nationalism as a country, while migration becomes for him both literal and metaphorical symbol of transnationalism. As against the confinement of nationalism, Rocío G. Davis in *The Transnationalism of American Culture* associates transnationalism and its migratory hybrid temper with the fluid and intersectional rethinking about any obsession with the national in both creative and critical practice' (2).³ In many ways, Davis' engagement with transnational rethinking within the postcolonial 'processual' hybridity in South Asia consents closely to what Homi K. Bhabha identifies as the 'third space', a discursive strategy that re-appropriates power imbalances to replace the repressed silences (*Location* 112) with new structures ('The Third Space' 211). In its literal sense, Iqbal's idea about a piece of land, if it turns out to be a confinement, a *Dar al-harabor* the territory of war, makes it mandatory for the Muslim inhabitants to move to other places. And in its metaphorical sense Islamic nationalism transforms for Muslims into a refuge from the territorialized constrictions to de-territorialized expanses in terms of regional cosmopolitanism and transcendentalism that draws its ideological strength from the teachings of universal *salamti* or peace. To reiterate, within these parameters Iqbal's vision of Islam defies the *Mullah*-brand or myopic priestly theocracy attached to any religion. He does not see Islam just as set of rituals to be performed in a nation-state. Rather, for him, freedom from oppression is the key to what he terms as his interpretation of the non-spatial Islamic nationalism. It is on such theoretical and poetic junctures that Iqbal developed a difference of opinion with the Nationalist *Ulema* or the *Deoband* Scholars who, under the leadership of Hussein Ahmed Madni, were vocal against his concept of non-spatial, non-temporal and de-territorialized Islamic nationalism. In one of his famous Persian couplet, Iqbal critiqued Madni's claim that the non-Arabs or *Ajamis* are incapacitated to understand Islam (Pervez 237). Iqbal posited that an insistence on the territorialized nationalism will ultimately sever the binding chord of world Muslims and their role as promoters of peace. Thus, Iqbal believed that commitment to a piece of land would only nurture feelings of rivalry, which is very much against the central spirit of Islam.

In his lecture 'Is Religion Possible?' in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam*, Iqbal maintains that at least in the contemporary state of human adjustments, both nationalism and atheistic socialism must address the psychological forces of rivalry, hate, suspicion and resentment which tend to impoverish human soul by closing up the hidden sources of spiritual energy. For Iqbal, neither the techniques of medieval mysticism nor the modern strategies of nationalism and its atheistic socialism could cure ills of the despairing humanity. For him, the current moment would be one of great crisis in the history of modern culture (149), this to lead him also to the transnational core of his poetic expression. Though much metaphoric and symbolic in nature, Iqbal's rethinking of nationalism equates his poetic ventures with the transnational hybrid dynamism apart of continuous narratives that vanguard what Bhabha also proclaims to be its 'DissemiNation'⁴, so that the 'nation-space becomes the crossroads to a new transnational culture. ...' (*Nation and Narration* 3-4). In many ways, the postcolonial transnational reading of nation in Iqbal's works and its dissemination from the disenfranchised peripheries privileges us to imagine the deformation of Empire that Edward Said would point out as de-nationalization, or Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire would label as decolonization or Benedict Anderson would inform as the imagined community. Iqbal's notions and their poetic expression translate into a literary narrative space complemented by its migrations, imaginative flights and what Bhabha terms as its 'metaphoric displacements' (*Nation and Narration* 2).

Because for Iqbal the territorialized nationalism is debilitated to address the demands of human soul, for it creates a culture of cut throat competition for material gains, the higher values of human life do not find any expression in modern Western nationalistic cultures. The cure for such confining expressiveness in Iqbal's view lies in re-appropriation and rethinking nationalism so that it equates with the pragmatic philosophies of transnational hybrid dynamism. For Iqbal it lies in the resurrection of spiritual revolution through a displaced nationalism where all the human beings are part of one bigger nation. Iqbal trusts that the essentialist contention and competitiveness between nations can be removed through a 'biological renewal' (149) that is connected with the non-spatial, spiritual revolution, neither purely nationalistic nor exclusively materialistic but a de-territorialized existence that transcends its own self. Its primary goal, for Iqbal, is the development of human soul by conquering the forces of nature and by allowing the entire humanity to benefit from it. In *The Reconstruction*, he explains again:

And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values. (149)

In Iqbal's point of view, spirituality and religion do not divide humanity into different nations and groups. Conversely, they become means to achieve a unity that excels the manmade equators of planetary bifurcation and its inhuman competition. In other words, spiritual and religious nationalism, which in Iqbal's case is also Islamic form of nationalism and which is unlike the bigoted *Mullah*-brand conviction, strives for convergence rather than creation of disjuncture in the growth of humanity, humanitarianism and human history.

Here the term spiritual unity needs a bit further clarification, while before that it is equally important to explain Iqbal's use of the terms '*Nafs*' or '*Khudi*' that are commonly signified as 'the Self'. The Western episteme locates the center of self through its juxtaposition with the 'Other', and Hegel, in particular looks at the construction of self through a life and death struggle between master and slave. Hence, in the occidental perspective, the presence of slave gives authenticity to the existence of master. In spirit, Iqbal negates this essentialist division between the self and the other. He introduces the term *Khudi*, which in the Quranic context is classified as *Nafs* and which in humanly terms is categorized as an exceptional quality of the human existence, and which actually expresses itself in constant struggle to overcome its non-self or the other. In Iqbal's world, human beings are not caught up in the existential trap of the self-other binary but are blessed with the infinite potential of creating new desires and ideals out of it. And this dream of creating new ideals can be fulfilled by imagining the entire human race as members of one family of the human. Those who believe in the authenticity of spiritual experience are duty bound to work for their welfare by rejecting the binary of us and them, while human self that Iqbal imagines to be indivisible like life gets authentically declared through the Quranic injunctions, like entire humanity or one *Ummah*: "Human beings were one *Ummah*. And then they created differences. Allah sent his Prophets and divine laws to transform them into one nation again" (*Surah Albaqra, Ayat 213 of the Quran*).

As per our analytical and interactive reading of transnationalism in Iqbal's idea of nationhood, the focus point remained as to how Iqbal dreams the human self or *Nafs* becoming the source of transformation for entire humanity into one *Ummah*, to let them enjoy their lives in peace and harmony. Because Iqbal, we researched, opposes the binary division of self and other, he believed that the dream of a transnational and transcendental as well as universal and cosmopolitan civilization can be achieved through spiritual democracy which negates the notion of Western nationalism in its modern forms. Also, because Western forms of territorial nationalisms can only divide humanity between 'us' and 'them,' Iqbal in 'The Principal of Movement in the Structure of Islam' in *The Reconstruction* argues that the discourse of Western enlightenment has been instrumental in creating intolerant democracies that are designed to exploit the poor for the rich (142). The solution, as per Iqbal, lies in intuition and revelation, a nonhuman source of knowledge which could give human beings the motives to de-territorialize the bindings of their nationalist imaginaries and, thus, create another harmonious world. Iqbal's introduction of the term 'spiritual democracy', which he also imagines to be more transnational in spirit, therefore, argues against the Western concept of 'secular democracy'. Iqbal trusts that the former envisages humanity as a family while the latter

divides it into groups and warring factions locked in the Darwinian struggle of the survival of the fittest. He therefore concludes in his 'The Principal Movement...':

The Muslim ... internalizes its own apparent externality. With him the spiritual basis of life is a matter of conviction for which even the least enlightened man among us can easily lay down his life; and in view of the basic idea of Islam that there can be no further revelation binding on man, we ought to be spiritually one of the most emancipated peoples on earth. Early Muslims emerging out of the spiritual slavery of pre-Islamic Asia were not in a position to realize the true significance of this basic idea. Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam. (142)

In the pre-Partition India, transcendental and Islamic nationalism of Iqbal with its emphasis on spiritual democracy along his transnational philosophic pragmatism was also placed beside Mohandas Gandhi's popular nationalist canon that in certain ways was equally in contrast to the Nehruvian secularized nationalism. Be it religious, a-religious or secular, what we see overall in pre-Partition India is the split of a nation into its multiple communal segments. Torn between the conflicting modes of representation, even the Hindu chauvinistic orthodoxy versus Gandhian non-violent territorialized though rhetorical-ized Indian nationalism and its various forms of being Hindustani stayed challenged in different capacities.⁵

In her essay 'The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and Migrant Writer', Rebecca L. Walkowitz foregrounds the value of contextualizing literary transnationalism 'within several national traditions' (527-529). From a more sociological perspective in his 'Migration and Other Modes of Transnationalism', Steven Vertovec also describes such a contextualization in terms of 'Conceptual Cross-Fertilization' for mobilizing and restructuring of the literary movements.⁶ That the local assumptions intervene with interpretation to give the literary thought more mobilized a meaning is something that shapes our understanding of the transnational alternative engagement amid multiple binary positionalities. Further, and within the milieu of Empire and Orientalism as a form of controversially representative against the re-representative nationalistic text (to use Gayatri C. Spivak's distinction), Lisa Low refers to Vasant A. Shahane and elaborates on the multiplicity of perspectives on Indian nationalistic voice and its otherness within the British orientalist orchestration (Lowe 104-105). The British colonial nationalism paved ways for alternative Indian nationalisms to see through the difference that Snehal Shingavi terms as 'nationalism's "others"' (5). That Indian nationalism has for long been replete with oppositions, splits and deeper communal rifts based on sociopolitical, socioeconomic and sociocultural tendencies is something that brings in divergent rethinking even about the Indian communal loyalties based on Congress versus Muslim League nationalisms. Of course, such a broad based bifurcation of the Indian nationalistic sensibility had its complexities related to religious against secular modernity, which Shingavi explicates over the divide in religions where 'a thoroughly secular set of politics that were hostile to Islam in a different way' (106). It is because of such complexities that the dynamic fluidity of transnationalism and its 'alternative historical destiny of the nation' offer intersectional rethinking for a liberal nationalistic cross-fertilization, a relative geographical transcendence for heterogeneity that points out philosophically, spiritually and pragmatically the possible hybrid transnational space (202).

Though Iqbal's poetry develops a scope for transnational poetics from the Muslim spiritual democracy viewpoint, the Indian National Poet Rabindarnath Tagore occupies this hybrid space in his distinctive way. Son of one of the 19th century founders of Hindu religious reforms movement, and known mostly by his pen name Bhanu Singha Thakur, Tagore was also popular as polymath through his sobriquets Gurudev, Kabiguru and Biswakbi. The first non-European Nobel Prize winner of literature in 1913 and a champion of the 'One World' idea, Tagore was also acclaimed as the 'Great Sentinel' by Gandhi, for he emerged to be an educator of the Indian mind. Despite being critical of Gandhi's political activism Tagore supported him regarding the separate electorates for untouchables, and though he opposed Western imperialism in support of his idealized Indian nationalism, in spirit Tagore was against human divisions. As a National Poet of India, Tagore renounced his Knighthood in response to 1919 *JallianwallaBagh* massacre to claim 'Freedom from fear ... for ... [his] Motherland! ('Freedom', *Collected* 454-455), feeling 'Deliverance' and 'freedom' for his self and his nation not in 'renunciation' but unification of 'a thousand bonds of delight' ('Gitanjali', *Collected* 34). For Tagore, heaven therefore was 'born ... in the arms of the mother-dust' ('Lover's Gift', *Collected* 263). In his critique of the idea of nationalism as it appears in the Western

episteme, Tagore, like Iqbal, feels worried about the concept of othering and the imagined superiority of West over East. Filled with colloquial lyricism, Tagore's poem, 'The Sunset of the Century' reverberates Iqbal's concerns about such tyrannies of the Western territorialized nationalism:

The last sun of the century sets amidst the blood-red clouds of the West and the whirlwind of hatred.
The naked passion of self-love of Nations, in its drunken delirium of greed, is dancing to the clash of steel and howling verses of vengeance.
The hungry self of the Nation shall burst in a violence of fury from its shameless feeding.
For it has made the world its food. And licking it, crunching it and swallowing it in big morsels,
Its swells and swells
Till in the midst of its unholy feast descends the sudden shaft of heaven piercing its heart of grossness.⁷

The culinary imagery used in Tagore's poem aptly conveys the insatiable hunger of modern Western nationalism, which he believes feeds on the dead body of the 'other' like a monster or a vulture. Tagore is of the perspective that as a philosophic doctrine, modern Western nationalism can only breed hatred and greed. Here, two important theoretical terms in the poem need to be elaborated so that it helps us understand why the celebrated National Poet of India is also vocally so much against the political demands of modern Western nationalism. These terms are self-love of Nations and the self of the Nation.

By self-love of Nations Tagore means the imagined inferiority of the 'other' that paves way for an uncritical self-love. This narcissistic tendency is reinforced through the cultural and literary narratives which glorify collective national past of an imagined community. Since this past does not exist *per se*, the literary narratives tend to re-create it through metaphors, symbols and architectural monuments that find expression in the semiotics of nationalism. The process becomes instrumental in creating an individual self as well as the self of the Nation. Hence, self-love of the Nation and the self of the Nation become modern equivalents of the Roman god Janus (One god with two faces) that even South Asian critics like Bhabha would interpret: 'Janus-faced ambivalence ... Janus-faced discourse of the nation' (*Nation and Narration* 3). Within the context of Janus-faced discourse of the Indian nation, Tagore feels scared of the destructive potential of the notion nationalism overall. For Tagore, self-preservation and self-glorification are the sole purpose of nationalism that create hatred for the 'other' to proliferate further a fear of the 'other' as well. The nations, thus, are caught up in the vicious struggle for survival, while the main objective of their political struggle remains maintaining a political hegemony over the 'other'. The insatiable hunger for materialism, wealth and power makes nations look at the world as food, and by 'licking it, crunching it and swallowing it in big morsels' the dominant nations swell and swell and swell.

While Iqbal had coined another phrase for describing this insatiable hunger for power and wealth that he describes as 'self-centered intellect (*Aql-e-Khudbin*)', he argued that this self-centered intellect is void of thinking capacity for others. Self-centered intellect can never plan for the welfare of fellow beings because it is double-faced Janus and thus filled with the fear of extinction if it does not act or protect itself by exploiting others. In comparison, Iqbal believes that the intellect which can think for the other is God-fearing intellect (the *Aql-e-Khuda Bien*). In his unique manner and style, Tagore also theorizes this notion in a slightly different context. In his lecture 'Nationalism in India' in *Nationalism*, Tagore argues very adamantly:

Each individual has his self-love. Therefore his brute instinct leads him to fight with others in the sole pursuit of his self-interest. But man has also his higher instincts of sympathy and mutual help. The people who are lacking in this higher moral power and who therefore cannot combine in fellowship with one another must perish or live in a state of degradation. (94)

What Iqbal theorizes as God-fearing intellect is termed as higher instincts of sympathy and mutual help by Tagore, but both these South Asian National Poets consensually argue and agree that the modern Western forms of nationalism are divisive. Both agree that nationalism in its worst form tends to create hatred and fear of 'the other'. But how nationalism needs to be imagined differently is the common point that brings transnational poetic sensibilities of Iqbal and Tagore in conjunction for the higher purpose of creating human civilization based on mutual love and respect. Iqbal's flights for spiritual democracy find replication in Tagore's idealism for

‘Santiniketan’ [now VishvaBharati University], a spiritual center for Tagore to mediate social harmony: ‘... Santiniketan ... weaves our hearts in a song, making us one in music’ (‘Santiniketan’, *Collected* 457-458). Being models of transnational accessibility for humanity at large, Iqbal and Tagore serve the higher instincts of sympathy for whole human race. In his poem ‘Where the Mind is Without Fear’, Tagore dreams of such a ‘One World’ that is free of fear, compartmentalization and exploitation:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not broken up in to fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into dreary desert of dead habit: Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into widening thoughts and action: Into heaven of freedom, my father let my country awake 8

That both Iqbal and Tagore were in search of some ideal, transcendental and transnational world that is free of discrimination and exploitation allowed them imagine possibilities for self-negation against the Western idea of essentialist otherness within nationalism. They rejoiced human freedom from the constrictions of territorialized or demarcated nationalities. Despite the overwhelming nationalistic derivatives that frequently emerge in their works because of their over-nationalization by their nation-states, the imaginary flights of Iqbal and Tagore overlap to offer transnational spaces for a deeper understanding of cross-bordered dialogic. Celebrated as National Poets in their own capacities and declared as literary pride by their relative homelands, these versifiers powerfully offer interpretation for regional cosmopolitanism. That they can be interpreted in terms of rethinking beyond the rigid forms of nationalism connect Iqbal and Tagore to share values of togetherness. Together they restructure a South Asian literary nationalism for hybrid cross-fertilization of thought, revelation, intuition and inspiration.

Given the context of our own interactive and inspirational strategies to read Iqbal and Tagore for their transnational poetics, our biggest challenge has been to compare the National Poets of two politically rival South Asian countries, India and Pakistan. Yet, through questioning and clarifying, the problem anticipation along with problem avoidance techniques stayed integral part of our ongoing information processing and reciprocal teaching. Our learners’ textual comprehension overlapped with our monitoring ‘scaffold’ instructions (Palincsar and Brown 771), while the model of dialogic learning involved conducive simulations enacted by heterogeneously mixed-ability student groups. These simulations in terms of recreating characters from the relevant historical facts allowed theorizing the issues through role play practices.⁸ Because this is to be a continued project, we plan to make our ‘Interactive Teaching’ more experimental and challenging through further Team-Teaching and by raising more complicated general questions like: How may the national but inspirational poets of countries be made more exchangeable regarding human togetherness and not just for their much publicized and over-nationalized ideological frameworks? What possibly may be the gender of South Asian nationalism, and why do we not have any female National Poet? How do then the colonial/ postcolonial patriarchal cum patriotic orders may express the feminizing of homelands as motherlands? We may not find exact clarification for such conceptualizing questions, but raising concerns would definitely help bringing awareness about how some transnational poetics of humanity beyond the myopic notions of nation-states in works of National Poets may support our critical thinking in broader terms; how it may then facilitate us develop a more inclusive professional citizenship within the South Asian pedagogical practices.

Works Cited

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 2016.
- Bhabha, Homi K., Ed. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- . 'The Third Space.' Interview by Jonathan Rutherford. *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Rutherford et al., 1990. 207-221.
- Cesaire, Aimé 'Discourse on Colonialism', *Postcolonialism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, Vol I. Diana Brydon. Ed. London: Routledge, 2000. 310-339.
- Davis, Rocio G. Ed. *The Transnationalism of American Culture: Literature, Film, and Music*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Henning, John E., Stone, Jody M. and Kelly, James L. *Using Action Research to Improve Instruction: An Interactive Guide for Teachers*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Iqbal, Allama Muhammad. *Baang-e-Dara in Iqbal's Collected Works*. 11th Edition. Trans. Masood A. Raja. Lahore: Iqbal Academy of Pakistan, 2013.
- . *The Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam*. California: Stanford University Press in collaboration with the Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2013.
- Laura Briggs, Laura, Gladys McCormick and J. T. Way, 'Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis', *American Quarterly, Nation and Migration: Past and Future*, 60:3 (Sept., 2008) 625-648. Johns Hopkins UP.
- Lowe, Lisa. 'Orientalism as Literary Criticism: The Reception of E. M. Forster's A Passage to India'. *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*. Cornell University Press, 1991. 102-135.
- Marland, Perc. 'Models of Teachers' Interactive Thinking', *The Elementary School Journal*, 87: 2 (Nov 1986) 209-226, The University of Chicago Press.
- Osnowitz, Debra and Jenkins, Kathleen E. 'The Theory Forum: Teaching Social Theory through Interactive Practice', *Teaching Sociology*, 42:3 (July 2014) 245-250, American Sociological Association.
- Palincsar, Annemarie S. and Brown, Ann L. 'Interactive Teaching to Promote Independent Learning from Text', *The Reading Teacher*, 39:8 (April 1986) 771-777, International Literacy Association and Wiley.
- Pervez, Ghulam Ahmed. *Iqbal and Quran*. 4th Edition. Lahore: IdaraToluae Islam, 1996.
- Shingavi, Snehal. *The Mahatma Misunderstood: The Politics and Forms of Literary Nationalism in India*. UK: Anthem Press, 2013.
- Spivak, Gayatri C. 'Can the Subaltern Speak' in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, Eds. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 66-111.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. *Collected Poems and Plays*. New Delhi: Rupa& Co., 2011.
- . 'Nationalism in India', *Nationalism*. New Delhi: Fingerprint Classics Private, 2018.
- Vertovec, Steven. 'Migration and Other Modes Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-Fertilization', *International Migration Review* 37:3, *Transnational Migration: International Perspectives* (Fall 2003) 641-645, New York: Center of Migration Studies, 2014.
- Wolkowitz, Rebecca L. 'The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and Migrant Writer', *Contemporary Literature*, 47:4 (Winter 2006) 527-545. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Notes

¹ Popularized in the early 20th century as a post-World War phenomenon by the territorial legislators, pragmatic philosophers and reformers like John Dewey and his disciple Randolph Silliman Bourne the idea of transnationalism emerged out of democratic, cosmopolitan and assimilating spirit of people with various nationalities living together, ranging their interactive exchanges through ethics to aesthetics.

² For details, see Pervez, Iqbal and *Quran*. 237.

³ Davis' edition *The Transnationalism of American Culture* invites readers to examine the nature of transnational turn that highlight its creative and critical repercussions, affecting its fluid and dynamic cosmopolitanism.

⁴ Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* helps us read the notion of nation projected as the only authentic location for cultural representations by questioning, rethinking and transforming the nation and its 'national subject' through liminality as well as its narrative temporalities of splitting, ambivalence, and vacillation.

⁵ Shingavi argues that in a very pyramidal construct yet in the broader sense of Gandhian *Ram* versus *Ravana* 'dyad' to resist British colonialism, the unitary patterns of Gandhian nonviolent political nationalism result in much-more-religiously-informed partitions (60). No doubt, within the context of its historical ancientness, Indian nationalism had always been threatened by fractures and truncated diversities; socio-political, geographical, historical, physical, religious, metaphysical, racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural or even emotional.

⁶ Tracking the relevance of mobilized structures to transnational communities, Vertovec follows up thinking with the migrant populations as to how they 'make use of modes of exchange and relationship' surrounding different kinds of transnational structures to 'span nation-state borders' and cross-fertilize 'transnationalisms' (642-643).

⁷ For reference, <https://scroll.in/article/825441/the-sunset-of-the-century-a-poem-by-rabindranath-tagore>