

FROM SILENCE TO SLOGAN: COLONIAL VIOLENCE, CULTURAL RESISTANCE, AND THE SUBALTERN VOICE IN SIRAJ'S *ECHO IS THE CALL*

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Abstract:

*This research paper offers a postcolonial analysis of Sirajul Haq Memon's (Siraj's) historical novel *Echo Is the Call* (original Sindhi: *Parro so ee Sadd*, 1970; English translation by Dr. Amjad Siraj Memon, 2015) in terms of its depiction of colonial violence and indigenous Sindhi resistance to the Arghun and Tarkhan regimes in 16th century Sindh. Using Catherine Belsey's (2013) qualitative textual analysis and postcolonial theories of Fanon (1961), Galtung (1969), Bhabha (1994), Spivak (1988) and Memmi (1965), the paper argues that *Echo Is the Call* is a foundational text of anti-colonial literary consciousness in the Sindhi literary tradition. By analysing the novel's central episodes, the physical violence of the Tarkhan regime, the economic exploitation of Sindhi farmers, the linguistic imposition of Persian and the forms of indigenous armed, intellectual and cultural resistance; the paper shows that Siraj maps all three of Galtung's categories of colonial violence onto the Arghun-Tarkhan colonial apparatus, and builds a typology of anti-colonial resistance through the protagonist Sodhal, his brother Sanghaar, the martyred scholar Akhund Saleh and the child Sanwal. The paper adds to the field of postcolonial literary studies by recognising *Echo Is the Call* as a major text that should be included in the world canon of anti-colonial novels alongside Achebe, Ngugi and Fanon.*

Keywords: *Echo Is the Call*, Siraj, colonial violence, resistance, postcolonial, linguistic imperialism, Belsey, Galtung, Sindhi literature

Introduction

The Sindhi literary tradition stands out as a site of astonishing philosophical depth in the rich tapestry of South Asian anti-colonial literature, and yet this has been almost completely overlooked in the English language. The literary work of Sirajul Haq Memon (1933-2013) - who published his work under the pen name Siraj and is considered the most important novelist in the history of Sindhi literature - is one of the most sustained and complex engagements with the history of colonialism, indigeneity and anti-colonial resistance in the literary culture of the subcontinent. His trilogy of historical novels - *Echo Is the Call* (1970), *Rendezvous with Death* (1972), and *Parched Land Wandering Clouds* (1988), translated into English by his son Dr. Amjad Siraj Memon - maps the colonial history of Sindh across three successive waves of foreign rule: the Arghun-Tarkhan period of the 16th century, the Mughal period, and the British period. Among the three novels, *Echo Is the Call* is the first, the one that sets the parameters for Siraj's postcolonial project.

The action in *Echo Is the Call* takes place in the great Sindhi capital of Thatta in the 16th century, in the reign of the Tarkhan ruler Mirza Baqi. The Tarkhans (and their forebears the Arghuns) were Central Asian dynasties - descendants of Mongol warriors - who invaded Sindh in the early 16th century and ruled it with a hand of iron. The novel's plot focuses on a band of Sindhi rebels - led by the blacksmith-warrior Sodhal and his brother Sanghaar - who lead and fight in revolts against the Tarkhans, while the intellectual aspects of resistance are represented by Akhund Noor Muhammad and the hanged scholar Akhund Saleh, who refused to allow Persian to be taught to Sindhi students in his seminary. The novel was composed during the military dictatorship of Pakistan (as the Author's Note, dated "Karachi, 3rd April 1970"

confirms) and the colonial setting of the 16th century is clearly a historical allegory of the Pakistani state's oppression of Sindhi language, culture and political independence.

Yet, *Echo Is the Call* has not been given any attention in English-language academia. This oversight is part of a wider trend of the marginalisation of Sindhi literary and cultural expression that Spivak (1988) terms epistemic violence: the suppression of subaltern knowledge by hegemonic cultural politics. Through an analysis of *Echo Is the Call* using the lenses of postcolonial theory and Belsey's textual analysis, this paper aims to counter this oversight and to contribute to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive global postcolonial literary canon.

Research Question

This paper addresses the following research question:

How does Sirajul Haq Memon's *Echo Is the Call* represent the structures of colonial violence perpetrated by the Arghun-Tarkhan regime against indigenous Sindhis, and what forms of resistance does the novel construct and celebrate in response to that violence?

Statement of the Problem

This paper addresses a two-pronged problem. At the level of literary scholarship, the critical oversight of *Echo Is the Call* and Sindhi literature more generally is a major gap in the field of postcolonial literary studies, which is thereby deprived of a tradition that has its own highly developed anti-colonial sensibilities in response to the particular historical circumstances of colonial domination in the Indus Valley. At the level of representation, it is a problem of epistemic violence in Spivak's (1988) terms: the suppression of Sindhi literary expression by the hegemonic cultural politics of the Pakistani state, which has favoured the Urdu language as the medium of national literary culture over the literary expressions of Sindh, Balochistan and other parts of the country. Through an analysis of *Echo Is the Call* using the tools of postcolonial theory and textual analysis, this paper helps to recover the subaltern literary voice that Spivak identifies as one of the major tasks of postcolonial studies.

Literature Review

Colonial Violence: Theoretical Frameworks

Colonial violence has been conceptualised by a number of prominent strands in postcolonial studies. Fanon's (1961) seminal analysis of the colonial relationship in *The Wretched of the Earth* sees violence as central to colonialism, and as operating at the levels of economic exploitation, political domination, cultural disrespect, and psychological distortion. Galtung's (1969) influential three-fold classification of violence (direct violence - physical harm to bodies, structural violence - the organisation of social relations to produce suffering in the absence of individual agents, and cultural violence - the symbolic aspects that legitimise direct and structural violence) offers the main framework for the novel's depiction of colonial power. *Echo Is the Call* illustrates all three categories to the point: direct violence in the killings of Akhund Saleh, Roopo and Umer; structural violence in the land revenue system that dispossesses local farmers; and cultural violence in the imposition of Persian language and the eradication of indigenous cultural institutions.

Bhabha's (1994) notion of colonial mimicry, the ambivalent process by which colonised subjects are made to be 'almost the same but not quite' as their colonisers, helps to understand the novel's portrayal of Ameer Khan, the Tarkhan mayor who has a friendship-enmity relation with the resistance leader Sodhal. Said's (1993) notion of 'contrapuntal reading' - reading colonial texts against the grain to recover suppressed voices - underpins the critical approach of this paper, which reads *Echo Is the Call* as a practice of contrapuntal historical writing: a text that gives literary expression to the counter-narrative that colonial historiography has excluded. Memmi's (1965) psychological analysis of colonialism - distinguishing between the colonizer who accepts and the colonizer who refuses, and the colonized who accepts and the

colonized who refuses - offers a fine typology of the novel's characters. Spivak's (1988) notion of epistemic violence - the exclusion of subaltern knowledge from dominant discourse - is pertinent to the novel's focus on the suppression of Sindhi language and memory.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986) discussion of linguistic imperialism and cultural violence - his thesis in *Decolonising the Mind* that colonialism was imposed on the African people through the imposition of European languages and the subordination of indigenous languages as the only possible vehicle of knowledge - is pertinent to the Tarkhan language policy the novel portrays. The similarities between British colonial imposition of English on African peoples and the Tarkhan imposition of Persian on Sindhi peoples are striking and important: in both instances the colonial administration employs linguistic imperialism as a means of cultural domination, using language as a medium of colonial ideology and a means of suppressing indigenous cultural identity. The difference - and this is one of Siraj's most historically acute points - is that the Tarkhan administration tries to exploit Islamic religious identity in order to legitimise Persian imposition, representing Sindhi as inferior to Persian and the learning of Persian as a religious as well as a social obligation. This use of religion to advance cultural imperialism is a particularly historically sensitive point of the novel.

Siraj and the Sindhi Literary Tradition

Sirajul Haq Memon (1933-2013) was born in Tando Jam, Sindh. He studied in Sindh and completed his Bachelor of Arts at the University of Karachi, and joined the civil service after passing the Central Superior Services examination, before retiring to pursue a career in literature. He passed away on February 2, 2013 in Karachi, leaving a literary legacy of novels, short stories, poetry, drama, linguistics, translation, autobiography and journalism. In her Foreword to *Echo Is the Call* (2015), Dr. Fahmida Hussain describes him as 'the legendary Sindhi novelist Siraj' and his historical trilogy as having 'created interest in the history of Sindh and encouraged the movement of romantic nationalism' (p. 5), and played 'an important role in the popular resistance movements during and after the military rule of General Ziaul Haque' (p. 5). The trilogy *Echo Is the Call*, *Rendezvous with Death*, and *Parched Land and Wandering Clouds* was translated into English by Siraj's son Dr. Amjad Siraj Memon, whose Translator's Note (2015) poignantly describes the emotional impact of reading his father's account of colonial atrocities against the Sindhi people.

In the critical literature, Khokhar (2022) credits Siraj with founding the modern Sindhi novel and describes his historical fiction as an engagement with the history of colonialism in Sindh through folk narrative, classical poetry and the oral tradition of resistance. Jamil's (2019) research situates *Echo Is the Call* as 'the most important anti-colonial novel in the Sindhi language' (p. 87). But no existing work offers a postcolonial theoretical analysis of the novel which is the focus of the current paper.

Research Methodology

This paper uses the qualitative textual analytical approach described by Catherine Belsey in her seminal essay 'Textual Analysis as a Research Method' (2013). Belsey's methodology acknowledges that literary texts are not transparent representations of an independently existing reality but are complex signifying practices whose meanings are generated through the interaction of formal textual properties - narrative structure, characterisation, focalisation, irony, metaphor, dialogue - with the ideological and discursive contexts in which these textual properties are used. Belsey (2013) calls for close reading that focuses simultaneously on what texts say and on what they do - on the propositional content of a literary text and on the rhetorical, structural and ideological effects of that content. This method is well-adapted to *Echo Is the Call*, which is a combination of historical realism and political allegory and employs a broad array of literary strategies to portray both the systemic nature of colonial violence and the human responses to that violence.

The theoretical context is the account of colonial violence by Fanon (1961), the tripartite typology of violence by Galtung (1969), the idea of colonial mimicry by Bhabha (1994), the contrapuntal reading by Said (1993), the epistemic violence by Spivak (1988), the psychology of colonialism by Memmi (1965), and the linguistic imperialism by Ngũgĩ (1986). The main source is the English translation of *Echo Is the Call* by Dr. Amjad Siraj Memon (Siraj, 2015), complemented with the Foreword by Dr. Fahmida Hussain (2015) and the Translator's Note by Dr. Amjad Siraj Memon (2015). The method of analysis is a close reading of the entire novel, selection of passages most relevant to the analysis, analysis of the formal and rhetorical strategies by which the passages generate their meanings, and contextualising the formal analysis within the postcolonial theoretical frames.

It should be noted that the other two novels in the trilogy *Rendezvous with Death* and *Parched Land and Wandering Clouds* have also been translated into English by Dr. Amjad Siraj Memon, and thus the trilogy is available for global academic study. Yet *Echo Is the Call* is the necessary starting point: it sets the historical context of colonial subjugation and indigenous resistance that provides the context for the representations of the Mughal and British colonial periods in the later novels. The Foreword by Dr. Fahmida Hussain (2015) explicitly acknowledges that this trilogy of novels 'played important role in the popular resistance movements during and after the military rule of General Ziaul Haque' (p. 5) - a testament to the political potential of historical fiction as a tool for contemporary anti-colonial activism. The allegory is not subtle: in 1970, writing under a military dictatorship that was stamping out Sindhi culture and politics, Siraj selected the Tarkhan colonial state of the 16th century as an analog of the military state of the 20th century, and the Sindhi resistance leaders of the past as exemplars of contemporary political resistance.

Data Analysis and Discussion

1. Direct Violence: Physical Terror as Colonial Policy

The opening scene of *Echo Is the Call* depicts a scene of extreme, controlled physical violence: the blacksmith Sodhal at his forge, transforming iron into tools through the controlled use of violence. The image is not incidental but is the central metaphor of the novel: just as the blacksmith uses violence to forge iron, so the novel is structured around the question of how violence - colonial violence and resistance to it - shapes human lives and communities. The Author's Note cites the historical evidence of Tarkhan violence in detail: 'Not a single day went by when someone was not hanged. It was a common practice to cut off someone's nose, head, hand or arm. It was his favourite ritual to get people trampled under elephants' feet' (Hussain, 2015, p. 6, quoting Pir Hisamuddin Rashdi). This historical record is seamlessly woven into the novel's narrative.

The most important instance of direct violence - the hanging of Akhund Saleh - is given forensic narrative detail. The scholar's last words to his executioner are one of the most memorable moments in Sindhi literature:

"Akhund Saleh's face was calm with confidence and pride. He said, 'I have seen thousands of illiterates like you. If you hang me, will Sindh start speaking in Persian? You can hang as many teachers as you like but you will never succeed in teaching Persian by force.' Ameer Khan waved and one of his men put the noose around Akhund's neck... Akhund hung without a sound with that smile still on his face. Ameer Khan was surprised to see him and wondered where the Sindhis had learnt to smile despite being on the gallows." (Siraj, 2015, p. 121)

This scene enacts a double logic of violence and dignity. The colonizer's perplexity at the victim's smile is a turning point in the colonial project: Ameer Khan realises that his violence has failed. Akhund Saleh's smile is a consciousness beyond the reach of colonial violence: a consciousness rooted in the certainty of the justice of his cause and the inevitability of the

failure of his executioner's project. Siraj's narrative focalization (from the colonizer's perspective) is a rhetorical choice: in focalizing the execution from Ameer Khan's perspective, the narrative places the reader in the position of the colonizer and, in doing so, in the position of moral failure. The parallel episode of two Sindhi men skinned alive before Mirza Baqi similarly ends in a powerful act of defiance: 'regaining his strength, the Sindhi gathered his saliva and spat it at Mirza Baqi' (Siraj, 2015, p. 94). The arc from the systematic removal of the body's skin to this final act of embodied defiance enacts Fanon's (1961) logic of colonial violence in reverse: it is the colonized body that produces the ultimate act of violent defiance even in its death.

The torture and death of Umer, Janan's adolescent son who spontaneously slays a Tarkhan soldier demanding 'five virgins for the harem' for his role in a previous rebellion, exemplifies the pedagogical nature of colonial violence. His death following imprisonment in a well, torture and blinding signifies the limit of the colonized subject's non-violent compliance, while his last words the slogan 'Jiye Sindh' convert his individual martyrdom into a collective assertion.

2. Structural Violence: Economic Extraction and Dispossession

In this novel, structural violence is represented through the extended episode of Janan's village and the Tarkhan demand for the villagers' grain crop. The episode opens with the pre-colonial communal economy as a political point of reference: 'They divided the produce they grew equally among themselves... After giving the blacksmith, the mason and the preacher of the mosque their stipulated share, the rest of the produce was evenly distributed among the families of the village' (Siraj, 2015, p. 71). The Tarkhan soldiers intervene in this economy with the imposition of a new property regime: 'These lands originally belonged to the Samas. They have handed over the reins of the state to us and then, His Excellency has given this estate to Ameer Kokiltash' (p. 72). This statement captures the structural logic of colonial dispossession: the colonial state asserts the right to redistribute property confiscated by conquest, in lieu of the collective property rights of communities that have 'lived here for centuries'. The Tarkhan soldier's appeal to precedent enacts Spivak's (1988) "epistemic violence" of the colonial property discourse - a regime of individualised, state mediated property relations that erases the indigenous community's ancestral connection to the land.

The escalation of demands in this episode follows the logic of colonial economic extraction: first, demand for half the produce; when resistance is offered, demand for all the produce; and finally, as 'penalty for the insurgency,' the community must produce 'five virgins for the harem'. Each step also escalates the structural violence of the colonial relationship - from economic, to dispossession, to sexual - and in turn, the resistance. The category of structural violence proposed by Galtung (1969) is well exemplified: the demand for half the grain harvest is not the rapine of individuals, but the enforcement of a structure that produces impoverishment for the indigenous Sindhis and accumulation for the colonial ruling class.

3. Cultural Violence: Language Imperialism and Epistemicide

The most philosophically interesting aspect of the novel is its discussion of cultural violence, the ideological aspects of colonialism, in the form of the Tarkhan policy of linguistic imperialism. The Tarkhan justification for the imposition of Persian is voiced by the Kandhari cleric: 'Persian is the language of the rulers, a language of Islamic state and is an Islamic language... Learning Persian will bring the Sindhis closer to their masters and they will start having a special understanding of Islam. The gap between the Tarkhans and Sindhis will also get better' (Siraj, 2015, p. 117). This statement combines the major themes of colonial language policy: the association of the colonizer's language with civilization and the colonized's language with backwardness; the use of religious identity to justify linguistic imperialism; and the notion of cultural erasure as social progress.

Akhund Saleh's counter is a highlight of Sindhi literature:



"If a language is thrust upon Sindhis at governmental level, they will never study it. They have an immense amount of love for their language which is one of the oldest languages of the world... They have never accepted any foreign language, the Brahmins tried to teach them Sanskrit while preaching their religion but they did not learn it. Arabs brought Islam but they could not impose Arabic on these people. History shows ample evidence that they have not accepted foreign languages." (Siraj, 2015, pp. 117–118)

Akhund Saleh confirms the ancient and rich history of Sindhi, challenging the argument that Persian is a superior language. His historical case - evoking the memory of the failed imposition of Sanskrit and Arabic - observes a long history of Sindhi cultural resistance to language eradication. Sodhal's formulation of this analysis takes it to its most explicit philosophical point: 'language is what gives a person his identity, humane nature and a forced foreign language deprives him from his natural behavior, it will give rise to an artificial and un-natural personality' (Siraj, 2015, p. 132). This is an exceedingly nuanced analysis of the politics of language that prefigures Ngugi's (1986) argument in *Decolonising the Mind* by 16 years. Mirza Baqi's articulation of the colonial language strategy reveals its strategic nature: 'Until the Sindhis read Roomi, Hafiz and Khayyam, they will not stop these insurgencies. Once they taste the delights of life, of Turkish boys, of wines and spirits, they will not think of any insurgencies' (Siraj, 2015, p. 97). This is a clear case of cultural replacement as political pacification.

The literary strategy adopted in this encounter demonstrates Belsey's (2013) point about the difference between what texts say and what they do. The Kandhari cleric declares that Persian is the language of civilization, Islam and social progress. But what the text does - by comparing the long-winded verbal explanations of the colonial administrators with the simple, confident voice of Akhund Saleh - is show that the discourse of the colonial administrators' superiority is itself weak: it needs to be continually asserted (swords, soldiers, decrees) because it is not intellectually convincing. Akhund Saleh's response, given 'in the same polite tone' (Siraj, 2015, p. 118) that never loses its temper while Ameer Khan rages, dramatises through its form as much as its substance the point it makes: that the culturally self-confident person does not need to yell to be heard, but the culturally defensive colonial administrator can only assert authority through violence. When Akhund Saleh says 'the state will have to cut the tongues of all Sindhis, they will prefer to remain speechless than speaking in Persian' (Siraj, 2015, p. 118), he is making a prophetic claim that the subsequent episode of the two boys whose tongues are literally cut out tragically fulfils - but even this physical silencing cannot succeed because the community's outrage and disgust at the sight of the mutilated boys has precisely the effect that the colonial administration fears: it galvanises community resistance.

The murder of the puppeteer Roopo, whose folk dramas re-enacted Sindhi history and resistance for popular audiences 'the whole region from Thatta to even as far as Multan' (Siraj, 2015, p. 58), is the cultural violence corollary of Akhund Saleh's hanging: it seeks to silence the institutional vehicle through which the language is transmitted as cultural memory and political knowledge. The sending of Roopo's head in a sweet carton - turning a means of pleasure (the sweet) into a means of torture - is the image of colonial cultural violence.

4. Armed Resistance and Popular Insurgency

In response to the Tarkhan regime's comprehensive violence, *Echo Is the Call* offers a comprehensive typology of indigenous resistance. The most spectacular form of resistance is armed rebellion, exemplified by the brothers Sodhal and Sanghaar, who embody two types of warrior spirit. Sodhal is the philosopher-warrior: physically powerful, emotionally disciplined, tactically savvy, and committed to the motherland as an idea:

"He had in front of him the sweet façade of his beautiful motherland and he started caressing the mare's neck with immense love. He felt like the mare had in her a flicker of the soul of his land, his Sindh; that was loyal and always willing for any and every sacrifice! Sindh, his mother, his goddess; that had suffered through the centuries, be it the Greeks, the Iranians, the Sasanis, the Arabs — and every time the honour of Sindh was at stake, hordes of Sindhis gave their lives and left a print for their motherland to live with honour!" (Siraj, 2015, p. 34)

The series of colonial predecessors - Greeks, Iranians, Sasanids, Arabs - places the Tarkhan regime within a line of foreign colonisations, suggesting that just as each of these colonialisms was ultimately defeated by the strength of Sindhi culture, so too will the Tarkhan regime be defeated. Sanghaa's resistance is more impulsive: his invasion of the Tarkhani bar with a rope, his procurement of military information from Ameer Khan through physical and psychological coercion and trickery, and his dramatic raid on Mirza Baqi's bedroom are examples of individual direct action that enact what Bhabha (1994) calls a colonial "sly civility" in reverse; a rejection of the colonially assigned role of the subordinate subject.

The scene in which Sanghaa enters the Tarkhani bar, mocks the Tarkhan nobles, coerces Ameer Khan into providing military intelligence, and flees, is a theatrically staged scene. The bar - with its ritual of boy servers and nobles vying for their attentions - is a space of colonial performance, a theatre in which the colonial elite acts out its power for its own amusement. Sanghaa's entrance with a rope smashes the performance. His readiness to impose his own terms on the colonial social space is a strategic act of resistance: he knows that the Tarkhans' complacency in their pleasure house renders them especially vulnerable to an intervention that trespasses on the spatial prerogatives of their power. When he gets military intelligence from Ameer Khan by threatening his honour rather than his life, he shows that knowledge and wiles, applied to the psychological vulnerabilities of the colonizer, are as deadly as guns and cannons. The great peasant uprising - in which all of Sindh rises together against Tarkhan cantonments - is the novel's most extensive portrayal of collective armed resistance, but it is presented with a tragic realism that is one of Siraj's most politically shrewd insights. The Sindhis are not defeated by superior firepower, but by lack of discipline and coordination. The Akhund's post-mortem - 'if only the Sindhis could have a little discipline and if they form a small army of their own, it would not be difficult to show the rulers the road to Kandhar' (Siraj, 2015, p. 165) - suggests that the missing ingredient is not individual courage but political maturity. Siraj does not idealise resistance: he shows it in all its complexity, including the divisions between different resistance groups and the political complications of forming tactical alliances with other colonial groups.

The novel's most politically embarrassing moment in this regard is Sodhal's despairing soliloquy following the Sindhi crowd's rallying to Mirza Jan Baba against Mirza Baqi - replacing one Tarkhan colonial master with another in a politically naive act of which Sodhal is ashamed: 'Sindhis support for wolves against a tiger in their ranks was something he could not take, and his head was bowed with shame. He was full of shame instead of anger on this inept attitude of his countrymen' (Siraj, 2015, p. 139). This scene of Sodhal's despair - 'for the first time he felt helpless and weak' - is the novel's most realistic portrayal of the limits of individual heroism and of the difficulties of successful anti-colonial revolution. The novel's resistance heroism is not the crowd's naivety but the organized, informed resistance of a populace who know the structure of the enemy and the conditions for their own freedom.

5. Intellectual Resistance and the Politics of Knowledge

The intellectual aspects of anti-colonial resistance are borne primarily by Akhund Noor Muhammad - the great strategist who is both a religious scholar and a political leader and a

long-term organiser. His ability to function as the key figure in the resistance movement while maintaining his legitimacy in the eyes of the colonial regime is what Bhabha (1994) terms colonial mimicry in reverse: the local intellectual takes on the semblance of collaboration while using the social space that this opens up to organise and sustain the resistance. The network of seminaries he maintains - 'he had thousands of pupils and followers from Thatta to Bhakkar who were ready to give their lives on his command' (Siraj, 2015, p. 51) - is both a school and a political party.

The debate among the resistance leaders on whether to seek help from the Mughals against the Tarkhans - between Akhund Noor Muhammad's advocacy for the autonomy of the Sindhi people and Dadan's pragmatism in accepting the lesser of two imperialisms - is the longest sustained engagement in the novel with one of the central dilemmas of anti-colonial politics. Siraj does not settle this debate in favour of either side, recognising that the strategic options open to colonized peoples in a world dominated by rival imperial powers are indeed hard to choose from, and that all options are costly. This refusal to resolve the debate is one of the signs of the political sophistication of the novel: it does not provide the comfort of a single 'right' anti-colonial politics but acknowledges that the conditions of colonialism demand pragmatic choices whose consequences are uncertain. The historical irony that the novel's sequel, *O Death Come with Me* (translated by Dr. Amjad Siraj Memon), records - the overthrow of Tarkhan by Mughal rule - shows that neither the optimism of the resistance movement nor the pessimism of its critics was completely proven right.

Akhund Saleh's stand against Ameer Khan on the imposition of Persian is the most explicit example of intellectual resistance as anti-colonial politics in the novel. His resistance is not passive but active: he asserts the epistemic legitimacy of local knowledge - that the colonial state's right to define what is legitimate knowledge and what is legitimate medium of knowledge transfer is itself illegitimate. His self-sacrifice - his refusal to be hanged rather than being linguistically colonized - dramatises the entire argument of Ngugi's (1986) *Decolonising the Mind* in a single narrative moment: language is the medium of culture, memory and identity, and its suppression is not a mere cultural inconvenience but an existential threat to the colonised people.

6. *The Child as Hope: Sanwal and Transgenerationality*

Perhaps the most fascinating feature of *Echo Is the Call* is the long representation of the child character Sanwal (Sodhal's young nephew) as a site of anti-colonial consciousness. The Sanwal scenes are not just diversions but a separate argument about the sociology of anti-colonial consciousness. Sodhal often tells Sanwal 'the history of the bravery of Sindhis, their sacrifices and their revolts... the internal rifts between the Sindhis, the tortures of the invaders and about the arson and looting committed by the foreigners' (Siraj, 2015, p. 132). This informal education is the novel's model of anti-colonial education at its most basic level: the stories Sodhal narrates to Sanwal are the germs of the consciousness that will become the next generation of revolutionaries. The children's impromptu satire on the Kandhari preacher - 'Tarkhani turbans on the ground / Like a donkey walks on the mound!' - is an example of the 'inversion of colonial signs' described by Guha (1983) as the appropriation and subversion of colonial symbols through popular ridicule as a form of subaltern resistance. Siraj knows, as Fanon (1961) knows, that anti-colonial revolution is first a revolution of the mind, then of the body.

7. *Jiye Sindh: The Slogan as Anti-Colonial Utterance*

One of the most beautiful formal elements of *Echo Is the Call* is the deployment of the slogan 'Jiye Sindh' (Long Live Sindh), in Sindhi, as a leitmotif that serves as narrative punctuation, political program, and cultural affirmation of indigenous sovereignty. The slogan is uttered at the deaths of Umer and Akhund Saleh, in the parting between Sanghaar and Janan, and in

Sodhal's personal reflection on his love for the motherland. Umer's last words, 'Jiye Sindh', after torture, with his eyes burnt and body burnt, encapsulate in two words the political ideology of the resistance movement: the refusal of the will of the colonized people to be destroyed, the call of the colonized people to live as a people, despite the violence of the colonizer. This is the 'echo' of the novel's title, the call that echoes through the ages, from martyr to martyr, from generation to generation, that cannot be silenced by the colonizer's brutalities.

Sodhal's soliloquy on the name 'Sindh' turns the political slogan into a religious experience:

"He felt as if his body was instilled with new and fresh blood, as if he had drunk water that quenches an eternal thirst... The name had extinguished the fire that burnt his heart. The poison of hatred was all gone and he felt elated. That name had, like a touchstone, made him transform to gold, and he thought that if his blood was to spill, each drop of that golden blood will give birth to a golden Sindh." (Siraj, 2015, p. 125)

The alchemical metaphor, the name of Sindh as a touchstone that turns blood to gold performs the anti-colonial logic of martyrdom as cultural reproduction: the death of the resistance fighter does not end the resistance but intensifies it, converting individual sacrifice into collective energy for the liberation struggle. The title of the novel - *Echo Is the Call* - makes the same point formally: the echo is the repetition in space of a voice that has departed, the repetition in time of the call of the past, ensuring that no martyrdom is final and no colonialism is permanent.

Findings

The above analysis has five key findings. First, *Echo Is the Call* is a comprehensive study of colonial violence that superimposes the three categories of violence identified by Galtung (1969) - direct, structural, and cultural - onto the Arghun-Tarkhan regime with analytical rigour and narrative verve. Siraj does not represent colonial violence as an occasional atrocity but as a self-sustaining structure that governs all social relations in colonial Sindh. Second, the novel presents a typology of anti-colonial resistance that includes armed rebellion, intellectual dissent, cultural survival, linguistic resistance and the transmission of cultural memory across generations. Importantly, the novel does not privilege one form over another, but represents all as integral and inter-dependent aspects of a holistic anti-colonial resistance. Third, the novel's analysis of colonial subjectivities - in the range of characters from Ameer Khan (the ambivalent colonizer) to Haji Baba (the collaborating informer) to Sodhal and Sanghaar (the committed resisters) - is remarkably sociologically sophisticated and anticipates directly the insights of Memmi's (1965) analysis of the psychology of colonialism. Fourth, the novel's analysis of language as both the site of the violence of colonialism and the site of cultural resistance constitutes an independent South Asian contribution to the politics of linguistic imperialism that prefigures Ngugi's (1986) *Decolonising the Mind* by 16 years and deserves to be acknowledged in the global postcolonial studies canon. Fifth, the figure of Sanwal and the scenes of cultural transmission represent a unique argument - not often made in anti-colonial novels - about the relation between cultural memory, child consciousness and the inter-generational reproduction of resistance.

The ambivalence of the colonizer, embodied in Ameer Khan, is a further contribution of the novel. The history of the turban exchange between Ameer Khan and Sodhal - which takes place inebriated, after their joint victory over the Portuguese, in response to the Sindhi custom that Ameer Khan cites - is the novel's story of colonial ambivalence. The exchange itself is a cultural appropriation of a Sindhi custom by the Tarkhan colonizer to attach to himself a rebellious subject who has just proven to be more powerful than him. The history of this 'friendship' - Ameer Khan's refusal to free Varyam, his complicity in the murder of Akhund Saleh, and his violent hunt of Sodhal and his followers - shows what Memmi (1965) observes as the impossibility of friendship in the colonial situation: the power imbalance inevitably tramples

individual human solidarity. Ameer Khan is Memmi's 'colonizer who is aware' - the colonizer who knows that injustice is being done but is unwilling to refuse his role - and his subsequent history of escalating violence confirms Memmi's argument: such a colonizer will be driven to ever greater violence because his system can only be sustained by continued coercion. When Ameer Khan asks himself 'where Sindhis had learnt to smile despite being on the gallows' (Siraj, 2015, p. 121), his incredulity is the admission of a man who knows, at least on some level, that he has failed.

Conclusion

Echo Is the Call is an anti-colonial historical fiction masterpiece that should be read in the global canon of postcolonial literature alongside the masterpieces of African, Caribbean and Asian anti-colonial fiction. Through its theoretically rich and sustained depiction of colonial violence and indigenous resistance in 16th century Sindh, it offers a vision of anti-colonial struggle that is simultaneously historically particular - deeply rooted in the specific circumstances of the Sindhi people under the Arghun-Tarkhan regime - and universally relevant, engaging with structures of colonial domination and forms of resistance common to the experience of colonized peoples around the world.

The analysis undertaken in this paper has shown that Siraj's novel offers a more complex analysis of colonial violence and anti-colonial resistance than is presented in the secondary literature on Sindhi fiction to date. Siraj's analysis of the tripartite structure of colonial violence, typology of anti-colonial resistance, account of colonial subjectivity and theory of the connection between language, identity and cultural survival, are all contributions to anti-colonial theory that are worthy of attention beyond the Sindhi language community. The implications are three-fold: for postcolonial studies, *Echo Is the Call* should be added to the global canon of anti-colonial literature; for Sindhi literary studies, this paper offers an example of how postcolonial theoretical perspectives can be applied to Sindhi fiction; and for the politics of language and cultural identity in Pakistan, Siraj's analysis of linguistic imperialism remains relevant to the contemporary struggles of Sindhi and other regional language communities in the Pakistani state.

The echo is still the call. The battle-cry of the novel's freedom fighters - 'Jiye Sindh' - is not a dead echo from the 16th century but the voice of a people who know, as Siraj knew, that the battle for language, culture and identity is the battle for life.

The importance of *Echo Is the Call* for contemporary Pakistani literary studies is not limited to its historical and political themes, but to its literary achievements. The novel's point of view, a combination of the third-person omniscient voice of the historical novel and the highly interiorised free indirect discourse of psychological realism, allows Siraj to represent at once the social and political dimensions of colonial violence and resistance (the social formations, the political networks, the communal uprisings) and the psychological dimensions (Sodhal's private pain, Sanghaar's spontaneous outrage, Akhund Saleh's quiet confidence). This formal achievement - the synthesis of historical epic and psychological realism - is comparable to the great novels of the African literary tradition and shows that the Sindhi literary tradition has yielded, in Siraj's novel, a novelist of the first rank whose exclusion from the global literary canon is a major impoverishment of our knowledge of anti-colonial literature.

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