

Urdu Novel and Post Colonialism.

Dr. Rubina Shanaz^{1*}, Dr. Freeha Nighat², Dr. Arshad Mahmood Asif³, Dr. Muhammad Jamil Ahmad Barvi⁴

¹ Professor, Department of Urdu, Alhamd Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: rubina.shanaz@aiu.edu.pk

² Professor, Department of Urdu, Alhamd Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

³ Associate Professor, Department of Urdu, Alhamd Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of Urdu, Alhamd Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Rubina Shanaz

Professor, Department of Urdu, Alhamd Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: rubina.shanaz@aiu.edu.pk

Abstract

This research paper examines the Urdu novel from a postcolonial perspective, with particular emphasis on existential anguish, cultural displacement, fractured identity, historical memory, and intellectual metaphors. The study explores how Urdu fiction responds to the enduring psychological, cultural, and ideological consequences of colonialism and how the postcolonial condition shapes an individual's understanding of self, history, society, and existence.

Through a critical reading of Abdullah Hussain's *Udaas Naslain*, Intizar Hussain's *Basti*, and Akhtar Raza Saleemi's *Jaage Hain Khwab Mein*, the research investigates the complex relationship between colonial history and the inner world of the individual. These novels portray political upheaval, migration, cultural dislocation, social alienation, and historical trauma while simultaneously engaging with questions of identity, memory, belonging, and the meaning of existence. Their narratives demonstrate that the effects of colonialism extend beyond political domination and continue to influence consciousness, cultural memory, and patterns of self-perception.

The study further considers the Urdu novel as a literary site of resistance, reinterpretation, and negotiation of inherited colonial narratives. Within this framework, existential anguish is understood not merely as an individual psychological crisis but also as a consequence of historical rupture and cultural displacement. The metaphorical structures of these novels frequently transform collective trauma into representations of loss, fragmentation, silence, memory, and the search for continuity. At the same time, elements of South Asian cultural and mystical thought provide alternative modes of responding to the crisis of identity produced by colonial modernity.

The research argues that the postcolonial Urdu novel occupies a distinctive intellectual space in which history and memory, self and society, material reality and metaphysical inquiry converge. By questioning established representations of power, identity, and history, these novels reveal the continuing dialogue between colonial inheritance and indigenous consciousness. Their existential and metaphorical dimensions therefore contribute to a deeper understanding of the postcolonial human condition.

Ultimately, this study contends that the Urdu novel is not merely a reflection of the historical consequences of colonialism but also an active literary space for confronting, reinterpreting, and resisting its intellectual and cultural legacies. Through the interaction of postcolonial consciousness, existential questioning, and metaphorical imagination, Urdu fiction articulates the complexities of identity and belonging in a society negotiating the unresolved tensions between past and present, inherited structures and indigenous experience, displacement and rootedness.

Keywords: Postcolonialism; Existential Anguish; Intellectual Metaphors; Modern Urdu Novel; Urdu Fiction; Metaphysical Symbolism; Consciousness; Postmodern Criticism; Eastern Mysticism; Literary Philosophy; Human Condition; Psychological Realism.

Introduction

Dr. Iqbal Afaqi is a respected figure in the field of Urdu criticism, philosophy, Sufism, literary terminology and translations. The book under review, "Urdu Novel: Nai Tawjeehat-o-Taaberat", contains his critical essays on Urdu novels. The greatest uniqueness of these essays is that Dr. Afaqi has avoided traditional critical molds and has worked with his own literary principles and critical tactics. Instead of relying on imported theoretical criticism, he has formulated standards according to the artistic and intellectual requirements of the Urdu novel that are closer to practical criticism. Urdu criticism generally consists of either repetition of theory or superficial discussion in

the form of comments and impressions. Practical criticism, which requires that each work of art be judged in a new mold according to its uniqueness, has been lacking in our country. Dr. Afaqi has tried to remove this deficiency. In his critical essays, one can see the recovery of characters, the analysis of plots, the development of language and narrative, and the untangling of social and psychological knots. At the same time, he has also used the applications of theoretical criticism very effectively wherever he felt the need. His writings are not only protected from one-sidedness, but also create a separate and new critical narrative for each novel. This effort of Dr. Iqbal Afaqi can rightly be called a new milestone in practical criticism in Urdu. Especially, the preface of this book itself is an excellent example of practical criticism on the Urdu novel, which is a testament to his scholarly insight and intellectual depth. In human history, the novel is not just a genre of literature, but a reliable mirror of the intellectual and existential situation of the modern era

According to Ralph Fox.

“The novel presents the life of the individual. It is the epic of the individual's struggle against society and nature. It can only develop in a society where the balance between the individual and society has been lost and where man is at war with the conditions around him or with nature”(1)

When modernity made man feel his conscious freedom and responsibility as an individual, the novel emerged as the most extensive and diverse form for his creative expression. Different from the narrative and epic tradition, the novel awakened the reader from dreams and mirages and confronted the real questions of life. This is why, according to Milan Kundera, the birth of the novel is connected with the birth of the modern world itself, and its inner meaning is connected with man's self-awareness and existential discovery.

According to H.G. Wells.

“The novel is a means by which we can critically examine the important problems of the present time. Through the novel, moral values, manners, customs, laws and institutions, social thought, political, social and religious debates can be examined. It shows a kind of mirror of the entire era.”(2)

The study of the novel in Urdu has often taken the form of historical, social or cultural analysis, but the fact remains that the real strength of the novel lies in its aesthetic and existential possibilities. This genre reveals the internal contradictions of the individual, social oppression, and the place of man in the flowing stream of time with an intensity that is not found in any other genre of literature. The story of the novel wakes up the reader instead of putting him to sleep, forcing him to think, examine and discover his own reality.

The purpose of this research study is not to limit the novel to a specific theoretical box but to see it in its entirety. Because the meaning of any great novel cannot be fully explained by its partial or structural analysis. To understand a novel only through the analysis of character, plot or setting is a limiting attitude. The real requirement is to see the novel as a living and holistic experience, where the text, the author, and the reader all enter into a creative relationship. In this, the technical structure of the novel, the existential aspects and the aesthetic experience of the reader have been given central importance. The aim is to consider the novel not merely as a narrative or a social document but as a creative and intellectual experience and to highlight the meaningful possibilities hidden within it that highlight the problems of humanity, the freedom of the individual and the paradoxical conditions of life. In this study, a free, transparent and sympathetic critical attitude has been adopted, not a specific school of thought, so that the light of the novel can come out, which illuminates the dark corners and makes the reader face his reality.

The genre of the novel has been closely related to the complexity of human consciousness and era since its inception. In the seventeenth century, Cervantes's Don Quixote is considered the beginning of the modern novel, which broke away from the narrative tradition and presented the realities of human existence through satire, realism, and internal conflict. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the novel became the voice of Europe's emerging urban middle class. While Charles Dickens, Defoe and Balzac made industrial and class life the subject, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy highlighted the moral and spiritual crisis of the individual.

According to Professor Qamar Raees.

“Actually, the art of the novel is the art of portraying life from a specific point of view. To present the reality by giving the form of creation or by dressing the creation as reality in such a way that the status of the story remains in harmony and harmony in all its components is a novel.”(3)

Viewing the novel as a creative relationship between the text, the author and the reader, so that it is clear that meaning is formed not only in the text but also in the process of reading it. To show that the real function of the novel is to awaken the reader, rather than lull him into a dream, so that he may discover his own reality. The significance of this research is on several levels. First of all, it is an attempt to compensate for the tendency in the study of the Urdu novel to limit the novel to a mere social or cultural context. Second, this study invites us to look at the novel on an existential and aesthetic level, revealing the true creative power and potential of the genre. Third, this research recognizes the reader as an active participant, who plays an important role in constructing the

meaning of the novel. This work is not merely a critical exercise but an attempt to understand the novel as a living and continuous literary experience. This will not only open new doors to the understanding of the Urdu novel, but the reader will also feel that the novel is a mirror of his own life, his questions and his freedom.

Mirza Hadi Raswa's novel *Amrao Jan Ada* is a milestone in the history of Urdu fiction which still retains its meaning even today. Apparently it is the story of the life of a prostitute, but in reality this novel is not limited to the world of the room and sex, but the soul of an entire civilization breathes in it.

"This is the reason why Mirza Raswa did not use any position of sexual pleasure while writing the role of Amrao. The critical conditions of pleasure are not found here which are often seen in the writings of romantic writers."(4)

Dr. Iqbal Afaqi has given new meanings to this novel with his critical perspective. According to him, it is not just the story of *Amrao Jan* but a mirror of the decaying civilization of Lucknow, and hence *Amrao Jan* can rightly be called the "Mona Lisa" of Lucknow.

"I do not agree that Mirza Hadi Raswa's intention was to mirror the decadent civilization of Oudh. That civilization was certainly so distinguished that despite all the causes of decline, the decline of human nature was not an example. A society in which there is a creative and creatively fertile woman like Amrao Jan Ada, and in which a writer like Hadi Raswa is living, cannot decline."(5)

Just as deep mysteries and complex meanings are hidden within a painting, Raswa has created the layering in *Amrao Jan's* character that gives Urdu fiction a timeless metaphor. Dr. Afaqi emphasizes that 19th century Lucknow was not just a city but a cultural experience in which language, manners, music and arts were at their height. Prostitutes were the central metaphor of this civilization, which was not only limited to dance and song, but also a training institution and a representative of cultural consciousness. According to Dr. Afaqi, Raswa captures this cultural duality in the character of *Amrao Jan*. On the one hand he is at the height of art and on the other hand he is suffering from his inner loneliness and social decline. It is this contrast that makes this character extraordinary. The greatest achievement of Raswa is that they did not present *Amrao Jan* as a mere "sex object". According to Dr. Afaqi, he treated her as a living and complete human being—a poet, a singer, a sensitive woman, and a symbol of a decadent society. *Amrao Jan's* sufferings and his silences are not just the tragedy of an individual but the lamentation of an era. This aspect makes it a permanent reference in the history of the Urdu novel. Dr. Afaqi also highlights the point that in *Amrao Jan Ada*, Raswa has never taken a preachy or moral tone. He has portrayed the characters with their own complexities. Somewhere the hypocrisy of the Maulvi comes to the fore, some the artistic training of Khanum Jan, some the longing and deprivation of *Amrao*, and some the cultural breakdown of the entire Lucknow. It is the realism and neutrality that made the novel a literary masterpiece. Raswa himself said that his novels are neither tragedies nor comedies, but the history of his time. Dr. Afaqi based on this phrase shows that *Amrao Jan Ada* is not only an art but also a cultural document. It has the light of Lucknow's fairs and the sound of decadence. There is also the tenderness of love and the bitterness of a woman's existential tragedy. According to Dr. Afaqi, this combination makes this novel transcend time. *Amrao Jan* as a poetess and Suz Khan takes another dimension. In Dr. Afaqi's analysis, this aspect is of particular importance that even if she fails in love and social relationships, she persists in the ascension of art. His songs and poems become the voice of his inner space and inner anguish. This character is not just a decoration of the room, but a symbol of the entire social consciousness. According to Dr. Afaqi, the main reason for the popularity of this novel is that it is not just the story of a woman's life, but the tragedy of an entire civilization. *Amrao Jan* through her existence makes the reader realize that woman is a representative of feeling, consciousness, art and civilization more than the body. This angle elevates this character from a mere story to a metaphor. It can be said that *Amrao Jan Ada* is the masterpiece of Urdu fiction in which Raswa painted the entire social decline while writing the life of a woman, and Dr. Iqbal Afaqi has shown in its explanation and interpretation that this novel is not just literature but the history of civilization. His unique critical angle has given a new meaning to the character of *Amrao Jan*. She lives on even today, raises new questions with the reader of every age and is always fresh in her mystery.

Among the major Urdu novels, *Alipur Ka Ali* by Mumtaz Mufti is a textual experiment that has given rise to new debates in the tradition of Urdu fiction. This novel is not just an individual's personal life, but a reflection of the psychology and social structure of the entire era. The critical angle presented by Dr. Iqbal Afaqi in the study of this novel is unique in the sense that he has linked it to the crisis of Urdu literature, which has always complicated the relationship between the individual and the society, instead of considering it only as a biography or psychological writing. According to Afaqi, this novel is a text that shows both internal conflict and civilizational decay with equal intensity. *Ali's* character is a figure of contradictions from the very beginning of the novel.

"This novel presents the events related to Ali's life in a biographical style. The history covering the events of Ali's life from 1905 to 1947 - the story begins with the extremely dramatic events of Ali Ahmadi's sexual struggle. The deep impressions these events have made on Ali's soul, their detailed description covers the first one and a half hundred pages of the novel."(6)

He swings between his desires and reality. The attraction of a woman repeatedly draws him towards her, but social values and religious constraints force him to take a step back. This pull makes his personality complex and incomplete. Dr. Afaqi has seen this contradiction as a cultural disease rather than a psychological weakness of the

individual. According to him, Eli's conflict is an expression of the fact that the gap between desire and morality within the middle-class individual of the subcontinent is not just a personal matter but a collective attitude that has affected generations. The concept of woman in Alipur's Eli has also been the center of Dr. Afaqi's attention. Woman sometimes appears in the form of a mother, sometimes in the form of a lover, and sometimes simply as a physical attraction. For Eli, woman is a source of attraction and fear at the same time. This attitude actually points to the sexual confusion of his subconscious. Dr. Afaqi emphasizes that Mufti has not confined women to a mere emotional or moral mold, but has made them part of the internal game that continues between the male mind and the structure of society. In this context, women are not just characters but symbolic figures that expose both male desire and cowardice. The background of this novel is a society in which the patriarchal system is in full force. Men have authority and women's status is limited. The contradictions of Eli's personality grow in the shadow of this social system. According to Dr. Afaqi, this novel is a testimony to the fact that the weaknesses of the individual cannot be fully understood without the social structure. The individual is not simply a slave to his desires, but social values and restrictions constantly shape his psychology and his behavior. Another aspect of Eli's personality is his intellectual and intellectual restlessness. He raises questions, studies and sees a glimpse of the new world, but all this does not bring about a change in his practical life. Dr. Afaqi has described this situation as a symbol of the gap between knowledge and action. According to him, this gap is part of the mental structure of this era in which the individual seeks to know but is unable to develop the ability to live. This gap keeps his existence scattered and troubled. Alipur's narration of Eli is also unique in its nature. Mumtaz Mufti has constantly kept the reader involved in Eli's internal conversation. Different characters make this conversation even more colorful and complex. At one moment, the reader shares Eli's dreams and at another moment, he is overcome by his despair and fear. According to Dr. Afaqi, this style is not just a personal confession but a creative experiment that reveals the layers of the individual's unconscious. Despite all his failures and weaknesses, Eli tries to discover his existence. He falls again and again but does not give up the quest. This yearning provides strength to the novel. Dr. Afaqi has called this yearning the greatest success of this novel because it is the element that elevates it from a mere personal story to the level of a collective tragedy. According to him, this novel provides the basis for a new critical perspective to understand the relationship between the individual and society in Urdu fiction.

"I think there is no hero or heroine in the novel, just a jumble of short characters. Lots of names come up. For example, the entire Asifi neighborhood and its slums are involved, but also related and unrelated people from around and far away are included as luck would have it. Usually, without any justification, all of them emerge on the plot of the novel and recede without making any great impression."(7)

After all this analysis, it comes out that Mumtaz Mufti's Alipur Ka Ali is a unique experience of Urdu literature which simultaneously presents the sexual confusion of the individual, social contradictions and the decline of civilization. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's critical perspective has deepened the meaning of this novel. He read it not only as a psychological and biographical text but also opened its cultural and social layers. This aspect makes this novel a milestone in the history of Urdu fiction that leaves new questions for both the coming critics and the reader.

Abdullah Hussain's novel "Udas Naslan" is a milestone in Urdu fiction. This novel presents the pain of human life in the context of independence movement, partition of India and colonial history. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi has tried to look at this novel from a new angle in his work Urdu Novel: New Explanations and Interpretations and has deeply examined the meaning of the main character Naeem. Naeem represents the generation that was torn between the desire for freedom and the oppression of colonial politics. The conflict of identity is reflected in his character, which is in the grip of the hopes associated with the independence of the subcontinent on the one hand and class and cultural contradictions on the other hand. According to Dr. Afaqi, Naeem's tragedy is his uncertainty and duplicity, which is a reflection of the collective thinking of this generation. The changing political and social situation of the subcontinent is reflected in the background of the novel. Through this, the author has drawn a picture of a society that is torn between tradition, religion, modernity and politics. Hindu-Muslim relations, dominance of colonial powers and emerging trends of nationalism are the main themes of this novel. Dr. Afaqi describes Naeem as a metaphor that shows the condition of a nation torn between slavery and freedom. According to him, this character is not just a historical reference but a symbol of existential and intellectual crisis. Naeem is not just an individual but a representative of the collective helplessness and confusion of an entire generation. The meaning of this character is also seen in the context of subaltern theory where the silence and helplessness of the subjugated class is highlighted. Naeem's defeat in the context of partition of India shows that the major decisions of history trample the individual and he cannot influence his destiny. This is his real tragic status. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's criticism sees Naeem from a new intellectual angle. This angle is not merely historical or political, but philosophical and existential. Naeem is a symbol of a man who is forced and helpless in front of the contradictory realities of his era. This is the reason that Udas Naasalin is not only a historical novel but also comes out as an intellectual document. Abdullah Hussain's novel Udas Naasalin has an epoch-making position in Urdu literature. This novel describes the contradictions and experiences of human life in the most important historical background like freedom struggle, colonial politics, migration and partition of India.

"Abdullah Hussain's novel Udas Naslaan is generally compared to Quratul Ain Haider's 'Aag ka Darya'. Perhaps because both the novels focus in a way on the interpretive background of the freedom struggle and the partition of India. If this fire is a wider canvas than "Udas Naaslaan", some similarities can be identified between the two."(8)

Dr. Iqbal Afaqi has seen this novel in a new critical and intellectual perspective in his work Urdu Novel: New Interpretations and Interpretations and has shed light on its characters, narrative and artistic aspects. According to Dr. Afaqi, the characters of sad generations are neither avatars, nor belong to giant lineages, nor are they members of big families who make or spoil history. These characters are ordinary people like farmers and farm laborers who are forced to live amidst hunger, poverty and deprivation. Their reality is that they move the vehicle of life by mere instinct, without any grand claim or historical effort. This realism is the distinguishing feature of Abdullah Hussain's art, which is completely different from Platonic romanticism or religious and metaphysical narratives.

"The story, plot and characters in Abdullah Hussain's novel do not lead to any grand narrative or universal truth. He does not write under the spell of the supremacy of any ideology, race or civilization, nor does he glorify the national history of a particular region or race. He is not a fan of cultural illusion and historical idealism. Here the story and plot owe their centrality to a metaphysical justification. He is not a centrist but a centrist."(9)

Dr. Afaqi's point is also important that Abdullah Husain did not bind his novel to Marxist or progressive prejudices. If he had gotten entangled in a rigid analysis of class hierarchy and the imperial system, the novel would have remained a mere political document. According to him, Abdullah Husain has shaped history into fiction but has not confined it to ideological captivity. This is why Sad Generations is not just an ideological text even today but a complete literary work that affects the reader on many levels. Explaining the historical background of the novel, Dr. Afaqi has emphasized that it is actually a story of the first half of the twentieth century, when British power became more consolidated after the First World War and the grip of the colonial system in India was getting stronger. The feudal lords, Nawabs and local elites who grew up with the blessings of the British considered their power permanent. Roshan Agha and his family represent the same colonial system, whose fiefdom was actually granted by the British. The colorful celebrations of Roshan Mahal symbolize the luxury of this class and its loyalty to the colonial system. It is in this environment that the character of Naeem, the main character of this novel, emerges. Naeem does not belong to a Brahmin, Sayyid or aristocratic family, but is the son of a farmer. This is the real meaning of his character that he represents an ordinary Indian youth who can neither determine the direction of history nor change his destiny. However, fate is with him and through the Roshan Mahal ceremony, he is introduced to a new class of society. At this ceremony, he meets Azra, which is the beginning of the emotional and romantic journey of his life. Dr. Afaqi has called Naeem a metaphor that symbolizes a generation that was torn between freedom and slavery. The defeat and destruction of this character are highlighted through the tragedy of partition and the sorrow of migration. Naeem actually represents those who were victims of the big decisions of history but did not have the power to influence them. His death is the tragedy of the collective helplessness of this generation. From a technical perspective, Abdullah Hussain handles the narrative in this novel with great skill. The flow of events is like the flow of a river, which is not subject to any philosophical or ideological obstacles. The author has adopted simplicity and fluency in language and narration, which is close to the Urdu spoken in Punjab. This is the quality of this that even after half a century, this novel has maintained its popularity and literary status. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's analysis reveals the fact that Sad Generations is not just a historical novel but a fiction that will always live in the history of the Urdu novel due to its realism, characterization and narrative art. In it, characters like Naeem are not just individuals but representatives of the collective consciousness and contradictions of an entire generation. This aspect gives this novel not only historical but also philosophical and intellectual significance. Abdullah Hussain's novel Sad Generations is a milestone in the evolutionary journey of the Urdu novel. This novel is a mirror of the political, social and cultural conditions of the twentieth century, in which major themes such as the First World War, the independence movement of the subcontinent, colonial oppression and the partition of India take the form of fiction. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, in his book Urdu Novel: New Explanations and Interpretations, has examined this novel from a new critical angle and has clarified its meaning and artistic aspects with great precision. According to Dr. Afaqi, the characters of Udas Naslaan are neither mythical heroes nor representatives of any divine or spiritual philosophy. Naeem, Niaz Beg, Ayaz Beg, Azra or Sheila are all ordinary people who are crushed by the harshness of the colonial system and the oppressive forces of history. Naeem's character is the most prominent. He has very contradictory qualities. On one hand, he has the stubbornness and rebellion of his father and on the other hand, the worldly wisdom and training of his uncle Ayaz Beg. This contradiction gives depth to his character and the reader sees many facets of human psychology in him. Dr. Afaqi has especially highlighted this aspect of Naeem's personality that he is both emotional and cold-hearted, rebellious and realistic. This is why he abandons Azra's love and sticks to the soil of the village, but then, against his will, joins the army and becomes part of a world war. Despite suffering physical and spiritual torture in the war, when he returns, a new insight is born in him. He does not just want personal gain or survival, but shares the suffering of farmers and ordinary people. The depiction of the First World War is a

great strength of Abdullah Hussain's narrative. According to Dr. Afaqi, this war was a disaster thanks to science and technology that turned millions of slave soldiers into fuel. The Indian soldiers did not even know for what purpose they were fighting. Naeem's regiment's experience in France, Belgium and then East Africa is actually a symbol of the suffering of the enslaved nations, whom history has made mere pawns. Naeem's return alive is a mere miracle, but within him the wounds of war and the memory of Azra become a constant torment. After returning from the war, Naeem is not content with just personal comfort or the prosperity of his ancestral land, but he protests the atrocities being inflicted on the farmers. Together with Master Harichand and Congress workers, he becomes part of the freedom movement.

Here, Dr. Afaqi has described Naeem's character as a symbol of historical consciousness and awakening. He is neither a political revolutionary nor a romantic lover, but rather represents a "Udas Naslain" somewhere between these two dimensions. A key turning point in the novel is the story of Naeem and the terrorist group. Here he meets Sheila, who falls for him. But Naeem's coldness and his desire to please his "Self" separate him from this relationship. According to Dr. Afaqi, this behavior highlights that aspect of Naeem's personality that is full of horror and alienation despite love. Leaving Sheila is actually an expression of his inner directionlessness and rebellious spirit. This sin becomes a permanent scar on his soul. According to Dr. Afaqi, the greatest virtue of Udas Naslein is its narrative that molds history, politics and society into fiction. Abdullah Hussain has kept the language very simple and fluent, which is close to Punjabi Urdu. The depiction of the landscapes, especially the Roshanpur village, fields, farmers' lives and the battlefronts are the best examples of this realism. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's analysis makes it clear that Udas Nasreen is not just a historical novel but a masterpiece in the history of Urdu fiction that deeply explains the relationship between the individual, society and history. The character of Naeem represents a generation that was torn between slavery and freedom. His successes and failures are actually a reflection of the collective experience of the common people of that era. Abdullah Hussain not only wrote a great story but also placed the Urdu novel in the ranks of world fiction. Intizar Hussain's novel *Basti* is the best example of symbolic and existential trends in Urdu fiction. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi has looked at the intellectual, artistic and cultural background of this novel from a new angle in his work *Urdu Novel: New Explanations and Interpretations*. According to him, *Basti* is not just a story but the story of a man who has fled history, which encapsulates the contradictions between individual and collective consciousness in the layers of symbolism and abstraction. One aspect of this novel is that it both has a story and does not. The events and characters are apparently before our eyes, but they are wrapped in a mystery that descends into the layers of history, culture and individual consciousness. Through it, Intizar Hussain has presented the past and the specific cultural background of the subcontinent in conjunction with the tragic situation of the present. He has highlighted the tragedy of the 1971 war and the division of the country with existential and mystical insight. According to Dr. Afaqi, this is a scenario where "vile" selfish people tear the country to pieces with their lust, and the creator reacts to this with a combination of sadness, satire and symbolism. Dr. Afaqi has also made it clear that Intizar Hussain is apparently a patriot, but he actually uses the past as a creative force. The progressive movement wanted to bury the past, but Intezar made it a means of understanding the present. Instead of linear progression, cyclical time is at work in its concept of time. For him, time is a secret hidden in the cave of the century, which can be accessed through a "Leap of Faith". This point makes him closer to some concepts of Western existentialism and further away from others. Dr. Afaqi has also examined this attitude of Intezar with the intellectual background of Western existentialism. According to him, there is a long intellectual and cultural history behind the writings of Sartre, Heidegger and Camus in Europe, which is connected to the historicity of the Renaissance, the Protestant movement and Hegel. There, existential philosophy emerged from the bosom of a systematic intellectual tradition. But Urdu fiction writers accepted it directly in the sixties and seventies, without harmonizing its background with their own tradition. The novels of Anwar Sajjad and Anis Naji are a manifestation of this epistemological darkness, where the existential narrative is present but the creative light is dimmed. Intezar Hussain is different in this attitude. He certainly accepts the influences of Western existentialism but does not ignore his own linguistic tradition and cultural context. This is why his symbolic writings remain rooted in the local soil. His fiction lives on with a meaning derived from our collective memory, religious myths and cultural values. According to Dr. Afaqi, this characteristic saves him from the "rusty realism" in which the progressive movement often got caught. *Basti* is not just a literary experiment but an intellectual universe, in which past and present, myth and history, symbol and reality, existentialism and mystical insight all appear together. According to Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, Intezar Hussain, through this novel, connected Urdu fiction with global intellectual debates and deepened its inner meaning.

"Intazar Hussain's novel Basti came out in 1979. It was a surprising and stunning novel of its time, with layers of symbolism and abstraction as well as an underlying flow of story. This story was inside the novel and outside it. A story within a story, like a mysterious game, is playing out before our eyes. An event, an incident that we do not know despite knowing it well. In this incident, the Malay interpretation of the past was prominent, with a specific cultural background and the landscape of Roopnagar covered in dust."(10)

Intazar Hussain's novel *Basti* can be seen as a recovery of the aesthetics of tragedy and the scattered consciousness of history in Urdu fiction. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, in his book *Urdu Novel: New Explanations and Interpretations*, has

interpreted this novel as a narrative that describes the collective psychology of defeat and decline in symbolic and existential terms. The tragedy of December 16, 1971, appears to Intizar Hussain not as a mere political defeat but as a profound tragedy of history. According to Dr. Afaqi, Intizar did not see this tragedy merely in the context of the present but rather linked it to the defeat of 1857. The desolation of the Delhi Fort, the scenes of the Jama Masjid littered with corpses, and the reference to General Bakht Khan's scattering army are actually a sign that defeat and disintegration are a continuous process in the history of the subcontinent. The defeat of 1971 is not just an event but a renewal of past wounds. The psychological states of the characters in the novel are also a reflection of this historical defeat. Zakir's father's final dialogue, in which he hands over the keys of the house to his son and advises him to remember the "mercies of the abandoned land", is a symbol of the fact that the tragedy of migration and separation has been passed down from generation to generation. The death of the Maulana and Surendra's letter make the narrative of this tragedy even more multifaceted. There are different forms of grief here: satire, anger, sorrow and silence. According to Dr. Afaqi, all these are stages of catharsis without which the story cannot be complete. Zakir's personality is also a combination of several identities and internal conflicts: he is a Shia, a historian, a Buddhist monk and a yogi, a patriot and a realist. All these aspects are actually the threads of his inner universe that insist on telling their own stories after the tragedy. This is why, at the end of the novel, the narrative leaves the traditional order and merges into the expression of Nala and Shivan and wisdom and wisdom. Dr. Afaqi believes that if the story had ended with the death of Maulana or Surinder's letter, it would have been a complete ending, but Intizar Hussain continued to express himself even after that. The reason for this is that according to him, the purpose of the novel is not just a sequence of events but to reveal the subconscious. Dr. Afaqi has also highlighted the aspect that Intizar Hussain's story is certainly random but not directionless. In its background, there is a direction of beliefs and hope. The structure of the novel is a search for hope despite defeat and decline, as if there is a ray of hope even in the darkness of history that encourages both the individual and the nation. Basti is not just a historical or political statement in the Urdu novel, but a cultural and existential event, in which the defeats of history, religious and cultural traditions, and the internal conflicts of the individual come together. According to Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's analysis, Intizar Hussain has taken Urdu fiction to a new intellectual and narrative level in this novel, where history and culture are not just a background but become part of the character and narrative.

"I think Intizar Hussain believed in the Indo-Aryan concept of time. It should be remembered that Nietzsche also believed in a similar interpretation of time. Intizar has the mantra of open-jassim, which opens the closed doors of the past. He walks on the path of consciousness and finds himself in the waterless plains of the hundred-year-old Qar, Bast and Diyar Nineveh. The past time is like the old man in Alif Laila, who is sitting in a cave for a hundred years and waiting for him."(11)

Raja Gadh has emerged in Urdu fiction as a text that simultaneously dialogues with both modernity and postmodernity. Bano Qudsia treats it not simply as a story but as an expression of an intellectual and spiritual experience.

"This novel by Bano Qudsia is a critique of modernity, written under the umbrella of modernity. There is a compelling and compelling quality in its language and style. It has that intellectualism that focuses on observations and evidence, backed by the principles of psychology and sociology. Bano Qudsia has tried to reach the meaning of modern life with great effort and curiosity. She has provided it with an objective interpretation."(12)

According to Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, this novel is an attempt to answer the spiritual and psychological illness created by modernity. Here, the individual's internal confusions, social contradictions and spiritual questions are all interconnected. The biggest semantic layer of the novel is the interpretation of love. The character of Seemi is a representative form of this interpretation, who is destroyed in her love and reaches a level where the self is destroyed. But the author made her a metaphor for unrealized love and rejected its existence by weighing it in the scales of religious morality. According to Dr. Afaqi, this attitude itself is a contradiction, because Bano Qudsia, despite being convinced of Sufism and spirituality, has ignored the basic Sufi concept of love that love is unreal in its nature and that its meaning lies in this unrealisation. The character of Qayyum is the second major metaphor of the novel. He is connected to the symbol of the vulture, which is suspended between the boundaries of halal and haram, moral and immoral, and between man and beast. But presenting her personality in a one-sided manner creates a contradiction in the novel's narrative. Dr. Afaqi emphasizes that calling Qayyum evil and abominable despite his selfless love and loyalty is simply a result of falling into the grip of this metaphor. In this way, the novel distorts the creative rationality of its own characters. The intellectual perspective of Raja Gadh keeps swinging between religious, mystical and modern sociological debates. This swing makes it meaningful, but at the same time it raises several questions. Did Bano Qudsia understand the questions of modernity with full intellectual insight or did she simply want to reject them with the prevailing religious and spiritual narrative? Dr. Afaqi has also questioned the aspect that the level at which the author tried to engage in dialogue with the intellectual capital of the West was mostly based on hearsay or partial familiarity. Despite this, it is not possible to deny the spiritual appeal of the novel. Bano Qudsia has presented the dark corners of the human psyche, the

breakdown of social values, and the destructive power of materialism on a large canvas. A sense of belonging in the world emerges.

"The novel spans a period of about ten years. In the form of a novel, Bano Qudsia has written a lament for the failure and failure of modern society and has tried to create a specific kind of worldview that reinforces her spiritual perspective. She has not only analyzed the social problems and issues created by modernity, but has also tried to narrate them in the context of a story through deal coding. This is a technique that was popularized by Charles Jenks in the late last century."(13)

This novel is part of the debate in modern Urdu fiction in which the relationship between the individual and society was examined in the context of halal and haram, spiritual and material, and love and intellect. According to Dr. Afaqi's analysis, the greatest weakness of Raja Gadh is that it confines its characters in symbolic coercion and limits their human aspects. But at the same time, its greatest strength is that it has drawn the Urdu novel towards intellectual discussions that are not merely literary but also cultural, religious and existential in nature. Raja Gadh is a controversial but important novel, which will always be a topic of discussion in the history of Urdu fiction due to both its spiritual depth and intellectual contradictions.

Mustansar Hussain Tarar's novel Bahaa is a unique experience of its kind in Urdu fiction. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, in his work Urdu Novel: New Explanations and Interpretations, has examined this novel in a deep historical, cultural and intellectual context and has made it clear how this creation is isolated from the general trends of the Urdu novel. This novel neither creates a romantic atmosphere nor gives centrality to the glitter of modern urban life. On the contrary, it revives a lost chapter of human civilization that reminds us of the ancient agricultural life of the Dravidian race that settled on the banks of the Indus Valley and the Ghagra River thousands of years ago. The artistic skill with which Tarar has given new life to a defeated and forgotten race is an extraordinary achievement for the Urdu novel.

"The theme of 'Bhaao' is not mythical, despite its antiquity, but closer to real life. Its purpose is to recover the lost people of the Dravidian race who lived in a lush settlement on the banks of the Ghaggar River in Cholistan/Tharne two and a half to three thousand years ago, whose way of life reflected the ancient agricultural society. They were people connected to nature and were still unfamiliar with the conflict over money and land. Here, everything was shared. Fields, livestock, agricultural produce, even children were shared. If they were given a resemblance to the ancient Ashtar society, it would be lifeless."(14)

Dr. Afaqi emphasizes that Bahu is not the name of a mythological tale or a fictional figure, but a historical and social quest, which enlightens us to the fact that history always preserves the narrative of the victors and forgets the subjugated. In this context, Bahu can also be seen in the light of subaltern studies because it revives the voices of those anonymous and subjugated people who have been excluded from the mainstream of history through fiction. The protagonist of the novel, Parushni, is the soul of the story. She is not just a woman but a symbol of creation, survival and human courage. Her features and elements of her personality have been carved by Tarar in such a way that she becomes an embodiment of Dravidian aesthetics on the one hand and eternal human instincts on the other. According to Dr. Afaqi, the existence of Parushni does not simply represent the individual, but is a symbol of the eternal relationship between the earth, woman and survival. Dr. Afaqi has also highlighted the point that the atmosphere of the novel does not have the division of good and evil that was introduced by the Aryan civilization. Harmony with nature and simplicity of life are the central elements in Dravidian society, while later epics connect the subjugated with the narrative of humiliation and slavery. Through this, the author has also shed critical light on the interrelationship of power and history. The style of Bhaau, its linguistic structure and the figure of the rural landscape are synonymous with a new experiment in Urdu fiction. According to Dr. Afaqi, this novel is not just a creative work of art but a recovery of cultural memory. Reading it reminds us how literature can keep alive the silent and forgotten narrative of the past and give a new direction to socio-cultural consciousness. Bahā is not just a novel but a cultural metaphor, and Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's interpretation brings its cultural, social, and intellectual dimensions into a new perspective.

"Like every creator, his destiny is also linked to his creation. The flow is not a blind and pathless writing. There is an insight hidden within it. The first is that the role of the earth and women in the care of the seed of man is inextricable. The earth and women have always guarded the human race in the fight for survival. The second is that woman is the earth. She creates like the earth and waits for flowers to bloom in the deserts. A woman is a great mother who does not betray her own. A woman is a story, or a light, which, in the hope of better days, stands firm in the face of severe weather."(15)

Mirza Athar Baig's novel "Ghulam Bagh" is an ijtehadist and unconventional experiment in Urdu fiction, which gave birth to a new narrative dimension by challenging the established structure of the Urdu novel. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, in his work Urdu Novel: New Explanations and Interpretations, has not only examined this novel in detail but has also declared it to occupy a

"This novel is certainly new and unique in terms of its plot and text, because in it many of the accepted rules of the novel have been crumbling. It has also destroyed the specific structure of the novel. The narrative also seems to deviate from the legendary tradition of Urdu. Ghulam Bagh has emerged as an ijtehad in the history of the

Urdu novel, but it is certain that the themes around which it revolves, mankind has been struggling with since ancient times, are the same self-love, lust, hatred, contempt, hatred, revenge, exploitation, magic and the conflict between women, money, and land.”(16)

The greatest feature of this novel is that it breaks the boundaries of traditional fiction in terms of narrative and structure. There is no straight line of plot in it, but elements of chaos, multiplicity and delay are prominent in the structure of the text. Refusing to accept the division of reality and illusion, truth and falsehood, good and evil, Athar Beg has created a universe based on such literalism in which the reader is forced to confuse and question instead of making a decision.

“Athar Beg has limited creative activity to the extent of coldness to the game of the novel. While reading the novel, there are some painful places where it feels that perhaps the reader's understanding is being deliberately ridiculed. It seems that Derrida's deconstructivism is tightly guarding the aesthetics of his text.”(17)

According to Dr. Afaqi, Athar Beg's attitude reflects a clear impartiality and intellectual coldness. At no point does he write a manifesto for reform or rebellion, nor does he want to take the reader to any moral conclusion. On the contrary, he has a clear reflection of the thought of Nietzsche and Camus, where life is seen in the context of literalism and meaninglessness instead of being judged by placing it in the boxes of good and evil. This is why the narrative of the novel seems close to Derridean deconstructionism, where every possibility of meaning is constantly postponed. The hallmark of Ghulam Bagh is its multifaceted themes. In it, the myths of the humble races, the suffering of the demanding nation, social and sexual exploitation, the effects of colonial structures, the exploitation of religious and spiritual leaders, the deprivations of intelligent people associated with journalism and literature, and the oppression and immorality of the elite all come to the fore. This integration makes it a creation that is difficult to associate with any one genre. Dr. Afaqi has rightly highlighted the motifs of this novel. The mythical disappearance of Ghulam Bagh and Janm Khandar, the stories of the humble generations, the sexual adventures of Yadag Yawar Bhai, the helplessness of the woman in the psychiatric ward, the charismatic status of Chatta Sai, the exploitation of the journalist and intellectual class, and the evils of the feudal and political system all together form the different faces of this novel. All of this together makes it clear that Ghulam Bagh is actually a lament for the social oppression and poverty that is imposed on the subaltern and oppressed classes.

“This ending of such a voluminous novel is disturbing because it makes the theory of hegemony appear victorious. The loose rhetoric has accepted defeat in the novel. Despair, helplessness and exhaustion dominate.”(18)

However, Dr. Afaqi calls the ending of this novel disappointing. The death of the main character Kabir comes as a mere dead end, which ends the story instead of moving forward. In the tradition of Urdu fiction, defeat often heralds a new journey, but in Ghulam Bagh this defeat takes on the definitive form of death, which symbolizes the victory of the hegemony and the permanent defeat of the oppressed classes. Due to its voluminousness, breadth of themes and complexity of narrative, Ghulam Bagh emerges as an extraordinary experiment on the scene of the Urdu novel. The meticulousness with which Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's analysis has highlighted its intellectual and artistic background reveals the fact that this novel not only deviates from the traditional continuity of Urdu fiction but also introduces it to a new It also enlightens with intellectual questions and debates. Asim Butt's novel Unfinished represents those voices in Urdu fiction that are usually excluded from the mainstream of society and literature. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, in his work Urdu Novel: New Explanations and Interpretations, has seen this novel not simply as a feminist tragedy, but as a narrative that is connected to the century-old cycle of reincarnation, the story of Ram and Sita, and the eight principles of Buddha. Thus, the novel has been examined in a cosmopolitan context, which takes it beyond a mere "story from a women's magazine

“It is as if the subject of the novel is not one that can be easily ignored. This subject is new in every era and until society becomes positive, this subject will always be new, it will continue to come up in one form or another. This is a problem that has not yet been resolved in the third world (at least in our fatalistic society, this is the current situation.”(19).

The main character Saima's life is one of misery and deprivation. She grows up in a narrow street in inner Lahore, where poverty, orphanhood and loneliness are her companions. Her natural feminine desires and desire to stand out become unacceptable to society. Her beauty and youth, instead of being a blessing, prove to be a curse. The relationships of men with Saima are temporary and exploitative, in which promises of love turn out to be mere deception. Finally, she commits suicide under the burden of the ruthlessness of society, the arrogance of men and her own defeated self.

“The subject of this novel is essentially the instructive consequences of a cruel and ignorant society. The author has followed Charles Jenks' principle of double coding to protect this story from dusty uniformity and repetition. The author has tried to present this story in more than one.”(20)

According to Dr. Afaqi, the true meaning of the unfinished lies in its metaphorical truth. Saima's story is actually a continuation of the centuries-old story in which women have always been victims of oppression, oppression, and the game of fate. Here, it is possible to see Saima as a "new Sita", who had to suffer the punishment of karma and social oppression. The difference is that the ancient Sita had access to the light of the court, while Saima

received nothing but the reproach and loneliness of the times. In this way, Saima becomes a representative character who highlights the collective oppression of women on a symbolic level.

"Postmodernism has accused that Tanithism has ruined family life, as a result of which the younger generation has been deprived of all kinds of moral codes and family standards. Tanithism has caused irreparable damage to the family as an institution, which many people consider essential for a healthy and just society."(21)

Dr. Afaqi did not limit the novel to mere existential suffering or psychological tragedy, but also linked it to social justice, Marxist criticism and post-colonial debates. He points out that myths and religious philosophies cannot save man from the cycle of suffering. The real solution is a change in the social structure and an egalitarian state responsibility. In this context, *Unfinished* is a protest lament, which repeatedly asks the question: despite our loud claims and sacred teachings, have we not yet become human? On a technical level, the author uses mythological and philosophical references to protect the story from uniformity and simple narrative. Under Charles Jenks' principle of "double coding", Saima's personal story is actually connected to a collective and mythological story. Saima's death is not just a defeat of an individual but becomes a lament for the entire history of civilization. If *Nataam* is seen in the tradition of the Urdu novel, it is different from the traditional presentation of the female character which is either She appears as a victim or as a rebellious woman. Saima is neither simply oppressed nor simply rebellious. She is the representative of an existence that collapses in the contradictions of society. This is why Dr. Afaqi has called her suicide not just an individual defeat but a collective and cultural failure. *Unfinished* is not just an "unfinished story" but an artistic and intellectual experiment that combines protest, lamentation and mythological metaphor in the Urdu novel. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's analysis makes it clear that this novel cannot be ignored, because it is a ruthless mirror of our social realities. Akhtar Raza Saleemi's novel *Jagaye Hain Khaab Mein* is a unique and unconventional experiment in the world of Urdu fiction that has linked the genre of the novel to a broader perspective of metaphysical and transcendental questions. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, in his book *Urdu Novel: Nai Tujihat Wa Taabrifat*, did not consider this novel to be a mere imaginative narrative but rather a reflection of the conscious, unconscious and collective unconscious. It is an artistic attempt to solve the puzzles. In this context, this novel is not just a story or a plot-based story, but becomes an exploratory metaphor for the cosmic expanses and transcendental possibilities of human consciousness.

"While reading Akhtar Raza Salimi's novel 'Jage Hain Khaab Mein', the reader enters a wonderland. This wonderland takes us out of the realm of physics and transfers us to the realm of metaphysics. The door to a world is revealed, in which the reader, upon entering, starts solving the puzzles that arise regarding the conscious, unconscious and collective unconscious. One wonders if this is possible."(22)

The main question of the novel is what kind of relationship exists between dreams and reality. The character of Zaman Khan is a means of examining this relationship, whose personality is associated with unusual signs from the very beginning. The simultaneous occurrence of snowfall and birth, the unusual attraction to the universe from childhood, and the awakening of the third eye later, all are signs that this character is not a representative of a single individual but a metaphor for the collective human experience. Through this character, Akhtar Raza Salimi has raised the question of whether a person can tear the veil of the past and the future and see everything in a single moment? Are the relationships of cause and effect reality or a product of human understanding? Is a dream a world where the boundaries of existence and non-existence are erased?

"There is no doubt that these questions are surprising but not new. They are always. However, the aesthetic care with which Salimi treats these weighty questions and the fertile treasure trove of human gratitude heritage ... From Plato to Jung... the most important part has been cleverly molded into the story, giving Jagaye Hain Khaab Mein a milestone in the history of the Urdu novel."(23)

According to Dr. Iqbal Afaqi, the greatest achievement of this novel is that it has encapsulated centuries-old philosophical questions in an aesthetic context. From Plato's ideas to Jung's collective unconscious, and from Buddhist nirvana to the concepts of modern psychology, these questions have been woven into the fabric of the story in such a way that they are no longer mere philosophical discourses but become a fascinating artistic experience. In Zaman Khan's life, all these questions are not merely theoretical but become part of his internal and external reality.

"The locale of this novel is as majestic and awe-inspiring as the questions raised above. Nestled in the backdrop of the forests of Ched and Kaho, near the tranquil banks of the Haro River, amidst the mountain ranges of the Galiyat descent behind the Margalla, the ancient village of Noorabad and the cultural environment of the people living in it, the layered series of beliefs, ideals, magical rituals and certainties, form the scenario of the novel."(24)

Conclusion

The rural landscape of Noorabad, the mythological traditions of the caves, the myth of Raja Rasalu, and the tales of the birds provide the novel with a spatial background where the boundaries of dream and reality become blurred. The locale itself enhances the impression of transcendence. In this background, the role of mysticism provides philosophical and intellectual justification. It is a combination of mystical, sophisticated and modern scientific

traditions, which convinces Zaman that reality is not one, but manifests itself in different forms from different angles. The concept of the "third eye" holds a central position in the novel. This is the spiritual and psychological metaphor that takes Zaman to metaphysical dimensions. Dr. Afaqi has rightly drawn attention to the point that Akhtar Raza Salimi is the first novelist in Urdu literature to so directly deal with the subject of the third eye in an artistic sense. Although the author tried to provide objective justification by linking the incident of Zaman with the scientific term Cerebral Edema But at the same time, they also keep its interpretations open on a transcendental level. This duality keeps the novel swinging between reality and imagination.

However, some parts of the novel also feel weak, especially the place where Zaman's soul experiences the stages of preparation and burial after his death. This part reflects more posthumous concepts than Jung's interpretations of psychology and the unconscious, which affects the logical coherence of the novel. Dr. Afaqi has criticized this aspect and said that if death had been shown as a mere dream or a near-death experience, the novel would have been more coherent and artistically perfect. Nevertheless, the end of the novel comes out in the form of a symbolic circle. The birth of his child after Zaman's death and his reaching out to the stars is actually a symbol of the continuation of the story and the eternal human quest. This gives the novel a hopeful aspect that the quest never ends but rather moves forward with new possibilities in each new generation. This novel by Akhtar Raza Salimi Urdu It is a milestone in the history of fiction because it exposed the novel to metaphysical, philosophical, and psychological questions. Dr. Iqbal Afaqi's analysis makes it clear that Jagaye Hain Khab Mein cannot be called simply a story or an imaginative experience of an individual, but rather a profound creative and intellectual dialogue on the relationship between human consciousness and the universe..

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