

The Routledge Companion of Pakistani Anglophone Writing

ed. Kanwal, Aroosa, and Saiyma Aslam

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The editors of *The Routledge Companion to Pakistani Anglophone Writing*—Aroosa Kanwal and Saiyma Aslam—are scholars who have made important contributions to the gamut of Pakistani Anglophone literature. Whereas Kanwal has recently authored *Rethinking Identities in Contemporary Pakistani Fiction: Beyond 9/11* (2015) to bring out varied formations of identity in the context of 9/11, Aslam has written *From Stasis to Mobility: Arab Muslim Feminists and Travelling Theory* (2017) to probe the interactions between Islamic feminism and travelling theory.

This critical compendium consists of 32 articles on diverse themes that pertain to Pakistani Anglophone literature. It is divided into eight broad sections with each section comprising well-informed articles contributed by distinguished scholars hailing from different disciplines. In an engaging 'Introduction' the editors have encapsulated the objectives and central arguments of this book. They rightly claim that the articles featured in different sections are meant to establish Pakistani Anglophone literature "... in historical awareness and history's continued impact on contemporary realities". In the paragraphs to follow a few representative articles are briefly analysed to lay bare the multiple dimensions of this anthology.

For instance, in the opening section, Cara Cilano ("*All These Angularities': Spatialising Non-Muslim Pakistani Identities*") has persuasively contended that as far as the spatialization of Islam in Pakistan is concerned, movements of non-Muslim minorities have to be taken into consideration along with that of Muslim majorities with specific fictional references. Her intention was to "... examine the fictive portrayals of non-Muslim characters' abilities to occupy and move through space with specific reference to significant events and dynamics in Pakistani

history. . ." Apart from Cilano, Muneeza Shamsie and Daniela Vitolo have made significant contributions to the opening section of the book.

The second section of the book is titled as "*9/11 and Beyond: Contexts, Forms, and Perspectives*" which is indicative of the fact that the articles included in this section explore varied manifestations and representations of 9/11 in different fictional narratives. In "*Global Pakistan in the Wake of 9/11*", Ulka Anjaria contends that the pejorative portrayals of Pakistan in different fictional works need to be contested with the references to select post-9/11 Pakistani fiction on the ground that Pakistan's position in the context of 'global' imaginary has been shifting since 9/11.

In the third section entitled "*The Dialectics of Human Rights: Politics, Positionality and Controversies*", there are five articles which deal with different interconnected issues concerning human rights. For instance, Shazia Sadaf has explored cases of human rights violations in Pakistani Anglophone literature in "*Divergent Discourses: Human Rights and Contemporary Pakistani Anglophone Literature*". Sadaf observes that contemporary Pakistani Anglophone literature gives room to human rights violations in different contexts, thereby underlining the new turn in this domain of study.

"*Identities in Question: Shifting Perspectives on Gender*", the fourth section in this anthology, consists of three perceptive articles which deal with the questioning of identities relating to gender. Among them, the striking one is "*Doing History Right: Challenging Masculinist Postcolonialism in Pakistani Anglophone Literature*" in which Fawzia Afzal-Khan questions the ways in which historical events in select novels written by male Pakistani writers are represented.

In the fifth section titled "*Spaces of Female Subjectivity: Identity, Difference, Agency*", both editors have included those articles which are detailed explorations of changing perspectives on gender. Aqeel Abdulla is one particular scholar who produces an insightful article on plural implications within sexuality, marriage and domestic violence in "British-Pakistani Female Playwrights: Feminist Perspectives on Sexuality, Marriage and Domestic Violence". Abdulla deals with the following British-Pakistani playwrights—Alia Bano, Nadia Manzoor and Emteaz Hussain—to substantiate her critical arguments on the proximity between gender and society.

In the sixth section, contributors have focused on the shifting perspectives on identity, space and mobility. For instance, in "Homes and Belonging(s): The Interconnectedness of Space, Movement, and Identity in British-Pakistani Novels", Eva Pataki analyses multiple layers of significance of both 'home' and 'belongings' conditioned by the overlapping of space, movement and identity. She critically examines a few Pakistani Anglophone fictional narratives to contextualize her investigations.

'*Unsettling Narratives*' is the title of the seventh section which consists of divergent articles. For instance, in "Post-Postcolonial Experiments with Perspectives", Hanji Lee divulges varied narratological techniques employed by Pakistani novelists to shed light on cultural, political and economic realities in Pakistan. Unlike others, Lee has theorized "post-postcolonial" to explore the new theoretical turns in post-postcolonial time.

In the eighth section titled "*New horizons: Towards a Pakistani Idiom*", there are five outstanding articles which deal with the complex constructions of national identity with references to culture, politics and globalization. In "Brand Pakistan: The Case for a Pakistani Anglophone Literary Canon", Aroosa Knwal and Saiyma Aslam have put forward convincing arguments to "... canonise Pakistani anglophone literature, not only in reaction to its (current) production and consumption but also in terms of its dialogical dynamics, operating in four frames of reference: the individual, the national, the regional and the global".

On the whole, this critical anthology is unquestionably a remarkable contribution stuffed with fresh critical insights. Articles included in this anthology not only reflect on various aspects relating to Pakistani Anglophone literature but also inspire enthusiastic scholars to take up several issues hinted in different articles. Indexing in the end of this critical anthology is suggestive of the fact that both the editors have spared no effort to produce a scholarly book. Selection of articles in this critical anthology also indicates that both the editors have chosen to include those articles which bear imprints of the contributors' originality, intellect, and expertise. That apart, the structure adopted for sectionizing diverse articles deserves critical acclaim inasmuch as it facilitates readers to be acquainted with several emerging ideas in the domain of Pakistani Anglophone literature.