

# گفتگو

# Guftugu

Newsletter of the Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences



LUMS

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## From the Dean's Desk



*The Newsletter is the official voice of the Office of the Dean, Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences, LUMS.*

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*Special mention must be made of the photographer Faizan Ahmad, whose pictures have been used for the front and back covers, as well as for some articles within this issue.*

*The layout has been designed by Nazish Riaz. We also thank the authors who not only provided us with the write-ups but also pictures to go along with them.*

*Dear Colleagues, Students and Friends,*

The fourth issue of *Guftugu* is with you. The newsletter helps us share the breadth and intellectual vibrancy of the MGSHSS. This semester was especially busy; we had several highly successful and well attended international conferences, workshops, symposia, and seminars. Where events related to art, aesthetics, book launches, and literary discussions were a weekly feature, there we also focused on social issues around gender equity, analysed the past election, and created forums to discuss social marginality.

Along with these progresses, we have been busy with hiring new faculty and consolidating new programmatic initiatives. As MGSHSS seeks to become the center of cultural life on the LUMS campus, *Guftugu* is developing as the vehicle to represent our efforts in its pages. As always, it represents the best of what we offer as a School and highlights the creativity, dedication to excellence, and the vision of our faculty, students, and staff.

Our *guftugu* continues.

*K. Adar*

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# Conferences at MGSHSS

## Punjabi Returns to LUMS

*Ammara Ahmad*

In a first, LUMS has started a new tradition of organising a Punjabi conference around the Mother Language Day (February 21). The second such conference was organised this year and this time the focus was the Punjab—its culture, history and language. Punjabi scholars, writers, academics, activists, and artists from all over the world gathered at LUMS. The Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS was able to come up with an eclectic mix of speakers and topics.

Professor Javed Majeed, a doctorate from Oxford, delivered the inaugural lecture. He presented his research on Sir George Abraham Grierson, an Irish linguist who published the Linguistic Survey of India in 1928. Majeed pointed out some of the problems in the survey and Grierson's own approach. This was a befitting start to the conference.

Grierson distinguished various nationalities by language and attempted to distinguish them from one another despite being similar. A heated discussion followed this stimulating lecture.

Ajay Bhardwaj, a documentary filmmaker, presented his film "Kitte Mil Vay Mahi" (Where the Twain Shall Meet). The movie was a poignant representation of the syncretic culture of rural Punjab and focuses on how those from the fringes of the society—low castes, revolutionaries, the rural poor, and gypsies—still find space for themselves in the environs of the shrines of long-dead mystics.

The session on the "New Histories of Lahore" brought writers and researchers like Haroon Khalid, Tahir Kamran, Ammara Maqsood, and Ghafir Shehzad (an Auqaf Department official) together. Khalid mentioned how the people's history and narrative of a place differ from the official version while Shehzad, the Auqaf official, described the significance of

shrines in a community. Eventually, everyone on the panel and in the room started lamenting the role of the previous Punjab government for wreaking havoc with heritage sites without paying any attention to vociferous protesters.

There was a session on the Indian Partition, a very significant event in the history of the Punjab and the Punjabi language. Professor Furrakh Khan of LUMS presented his documentary on the experiences of women survivors of Partition in the Pakistani Punjab, titled *Stories of the Broken Self*. Dr. Pippa Virdee led the discussion that followed the film screening.

Academic Ilyas Chattha shared his research on the Partition riots in areas surrounding his native Gujranwala. Sara Kazmi conducted the session on "Resistance Poetry from Punjab" that had respectable names like Tauqeer Chughtai, Zubair Ahmed, Shakeel Ahmed Tahiri, and Anjum Qureshi on the panel.







They all agreed that Punjabi is a language of resistance and has survived all suppression. They attributed this tenacity of the Punjabi language to the lower economic strata who have still not adopted other languages of the elites. Punjabi poets like Najam Hussain Syed, Mushtaq Soofi, Ashoo Lal Faqir, and Nasreen Anjum Bhatti were read and applauded in this session.

Zainab Sattar led a session on teaching regional languages and literature. Ashok Kumar, a Sindhi professor from Mithi who is currently teaching at the Punjab University, expressed his views on teaching Punjabi.



Dr. Anne Murphy presented her thesis on the evolution of Baba Guru Nanak's image over the centuries. The founder of Sikhism has gradually become a more sophisticated and less rural version of his old self. This has also changed how his admirers interpret his poetry.

The conference was well-attended and most of the sessions were either fully or partially conducted in Punjabi. The speakers, as well as the guests and the attendees, gradually became more comfortable with the language.

Last year, it was impossible to think about how the conference could be improved but this year it has taken a step forward. More sessions on more diverse issues like Punjabi cinema, theatre, the history of leftist politics, emerging fiction, and poetry were organised to cater to everyone's intellectual needs. The conference concluded on the last day with an equally nourishing rendition of Heer.

The leadership of Gurmani School was not only present but also deeply invested in the proceedings. One can only imagine how much more exciting this conference will become in the coming years.



## HSS Annual Conference

### Critical Interventions: Mapping Emerging Scholarship on South Asia



The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS hosted its Thirteenth Annual Conference on April 10 and 11, 2019. The conference was co-sponsored by the Shahid Hussain Foundation and the Mahbub Ul Haq Research Center at LUMS.

The theme for this year's conference was Critical Interventions: Mapping Emerging Scholarship on South Asia, and was convened by Dr. Saba Pirzadeh and Dr. Sameen Mohsin Ali.

The conference brought together humanities and social sciences scholars whose work interrogated the concept of South Asia as reality and construct. The two-day conference comprised 30 panels with presentations by over a 100 scholars from Pakistan, India, the UK, France, the US, and Canada. The panels showcased research on a variety of subjects such as regional conflict, nationalist formations, urban development, political governance, education reform, gender contestations, indigenous literature, knowledge production, popular culture, and environmental concerns.

There were two keynote addresses. The first was delivered by Dr. Asma Abbas (Professor of Politics and Aesthetics at Bard College and Dean at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi). Dr. Abbas's address, titled Anticolonial Maps for Lost Lovers: Notes on the Aesthetics and Politics of Method, explored the entrapments of neoliberal knowledge production and social reproduction that predominate in the wider post-colony. The second was delivered by Professor Jamal I. Elias (Professor of Humanities and Islamic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania).



In his lecture, titled Beyond the Narrative: Recovering the Personal and Emotional in History, Dr. Elias located the personal as an important motivator in human actions and argued for the importance of human experience as a valid source of information and motivation in writing historical narratives.

The first day of the conference included the launch of the Mahbub Ul Haq Research Center with a discussion on Humanizing the State: Mainstreaming Human Security in Pakistan's National Security Narrative. The centre also hosted a panel on Women in Politics with MPAs Hina Parvez Butt, Maleeha Bokhari, and Malaika Raza.

An art exhibit—*Dhaak Ke Teen Pat* (Three Leaves of the Flaming Tree)—ran in parallel to the conference. Bibi Hajra Cheema exhibited work that focuses on the role of trees in a rapidly changing Lahore. She spoke about her inspiration from Punjabi folklore that featured trees as sites of women's agency, romance, physical and emotional healing, and divinity.

The conference featured multiple thematic panels with scholars, academics, and activists. We highlight three panels in this article.





## Panel: South Asian Literature and the Episteme

Aima Nisar



The all-women panel featured academics from various universities in Pakistan as they presented papers focusing on a specific text or series of texts from the South Asian literary tradition.

Amina Wasif's paper traced the history of the Urdu detective novel as representative of the para-literary trends of the 1960s and 70s in Pakistan. Using Zafar Zuberi's *Ibram Daku*, Colonel Faridi's *Safi*, and H. Iqbal's *Sabiha Bano*, the paper explored the literary tropes of the trickster, the rational investigator, and the *femme fatale*. She conclusively argued that the personhood of detective figures in Pakistani fiction of the two decades is never subservient to their sleuthing capabilities.

Dr. Sarah Abdullah highlighted the importance of periodicals by Muslim women in pre-partition India as a counter discourse to male-centric narratives. At a time when prescriptive novels like *Bihishti Zevar* were all the rage, magazines like *Tehzeeb-e-Niswan*, penned by women for women, became a safe space for resistance. Abdullah's argument was incredibly nuanced; it went on to question the extent to which these women magazines actually resisted the patriarchal hegemony of their time. She concluded that even though the magazines reified the phallogocentric patriarchal order by representing quintessential versions of womanhood,

their mere existence at the time was an act of subverting the traditional literary mode.

Similarly, Dr. Mariam Zia's analysis of the magnum opus of South Asian literature, *Dastan-e-Amir Hamza*, uprooted traditional ways of reading the text. By interpreting it through the Freudian Uncanny Zia made the text accessible to Western audiences as well. She traced the Uncanny back to the first recorded incidents of *dastangoi* in India, showing how the *dastan* reworks the Uncanny by refusing to clearly demarcate the boundary between the material and the fantastical. In bringing Islam as a foundation for *Dastan-e-Amir Hamza*, Dr. Zia's paper elevated the *dastan* from

mere childish entertainment to a story about the amalgamation of the fantastical and the material in early Islamic culture.

Dr. Habibah Rizvi, too, interpreted a vital text in the South Asian literary canon in a new light. Faiz's *Ham Jo Tareek Rahon Mein Maray Gaye*. The poem, usually considered a metaphor for the poet's relationship with the state, was reworked in terms of its aesthetic value. The themes of sorrow and beauty were expressed in the same Romantic tone as John Keats. By drawing a comparison with a Western writer, Dr. Rizvi clarified that the gap between Eastern and Western literature and scholarship is arbitrary, that literature transcends regional boundaries. However, she interpreted Faiz's aesthetic appraisal of beauty differently from that of Keats by saying that Faiz redefines the idea of the beloved's beauty by making it bigger than existence itself. Like Keats' lovers forever suspended in a moment of embrace, Faiz's time in prison opens up for him a moment of suspension, of freedom to think. That is where his beloved transforms from angry to beautiful to timeless. "We", then, is not just Faiz and his lover, but everyone who has sacrificed something for the cause. The amalgamation of seemingly contradictory images in Faiz's poem becomes a metaphor for a meaningful existence.



## Panel: Pop Culture and the Politics of Representation

Zainab Mubashir

Chaired by Dr. Saba Pirzadeh of the English programme at LUMS, the session Pop Culture and the Politics of Representation hosted three rising academics to present their research on the critical relationship between Pakistani popular media and the social narratives they represent and propagate.

Fareeha Shah, a writer with a degree in English Literature and Political Science from LUMS, presented abstracts from her thesis titled Rape and Repentance on Pakistani Small Screen.



Dr. Sameen Mohsin Ali

Shah's presentation involved the analysis of two Pakistani television drama serials—*Sangat* (2015) and *Muqabil* (2017)—in light of their distinct portrayals of sexual assault. Aided by video clips from the concerned serials, Shah presented close readings of the scenes representing acts of rape and analysed the social implications contained within the artistic portrayal of such acts of violence. Her specific focus rested on the sensationalist depictions of trauma and the limited subjectivity granted to female characters victimised by sexual violence. Shah emphasised the importance of responsible media representations of gendered violence by citing their contribution to national social and political discourse.

Fatima Bilquis, also a LUMS graduate, followed up by presenting her academic work, co-authored with Sara Tahir, focusing on the portrayal of hegemonic masculinities on the Pakistani small screen. Titled Expression of Masculinities on Pakistani Television, their research built upon Raewyn Connell's theoretical framework of masculinities and Edward Said's exposition of Orientation to view the representation of kinship structures in drama serials. Using the serial *Chhoti Si Zindagi* (2016) as an example, Bilquis talked of the complicated portrayal of masculinities on screen through the relationship dynamics of men with the women and other men in their lives. Her analysis involved the dissection of dramatic events to infer portrayals of power and hegemonic control within the family structure.

Syeda Minaal Ali, from University of the Punjab, shifted the conversation from television to fiction by analysing the short stories of the Pakistani author Usman T. Malik. In her research, titled The Curious Case of Liking Disgust: Exploring the Genre of Weird Fiction in Light of Abjection Theory to Study the Disordered in Pakistani Society, Ali explored the representation of order and disorder in Pakistani fiction through graphic depictions of horror-inciting imagery.



Building upon Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, and using the Lacanian idea of Symbolic Order, Ali offered a brief summary of discourse analysis conducted on eight short stories by Malik. Citing examples from the texts, Ali presented a comprehensive analysis of the complex relationships an individual experiences with the self and the entities outside of itself. Drawing upon Zaigham Sarfraz's division of Pakistani history into three epochs, Ali explored notions of normalcy, disorder, and social apathy as depicted within Malik's fiction as well as their relationship to Pakistan's political landscape.



Dr. Saba Pirzadeh, Fareeha Shah, Syeda Minaal Ali, Fatima Bilquis



## Panel: Mapping Nationalist Politics in Sindh

Muhammad Hani Ahsan

Dr. Muhammad Waseem chaired a session in which panelists discussed ethno-nationalist politics and political parties. The discussion explored different facets of Sindhi ethno-nationalist movements. Dr. Asma Faiz focused on the Pakistan Peoples Party as an ethnic party. Saeed Rid discussed Sufism's connections to Sindhi ethno-nationalism. Farhan Hanif Siddiqui discussed the role of the quota system in the rise of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement.

continued membership of Karachi in the Province of Sindh. PPP has also legislated on issues related to Sindhi identity including the language bill. Since PPP meets the criteria of particularity, temporality, and centrality, it is an ethnic party.

The topic for Saeed Rid's presentation was Sufism and Ethno-nationalism in Sindh. He explored GM Syed's reformulation of Sufism and Sayyidism. Using Syed's *Paigham-e Latif*, he reclaimed Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's

Farhan Hanif Siddiqui presented an analysis of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. He argued that the quota system led to polarisation that served as the context for the rise of MQM. But he then argued that there is confusion within MQM with regards to the quota system based on Altaf Husain's interview from the 1980s. Siddiqui considered CSS allocations under the quota system: 20% of the population of Sindh was urban but under the quota it had 40% representation while the rural areas had 80% population but only 60%



Dr. Asma Faiz, a member of the political science faculty at LUMS, began the discussion by attempting to define what an ethnic party is. She identified three essential characteristics of an ethnic party: particularity, temporality, and centrality. After explaining the history of PPP, she argued the although Sindhi nationalists criticise PPP as a "Punjabi Party", PPP and traditional Sindhi nationalists do not differ on any of the major issues related to Sindhi identity. This includes the construction of the Kalabagh Dam, quota system, and

poetry for Sindhi ethno-nationalism by connecting it to the land of Sindh. But the presentation then moved onto Socialist Sufism of Ibrahim that postulated the role of "holy men as spiritual reformers" according to Rid. He then argued that the Pakistan Peoples Party under the first Bhutto adapted mainstream Sufi discourse, to this day PPP celebrates Sufism as an integral part of Sindh in the celebration of the Sindh festival.

representation. The presentation explained the history of MQM and its transition from Muhajir to Muttahida Qaumi Movement. He argued that the reason for a lot of Muhajirs being deterred from applying for CSS is because of Bhutto's reforms which politicised the bureaucracy.

The session enlightened the audience regarding different facets of ethno-nationalism in Sindh and how it is manifested among different groups in different forms.



## Humanities and Social Sciences Seminar Series

*Dr. Asma Faiz*

The HSS Seminar Series is organised by Dr. Mohammad Waseem and Dr. Asma Faiz. It strives to provide a platform to faculty both from LUMS and beyond who are at various stages of their academic careers. The spring edition of the series brought together a diverse mixture of speakers who covered different domains of research ranging from potential impact of the CPEC to the use of cellular technology in counter-terrorism strategy, politics and sociology of Bazar economy, and the amalgamation of science and religion in Sir Syed's discourse.

The series saw presentations from speakers who belonged to distinguished national and international institutions including Professor Matthew McCartney (Oxford), Professor Bertrand Brodie (Sciences Po), and Dr. Asad Sayeed (Collective for Social Science Research).

Professor McCartney opened the spring edition of the seminar series by discussing the potential of CPEC as a game changer for Pakistan.

His talk brought together both the academic and policy sides of the debate on CPEC. The second seminar featured a presentation by Professor Brodie who developed a profile of the changing nature of conflicts in International Relations, especially highlighting the rising significance of intrastate wars and the threats posed by non-state actors. This was followed by Dr. Umair Javed's presentation based on his fieldwork in Lahore. Dr. Javed examined the confluence of religion and politics among the merchants and traders from Lahore's old city.

An interesting detour from these discussions was provided by Dr. Gwen Kirk who presented her work on the articulations of diaspora in the Punjabi cinema. The next seminar in the series saw a presentation by Dr. Nauman Faizi who provided an account of debates between Sir Syed and Mehdi Ali touching the domains of religion, philosophy, and science. Dr. Sayeed in his seminar elaborated upon the findings from his fieldwork in Karachi that



compared patterns of patriarchy and migration in three working class neighborhoods of the city.

The series concluded with Dr. Fatima Mustafa's presentation of her quantitative study of use of cellular phone shutdown by the government of Pakistan as a counter-terrorism strategy. The spring edition of the HSS Seminar Series provided a rich mixture of debate across various disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences and generated interest among students and faculty at LUMS.



## Queer Futures

Aiza Hussain

What does it mean to be queer in Pakistan? What spaces exist for such an expression in Pakistan? Must a history of queer existence be traced or is queer presence in the now testament enough? Is there a need to develop a local queer vocabulary? How important is language in offering/countering rebuke? Who will shape the queer futures that we are envisioning?



Dr. Nida Kirmani

These were some of the questions raised during the three-day workshop on Queer Futures at LUMS. Centred upon gender and sexuality, this workshop was co-organised by Dr. Nida Kirmani, Associate Professor of Sociology, and Omar Kasmani, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Freie University, Berlin, under the Saida Waheed Gender Initiative, LUMS. More than 25 academics, activists, artists, comedians, writers, and students chaired discussions at the workshop, bringing in diverse voices into the room. Friends from across the border were also present, while those unable to show physical presence participated through Skype.

The workshop drew upon a number of formats including academic talks, artist dialogues, literary readings, round table discussions, and a film screening. The environment created in each session was such that it stirred great conversation and made the audience comfortable with

asking questions. Each panelist had a placard with not just their name but also their preferred prefix in place so as to allow for the individual to ascertain their identity themselves and avoid overt judgement by others.

Over the last few years, significant progress had been made in the queer landscape for Pakistan: three new gender categories had been issued by the national database; exhibits of homo-erotic art displayed in galleries; strong messages delivered through a markedly greater and far more inclusive Aurat (woman) March; legislative reform granting increased protection to additional gender categories. The platform was in place, and the time was ripe, nearly yearning for such a gathering to be arranged—and so it was.

The workshop commenced with an address from Dr. Nida Kirmani, Dr. Omar Kasmani, and Dr. Kamran Asdar Ali (Dean, MGSHSS), also jovially termed 'Qutb-e-Queer' (or the 'Patron Saint of Pakistani Queers') at the workshop. This was followed by a keynote by Dr. Anjali Arondekar, Associate Professor of Feminist Studies, UCLA. There was emphasis on using this space to share lesser-told tales, of producing modes



Dr. Anjali Arondekar

of desires that fell beyond the established quagmires, of sensing that indeed there was a void in place, and eventually using these sentimentalities into shaping new, more welcoming, queer futures. The next two days were full of discussions around identity activism, and the history as well as the future of queer presence in the local landscape.

Dr. Anjali Arondekar's intervention was pivotal in this conference. As a scholar of the histories of sexualities in South Asia, she mentioned that the gaps present in these histories were numerous and





had been filled from archives of slavery, colonialism, and nationalism—all coloured in a language of lament and loss. She challenged the preoccupation with loss as the structuring mode of narration of the histories of sexuality and probed the audience into reverting the lens from loss to abundance. By offering a new mode of viewing archives, her analysis grounded the framework for the discussions that ensued over the next couple of days.

The sessions stirred debates around language, the politics of identity formation, and loss. Mehlab Jameel—LUMS alumni, researcher, and activist—evidenced through her research that no one universal meaning could be applied to feminine soul in a male body, trans-gender or trans-woman. She employed the word Hijra—rooted in Hindi and Persian—as an umbrella term for individuals who did not identify with the prevalent gender binaries. Amongst acclaimed scholars, research was also presented by current LUMS student, Ihsan Arslan, who spoke of the existence of homo-eroticism within Islamic literature in South Asia.



Most famous for his “Shumaila Bhatti” social media presence, Mohammad Moez highlighted the ostracisation, vitriol, and harassment that often marked queer experiences in Pakistan. He oscillated between Urdu, English, and Punjabi in his conversation with Aimen Bucha (Program Manager at SWGI), hence demonstrating the cruciality of language in one’s expression. Language, its ability to injure, and its inability to host certain terms were brought up time and again. Languages were often partially known: emotions

through them partially explained; identities thus partially revealed.

Queer struggle wears multiple forms, one of them being literary. This workshop also featured a number of literary dialogues, readings, and discussions—memoirs were read, unsent letters shared, tales of love, ache, and loss told. The literature read was more than often obviously intimate; the kind of prose shared was charged with great emotion. These were received with laughter; claps, and reassuring nods, and at other times met with a deafening silence.





Whatever the reaction, the literary texts resonated strongly with those in the room. Asad Alvi (current IBA student), Momina Masood (graduate student at University of the Punjab), and Fazal Rizvi (faculty member at Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture and interdisciplinary artist) were amongst those who shared their literary stories.

The workshop also featured author Sanam Maher who read out portions from her book *The Sensational Life & Death of Qandeel Baloch*. Qandeel was not willing to conform to society's set guidelines and it was this desire of hers that got her killed; however, Qandeel was not extraordinary or special. Her circumstances were not special. It was society that made her special. The ordeals faced by Qandeel could be paralleled to those felt by gender non-conformists for Qandeel, in her own way, too was queer.

The future of queers was more profusely discussed in The Activists' Roundtable. Multiple voices engendered multiple debates which circulated around visibility, state attitudes, societal policing of thought and bodies, queer participation in women's movements, donor bodies, and activist outcomes, amongst others. The activism that each was engaged in stemmed from very personal experiences, which perhaps made their brand of activism most

distinct. Activists participating included Mehlab Jamil (activist and anthropologist), Aun Shahid (member, HOPE Foundation), Khursand Bayar Ali (community activist and member, Saathi Foundation), Sarah Suhail (scholar and activist), Raza Haider (member, Sabrung Society and Humraaz), and Aqib Ali (activist, researcher, and faculty member, LUMS and Lahore Grammar School).

While the ultimate solution to the discussed issues was structural, and needed to take place on a governmental level, NGOs and activists could help heal gaping wounds. The future was premised on the milieu set by the present, where one would learn from another, partake in collective thinking, and utilise collective labour to yield beneficial results for all.

Last but not the least, the film screening of *Yeh Freedom Life* exhibited a tale of

queer lives in a South Delhi neighbourhood. This was followed by a Skype session with Priya Sen, the director of the film, who elaborated on the motives behind embarking on such a project, the labour that went into it, and the relationships that her cast had with her and one another during production.

The workshop ended with a concluding note from Dr. Omar Kasmani, Dr. Nida Kirmani, and Dr. Anjali Arondekar. Reflections were made on the debates that had taken place. Feedback, including suggestions, were taken from participants, especially on carrying on with the conversation and organising similar events in the future. The workshop was acknowledged as a small yet significant step in the development of queer futures.





# External Scholar Interview

## Dr. Anjali Arondekar

Anam Fatima Khan

Your presence at the Queer Futures conference and your keynote speech was inspiring and so I will start with asking you about your work and what informs it? How the personal is political?

I think most intellectual work is necessarily political. We often tend to privilege academics and/or activists as having more of a stake in the political, even as most of us are constantly trying to reiterate that those assumptions are rarely true. In my case, I was born and brought up in western India (specifically Mumbai/Bombay), in a multilingual and lower-caste household. I come from a Devadasi community (devadasi literally means slave (dasi) of god (deva), and is often falsely interchangeable with terms such as courtesan, prostitute, and/or sex-worker) and as such, I was very aware of the entanglements of politics and sexuality from an early age. I often get asked if it was "hard" being a queer person in India at a time when such formations were not only punishable by law but also societally unacceptable



(I am 50 years old, and so of course recall a time when conversations around sexuality and gender identities were mostly taboo!). My answer to such a question is more counter-intuitive that you would imagine. I would say that it was more challenging for me to work through the challenges of my caste and family background than those summoned by sexual orientation.

My parents were both feminists and my sexuality and gender choices were never a site of contestation. In fact, for my parents, sexuality has always been a non-issue, a place of ordinary articulation. All this to say, yes, the personal is political, but in ways that are often surprising, quotidian, and endlessly challenging.

Could you elaborate on the kind of work that you do?

I am primarily a historian of sexuality, with a strong focus on South Asia and Indian Ocean studies. My early work was focused on British colonial India (Karachi featured prominently in that book!) and since then I have moved on to thinking of the intercalations of sexuality and colonialism in Portuguese India. And the next project I'll be working on will be on similar questions in French colonial India. As you can see, comparative empires has been a source of great interest to me, especially as we think through genealogies of sexuality in South Asia.





For the past few decades, I have also become a little fatigued with Euro-American queer studies and its continued focus on histories of the here and now, and as such, my work writes against the press of such presentism. Because I work in South Asia, I also wanted to think of how the questions and archives we navigate here move the conversations around gender and sexuality to a very different set of spaces and temporalities. The conference I attended here provided rich and ample evidence of such an argument. We had papers and presentations that traversed periods and genres, and were multilingual and multidisciplinary

More vulgarly put, I would say that the last twenty years of my intellectual life have been an attempt to stage a dialogue between two field-formations that are often segregated: south Asian/area studies and queer/sexuality studies. Area studies is often perceived as a rigorous discipline while queer/sexuality studies is (falsely) seen as an identity based knowledge-formation, even as both obviously require an incredible amount of erudition, training, and thought. For example, I came to LUMS, one could argue, precisely to renew my commitment to this dialogue. On the one hand, I gave the keynote at the Queer Futures conference, but I also served on the advisory board for

the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. As a member of the advisory board, I was not directly addressing questions of sexuality, though it is my work in sexuality that clearly informs my relationship to administration and evaluation.

**Speaking of the advisory board, you have also served on such committees back in India how would you compare your experiences?**

I have not served on an advisory board in India, per se, but I have always been committed to thinking about the presence of caste and difference within university contexts,



and have done some work on that front. As I noted earlier, I belong to an OBC community (Other Backward Caste) and thus was keen to hear how similar projects of difference (as emblemised in the NOP initiative) were understood on this campus. I must confess I was concerned with how the NOP student/faculty presence was articulated more as a problem of assimilation and integration than as a locus of radical institutional change. In other words, it is not just enough to bring in more students and faculty from diverse backgrounds to LUMS; we need to more robustly shift the paradigms within which such ideas of diversity emerge. So, if you make an effort to bring in folks from under-represented communities, nothing changes if you simply have them aspiring to be like the majority. Diversity must translate to a diversity of knowledge formations, as it does to a diversity of embodied subjects.

**Do you have any advice for women who are taking a stand, going to the Aurat March, and women in general in the humanities and social sciences at LUMS?**

I obviously cannot proffer any easy digestible capsules of feminist wisdom! Everyone's experience is unique and unevenly marked by histories of inclusion and exclusion. Take my case, for example—I have rarely encountered discrimination as a queer person in India



(which is what one would stereotypically expect)! Rather, I have dealt more with the challenges of caste and linguistic discrimination. More importantly, I would say that feminism is not a script. It is more a process of emergence and you have to figure out where your zones of comfort and discomfort are, and what risks you are willing to take, without jeopardising your safety. We live in such precarious times that daily survival can itself be an act of radical feminist possibility.

### Finally, are you currently working on a project and should we look forward to something?

As I noted earlier, I am drawn to comparative histories of gender and sexuality in South Asia. Sexuality, particularly in South Asia, is rescued from the detritus of hegemonic histories of colonialism and nationalism and placed within more

liberatory narratives of reform and rights. The book I am currently writing (*Abundance: Sexuality, Historiography, South Asia*) engages two key questions: What if we are to shift our attention from the reading of sexuality as loss to understanding it as a site of radical abundance—even futurity? What would it mean to let go of our attachments to absence, to unmoor ourselves, as it were, from the presence of reliable ghosts? The talk I gave, for example, draws from a diverse set of archives from Portuguese India, and slants these questions through the history of a Devadasi diaspora, the Gomantak Maratha Samaj.

One additional point I would make here is that histories of gender and sexuality continue to be minoritised within histories of nationalism, progress, development, especially in places like India and Pakistan, and it is always important to reiterate that you cannot write one without the other.

Histories of gender and sexuality, after all, are not identitarian forms (though they can be), but more about uneven relationships of power writ large. Instead of creating hierarchies of value within projects of difference (the queers are more oppressed than X, etc.), I would urge us to think non-competitively, alongside and athwart each other's politics and visions. That is why I am always excited to return to Pakistan because there are only staged differences between our two countries, differences that we must continue to surmount. If anything, the Queer Futures conference has signaled the urgent and critical need for more collaboration.



## Centre Events

### Gurmani Centre for Languages and Literature

Maira Asaad

The Gurmani Centre for Languages and Literature, in its continued efforts to draw attention to the contemporary literary and artistic circles of Pakistan, spearheaded a series of events curated for this purpose.

Dr. Moeen Nizami, Professor of Persian at LUMS, and Bilal Tanweer, Professor of Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at LUMS, presented the following in Spring Semester 2019: the Halqa-e Danish *Ham-'Asr Urdu Afsana* series, the Ahmad Bilal Awan *Bazm-e Adab* series, and the Raag Shaam series. In addition, the semester also saw the continuation of the Khoka Natak series, a student-led initiative curated by Waqas Manzoor who is currently pursuing an MPhil at LUMS.

In a similar vein, the Halqa-e Danish series brought in renowned contemporary Urdu fiction writers,

including Ali Akbar Natiq, Ikramullah, and Dr. Tahira Iqbal. The series also paid tribute to the late Fahmida Riaz. Over the course of the semester, audiences were familiarised with their works through excerpt readings as well as with their writing processes and struggles.

On a more concentrated level, the Ahmad Bilal Awan *Bazm-e Adab* series was oriented around the theme of Pakistani literature. Dr. Aziz Ibn ul Hassan, Dr. Maryam Wasif Khan, Dr. Najeeba Arif, and Dr. Nasir Abbas Nayyar were invited to lead discourses on the history of Pakistani literature as well as its role in the contemporary literary setup. The speakers covered a broad range of arguments and discussed the distinguishing features of the Urdu novel and short story fiction writing, the politics of regional languages, and the development of Pakistani literature in both literary and religious streams.



The Raag Shaam series, introduced in Spring Semester 2019, aimed to introduce audiences within LUMS to the various nuances of Indian classical music. Moderated by Ali Aftaab Saeed, Bilal Tanweer, and Dr. Moeen Nizami, the series invited Ustad Imran Jafri to guide the audience through various kinds of raag—and to discuss the more technical aspects.







'Cinema ka Ishq', a performance based on Krishan Chander's play 'Vo admi jo mar chuka hai', as well as a comedic, improvised performance of Ibne Insha's 'Sadarat'. Additionally, the series also featured an originally-scripted mime performance on the colours of basant, as well as a dance performance to Hadeeqa Kiani's 'Aaj Rang Hai', which celebrated the festive colours of Holi.

Of notable interest was a tribute titled 'Rebel Angel', held in honour of the late graffiti artist, painter, and LUMS alumni, Asim Butt. Asim Butt pioneered the Stuckist art movement within Pakistan and popularised the use of graffiti as a form of protest art. The event was curated by Younis B. Azeem and arranged as a panel discussion. The panel comprised of Nazish Afraz, Khurram Husain, Nafisa Rizvi, and Shehribano Hussain, and they spoke of Asim's life in various capacities—as friend, brother, artist, and visionary.

Another independently-arranged event was Nad-e-Ali's photography exhibition *The Other Horses*, curated by Ali Sultan. The subject of the exhibition was Lahore's Shabih-e Zuljinah's processions. The photographs displayed the spectacle of



these processions through instances of its flagellating crowds, caught in deep devotional reverie, as well as monochromatic images of the horses' caretakers. Nad-e-Ali commented that Arif Mahmood and Robert Frank were two notable influences on his own work, and, for further understanding, supplied the exhibition with a catalogue of images and essays. It will be on display throughout the semester.

Over the course of the series, the audiences were introduced to *raag aimen*, *raag darbari*, *raag bhairavi*, *raag bilaval*, and *raag khamaj*, and was privy to rich, evocative performances by Imran Jafri, Shayan Jafri, and Ali Aftaab Saeed of various popular—and beloved—musical scores.

Khoka Natak, a student-led initiative that aimed to introduce street theatre to the culture of LUMS, in its second installation of the series continued this Spring Semester 2019 with a variety of fresh performances. These included an action comedy on Patras Bokhari's piece



## Gurmani Centre's Workshops

Khadija Zaidi

This year, the Gurmani Centre for Languages and Literature organised a series of workshops featuring journalists, artists, writers, and thinkers. Each workshop aimed at embedding and exploring a certain form of art, technique, or idea in ways beyond just the discussion.

In January, the Gurmani Centre organised a two-day workshop on Transcreation, the process of adapting content—in this case, language—to a new target audience. The workshop was led by Naveed Alam, an instructor of creative writing at the Beaconhouse National University. According to Alam, transcreation is “a merger of the translator and the translated to broaden a poetic realm”. In transcreation, one takes a leap or an inspiration from a work. The result is, in addition to being a translation, a work of poetic creation that is as much the translator’s own as it is of the original author’s. The participants included Syeda Abeera Bukhari, Ateeb Gul, Mahnaz



Dr. Aamir R. Mufti and Dr. Stathis Gourgouris

Shujrah, Ali Safdar, Hussain Iqtidar, and Raza Naeem. Moderated by Naveed Alam, the participants read one another’s works and gave feedback. The transcreated works that were produced either for the workshop or during it included those of Ibne Insha, Jaun Elia, Ghalib, Perveen Shakir, Gulzar, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Allama Iqbal, and Munir Niazi.

This was followed by a two-day workshop on Research Methods in the Humanities for students belonging to various educational institutions at the graduate level (MA, MPhil, and PhD) and disciplines as diverse as English literature, History, Anthropology, Social Development and Policy, and Media and Communications. The workshop was conducted by Dr. Ali Raza (Assistant Professor of History) and Dr. Maryam Wasif Khan (Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature) of the Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Through close examination of scholarly works such as those of Shahid Amin, Faizal Devji, and Edward Said, the instructors discussed the systematic invention of the archive and the stages of historical production, the need for scholars to develop a critical gaze, as well as the question of ‘method’ while writing.







Towards the end of the session, the instructors urged the participants to revise the initial research proposals they had submitted in light of the insights they had gained from the workshop. The two-day workshop was brought to a conclusion by a sustained emphasis on the core principles and considerations which must be kept in mind by all committed scholars and researchers, and an offer of continued assistance and guidance to the participants.

Sarak Chaap was another creative initiative which allowed for an informed engagement with art and the city—a street photography workshop held fortnightly in February, conducted by Lahore-based visual artist, Nad-e-Ali. He guided his students through the sights and sounds of Lohari Gate, Lakshmi Chowk, Anarkali, and the like, illustrating his approach while photographing the city’s unravished corners. Within his practice, he is interested in capturing the social and political climate evident on the streets of Lahore. He works in both digital and analog formats of photography. His work has been featured in *Vice*, the *Herald*, and *EOS Dawn*, and has been exhibited nationally and internationally since 2012.

With help from Publications at LUMS, the Centre also held an event titled “Immersive Science Fiction” with the writer Usman T. Malik—a Pakistani writer resident in Florida, the first South Asian to win the Bram Stoker Award and later the British Fantasy Award as well. The event, held amongst many writing enthusiasts, began with Malik reading out excerpts from his own work. His writing deals primarily with the genre of Science Fiction which was what the entire event was geared towards discussing. After he had read out parts of his own work, a discussion began around these works and how he had come to write them as well as his writing styles and process. The event concluded with Malik taking several questions from the audience and pointing out various workshops where those interested in the genre could apply to and further hone their craft.



gender and international development; Pakistani women’s narrative in the western media; feminism at home, #MeToo in Pakistan; history of feminism in the world and its link to Pakistan’s own history of feminism; gender portrayal from a storytelling perspective. Greatly interactive and engaging in nature, it prompted participants to express their interest in the idea of a series of further workshops centered on the subject of gender and its role in different fields and their landscapes in Pakistan.

The Centre also collaborated with the Saida Waheed Gender Initiative and invited Haneya Zuberi, a journalist and visiting lecturer based in Lahore, who conducted a Workshop on Women, Gender and the Politics of Storytelling. A graduate of the Columbia Journalism School, Haneya Zuberi worked in media and advocacy in New York for several years. Prior to that, she worked at UN Women on the ‘HeForShe’ campaign. In light of the topic of discussion, Zuberi highlighted fundamental themes such as: post-colonialism,



Haneya Zuberi

## Saida Waheed Gender Initiative

Aimen Bucha



Since its inception, The Saida Waheed Gender Initiative has been hosting monthly seminars and inviting local scholars of gender studies to share their working research and/or published work with the community at LUMS. This semester started off with a talk by Dr. Gwendolyn Kirk (Assistant Professor, MGSHSS). Her talk, titled ‘You need to know a little yes/no’: Crossing Gender and Linguistic Boundaries in Pakistani Cinema, examined two films in detail—1957’s *Yakkey Wali* and 1979’s *Aurat Raj*, to ask how vocal drag and translanguaging perform identity crossings in ways that complement or complicate other narrative dimensions of these films. Her work seeks to explore the gender-transgressive roots of such performances by asking the following questions: what role do vocal and linguistic elements play either in alignment or non-alignment with gender-crossing performances in film? What are the semiotic relationships between visual and vocal elements in film? And how do the meanings of these performances develop over time?

Sara Kazmi, who is currently pursuing a PhD in postcolonial literatures at the University of Cambridge, gave the next

talk. Her talk, titled *Postcolonial Echoes of Hir: The Feminist Poetics and the Vernacular Imagination*, explored the feminist poetics of postcolonial Punjabi poetry, focusing specifically on Amrita Pritam and Nasreen Anjum Bhatti. Through a close reading of their poems, “*Ajj aakhan Waris Shah nu*” and “*Neel karaiyaan neelkaan*”, she discussed how these progressive poets deployed the *Hir* narrative as a genre of contestation to critique the multiple patriarchies of nation, region, and community.

This was followed by a book talk by Dr. Sara Rizvi who is an Assistant Professor at Forman Christian College in the department of sociology. In her talk she discussed her book, *Women, Healthcare and Violence*, in which she sheds lights on the near million women healthcare practitioners across Pakistan who face some form of workplace violence almost daily during care delivery.

The Initiative then held a talk by Dr. Kate Vyborny (Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Economics, Duke University). In her talk—titled *Institutional Reform and De Facto Women’s Rights: Evidence from Marriage*

registrars in punjab, Pakistan—she discussed the possible gaps between laws that govern marriage and divorce as they are found in law books and the de facto practice of the law. She argued that Pakistan is a good example: the government officials who register marriages often follow their own judgment rather than complying strictly with the law. Many are not even aware of the laws on the books. To address this, she shared that the government of Punjab is conducting the first-ever mandatory training of marriage registrars in the province to inform them on women’s rights in marriage, including child marriage and women’s right to initiate divorce, and of the legal consequences to registrars for non-compliance. The study used a randomised rollout of this training programme and complementary information experiments to answer the question: how can state intervention increase local officials’ compliance with and enforcement of de jure laws protecting women’s rights? She shared the initial findings of the study.

This was followed by a talk by Dr. Laine Munir, a Research Fellow at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (SCAR),





Dr. Kate Vyborny



Dr. Laine Munir



Dr. Shirin Zubair

George Mason University's Korea campus. In her talk, titled *No Wealth for Women: Natural Resources and Gender Inequality in Africa*, she surveyed the relationship between the resource curse and gender by drawing on illustrative cases in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Shirin Zubair, a professor of English at Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore, gave the next talk. Her talk, titled *Negotiating Multiple Identities: Pakistani Women and Media Representations*, explored the ways in which media representations of Pakistani women are understood to represent broader international development discourses. By focusing on development narratives with regard to women's empowerment and their social and political positioning, and by looking at the visual and linguistic representations, images, and portrayals of women, she aimed to capture the competing discourses of femininities offered on the cable television channels in Pakistan.

The next talk was by Dr. Faiza Mushtaq, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts at the Institute of Business

Administration (IBA), Karachi. Her talk, titled *Performing Religious Authority as a Woman: Resources, Constraints, and Cultural Entrepreneurship*, was based on her research on Pakistani women who participate in the religious classes and reformist activities of the group Al-Huda. She explored how the standards of ethical conduct are especially pronounced for a female religious authority figure, as are the risks of courting controversy and being deemed illegitimate. She used the conceptual framework of cultural entrepreneurship to show how influence is acquired by drawing on social network ties and recombining symbolic as well as organisational resources.

Dr. Nida Kirmani (Associate Professor of Sociology at LUMS) delivered the last talk of the Spring Seminar Series. Her talk, titled *Can Fun Be Feminist? Gender, Space and Mobility in Lyari, Karachi*, focused on one of Karachi's original settlements, Lyari, and explored the multiple ways in which women and girls in particular experience and understand this area. She documented the various tactics used by women and girls to negotiate this landscape in the course of their everyday lives, as they travel for the purposes of work, education, and leisure.

Based on extensive interviews and participant observation in several neighbourhoods, her research shifts attention away from solely using violence as a lens to understand urban space—an approach that has so far dominated studies of Karachi in general and Lyari in particular—and away from seeing women mainly as victims of violence. Rather, by focusing on the multiplicity of meanings space holds for women and girls and by highlighting their own creative navigations and everyday forms of resistance, she brought new insights into discussions on gender and urban space.

### Student Colloquium

This year the SWGI had its fourth student colloquium to amplify research work in gender studies being done by students across public and private universities in Pakistan. The colloquium allowed students to present their research on topics including gender and religion, the media, literature, politics, social movements, feminist theory, masculinities and femininities, health and the body, sexuality, gender-based violence, and development.



Dr. Sara Rizvi



Dr. Nida Kirmani



Dr. Gwendolyn Kirk

# Mahbub Ul Haq Research Center

Nazam Maqbool

The Mahbub Ul Haq Research Center aims to improve human development and human security through a focus on research, policy change, and outreach. With a special focus on South Asia, the Center carries out activities to support research and policy-making across its core pillars: freedom from fear and freedom from want. Working across issues of democracy and governance, social justice, peace and conflict, gender and security, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development, the Center offers a holistic and evidence-informed approach to the challenges of human security in South Asia.

Originally established in November 1995 by the late Dr. Mahbub ul Haq, founder and chief architect of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports, the Center became part of LUMS in 2016. It draws upon the expertise of LUMS faculty and its rich, multidisciplinary foundation of academic work that extends across disciplines.

The Center has undertaken a number of activities this semester, focusing on three

main strands: first, conducting research and policy work in the form of research papers, conceptualising the annual South Asia Human Development Report (SAHDR), and pursuing a flagship policy project on "Humanizing the State"; second, developing a strategic framework for the MHRC; third, conducting outreach activities through seminars and roundtable discussions.

During this semester, the Center held consultations to finalise the theme for the 21st Annual SAHDR 2019. A cross-section of experts is being consulted in Islamabad and Lahore (within and outside LUMS). In addition, to harness previous work undertaken through the Center, all the research papers and statistical tables of the 20th Annual SAHDR 2017/2018—focusing on "Environmental Sustainability with Equity in South Asia"—were reviewed by a panel of leading South Asian experts. This work is now undergoing revision and will be completed this semester.

The Center continued to provide original research contributions to the *Social Science and Policy Bulletin*, published by MGSHSS, LUMS.

Three research papers—"Mahbub ul Haq's Vision of Human Development in Pakistan: Challenges and Policy Options", "Climate Change, Water and Human Migration in South Asia: A Case of India and Pakistan", and "Agricultural Trade Liberalization and Development in Pakistan"—were submitted by the Center's research staff. Two of these have already been published, with the third scheduled for publication within this semester.

The Center also initiated a flagship research project: "Humanizing the State: A Roadmap to Put People First". The purpose of the project is to produce a report and undertake a broad narrative building exercise to advocate putting human development and human security at the center of Pakistan's national narrative. As part of this project, the Center organised a roundtable discussion. Participants included Nida Usman, Gen (R) Waheed Arshad, Shaigan Sharif, Tariq Khosa, Saeed Shafqat, Ali Usman Qasmi, Ahmad Yunas Samad, Rasul Bakhsh Rais, Ali Sultan, Hassan Javid, and Ali Hasanain. Participants at the roundtable highlighted the need for



Dr. Moed Yusuf and the panel





for exploring and developing evidence that emphasises a people-centric approach as the mainstay of Pakistan's national narrative.

The research and policy work undertaken by the Center is evidence of the Center's strong focus on human development in South Asia. To ensure that this work takes place within a larger strategic framework, the Center is currently undergoing a strategic planning process, through which it seeks to amplify the work undertaken at LUMS by increasing the linkages between academics and practitioners in the social sciences. As part of this process, multiple consultations have been held within and outside LUMS to solicit views, input, and advice from researchers and practitioners. A Strategic Plan (2019–21) is being developed and will be shared with the faculty for further input by the end of this semester.

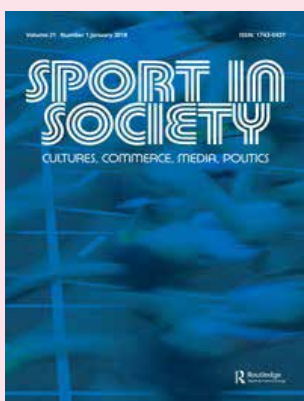
Finally, the Center renewed its efforts in terms of outreach to LUMS faculty, external researchers, and policy-makers.

The Center convened a talk on the "Importance of Technology and the Right to Privacy", led by Akbar Nasir Khan (the COO of the Punjab Safe City Authority), which explored topical issues about the use of technology for citizen welfare and the concerns this might raise in terms of data privacy and the involvement of the state in peoples' lives. Initiating the trend of partnering with other think tanks in Islamabad, the Center supported a roundtable discussion on "Reshaping Asia: CPEC and the BRI", co-hosted with the Jinnah Institute. Ivan Rasmussen (Assistant Professor at NYU Shanghai) and Nazish Afraz (Teaching Fellow at LUMS) presented on the topic, while well-known journalist Zahid Hussain moderated the session. This was followed by a discussion with a group of experts, notably Aliya Hashmi Khan, Musharaf Zaidi, Gen (R) Talat Masood, Nazam Maqbool, and others. The event allowed the Center to connect academics at LUMS with a wider audience of policy analysts in Islamabad. The Center cosponsored the Thirteenth Annual Humanities and Social Sciences Conference on

"Critical Interventions: Mapping Emerging Scholarship on South Asia" hosted by the HSS department. As part of the conference, the Center held a panel discussion on "Women in Politics in Pakistan". Malaika Raza, Maleeka Bokhari, and Hina Pervaiz Butt, representing the three main political parties of the country, debated the state of women's participation in politics and decision-making. Thematically, given human development's wider focus on gender dynamics and the Center's two Annual Reports (2000 and 2016) on gender and women empowerment in South Asia, this was an important area for the Center to explore. These initiatives offered an opportunity to the Centre to contribute to wide-ranging debates in the field of human development over the course of the semester.

# Faculty News

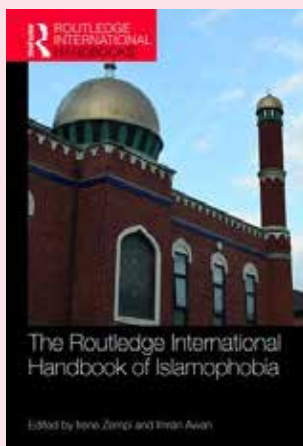
**Ali Khan (Associate Professor, HSS)** published an article titled "Cricket, society and religion: a study of increasing religiosity in the national cricket team of Pakistan" in *Sport in Society* (2019).



**Baqar H. Syed (Teaching Fellow, HSS)** has a forthcoming article on "Kalam in a Post-traditional World: Shibli Nu'mani's Construction of Authority in 'Ilmul-Kalam and al-Kalam" in the *Pakistan Journal of Historical Studies* (2019).



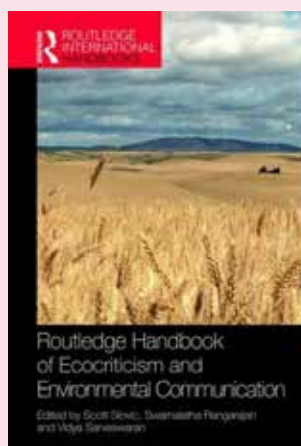
**Tania Saeed (Assistant Professor, HSS)** published a chapter titled "Islamophobia and the Muslim Student: Disciplining the Intellect" in the Routledge International Handbook of Islamophobia, edited by Irene Zempi and Imran Awan. She also presented on "Constructing the resilient citizen: A case of education policies and the fight against extremism in Pakistan" at the Comparative and International Education Studies (CIES) Conference, San Francisco.



**Sadaf Ahmad (Associate Professor, HSS)** published article titled "Pakistani policewomen: questioning the role of gender in circumscribing police corruption" in *Policing and Society* (2019).



**Saba Pirzadeh (Assistant Professor, HSS)** published a chapter titled "Postcolonial Development, Socio-ecological Degradation and Slow Violence in Pakistani Fiction" in the *Routledge Handbook of Ecocriticism and Environmental Communication*, edited by Scott Slovic, Swarnalatha Rangarajan, and Vidya Sarveswaran (Routledge, 2019).



## RESEARCH GRANT

Two HSS faculty members, Dr. Mohammad Waseem (Visiting Faculty, HSS) and Dr. Asma Faiz (Assistant Professor, HSS), have been awarded the prestigious three-year PERIDOT Research Programme grant for their project on federalism in Pakistan.

PERIDOT is the Franco-Pakistani Hubert Curien Partnership (PHC) Program that brings together Pakistani and French academics to collaborate of research projects. In Pakistan, the programme is implemented by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and in France jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Development (MAEDI) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESRI).

The proposal by Dr. Waseem and Dr. Faiz received the highest marks in evaluations in Paris as well as in Islamabad. The project will enable leading political scientists in France and Pakistan to conduct a thorough study of post-18th Amendment federalism in Pakistan.



**Nadhra S. Khan (Associate Professor, HSS)** published an article, “*Ayina-Kari* in the Sheesh Mahal, Lahore Fort: Issues of Attribution, Appreciation and Interpretation”, in *Artibus Asiae*. She chaired a panel discussion on “Conflict & Belonging in Literature” at the 13th Annual HSS Conference and also presented a paper on “Home in the Post-9/11 Anglophone Pakistani Novel”. She was awarded the CAA-Getty International Travel Grant in February 2019 for the following events and projects: Moderating a session on “Orientalism/Occidentalism” at the Global Conversations 2019 Preconference Colloquium; presenting a paper titled “Images of Guru Nanak: Locating

Patterns of Words in Images” at the Global Conversation on *Creative Pedagogy: Mapping In-between Spaces Across Cultures*; visiting the Clark Art Institute, Massachusetts; attending the LUMS FTG for the International Conventions of Asia Scholars (July, 2019) in Leiden.



**Fatima Mustafa (Assistant Professor, HSS)** presented on “Counter-terrorism in Pakistan: Can Cellphone Shutdowns Reduce Terrorist Violence?” at the HSS Seminar Series. She also presented a paper in the 13th Annual HSS Conference on “Cell phone Shutdowns in Pakistan: The Intersection of Technology and Violence”.

**Shayan Rajani (Assistant Professor, HSS)** presented a paper at a workshop at the New York University, titled “Regionalization without Vernacularization: The Changing Place of Persian in Eighteenth Century Thatta”.

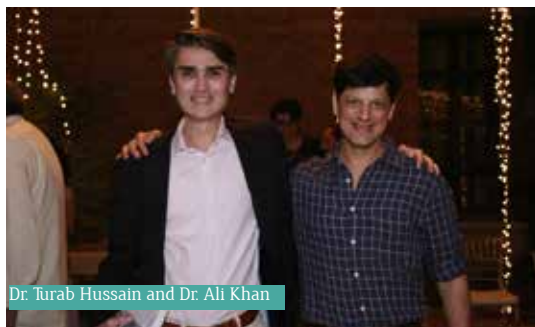


**Ateeb Gul (Teaching Fellow/Senior Editor, HSS)** published an English translation of Dr. Najeeba Arif’s poem (*Azal Abad Ke Darmiyan*) titled “In Between Eternities” in *Sky Island Journal* (April 2019). He also published a poem titled “Hurried Greeting” in the *Eureka Literary Magazine* (May 2019).





## Heads of Departments Head for Sabbatical



Dr. Turab Hussain and Dr. Ali Khan



Dr. Ali Khan (Head of Department, Humanities and Social Sciences) and Dr. S. Turab Hussain (Head of Department, Economics) have not just been heading their respective departments for many years, they have been intellectual mainstays of the Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences. They have been professors, administrators, mentors, and visionaries. Their departments—and therefore the School—have grown tremendously under their leadership. One downside of this has been that they have not been able to have any time for themselves throughout all these years of leadership. Beginning in Fall 2019–2020, both Dr. Ali Khan and Dr. S. Turab Hussain will go on a one-year leave of sabbatical. On April 27, the MGSHSS Dean’s Office organised a get-together to celebrate their accomplishments.





# Faculty Interview

## Dr. Maryam Wasif Khan



Photo Credit: Faizan Ahmad

### Could you tell us a little about your work?

I am trained in comparative literature, so the work I do usually spans languages and historical moments. For the past few years, I have been working with sources in French, Urdu, English and my very rudimentary dictionary-dependent Persian. I have just finished a book manuscript, tentatively-titled *Who is a Muslim? Orientalism and Literary Populisms*, which argues that modern Urdu literature from its inception in colonial institutions such as Fort William College, Calcutta, to its dominant forms in contemporary Pakistan—popular novels, short stories, television serials—is formed around a question that is and historically has been at the core of early modern and modern Western literatures. The question—who is a Muslim—is predominant in eighteenth-century literary and scholarly orientalist texts, the English oriental tale chief amongst them, but takes on new and dangerous meanings once it travels to the North-Indian colony, and later to Pakistan. The manuscript is currently out for peer-review.

I have spent this past semester reorienting two of my usual courses: the 200-level Sins of the Reader and the 400-level seminar on Orientalism. Not being stuck in the quagmires of writing, but just working with new materials and new questions in the classroom is revitalising (at least for a bit). I have absolutely loved teaching this semester—not only did I have great texts, I also had fantastic and engaged students

who made both classrooms really come alive! Your teaching methods are quite unique. I would like to know more about how you conceived the pattern of your courses.

I think it depends on what I am teaching. If there is one thing at the heart of every single lecture or seminar, it is close reading. I try and make close reading—for me the foundational practice for any scholar of literature—the heart and soul of any teaching I do at the 100 or 200-level. Close reading asks us as readers to be attentive right down from the level of the word to the broader location of a passage in a text. Each time that I teach students the basics of close reading, I recall that this was the first thing I was taught as a college freshman. Interestingly, the person who taught me the basics of close reading was a historian (and he remains one of the reasons that I am unable to ever see literature as distinct from history). “What is the text telling you about a people? What is the author trying to tell us about himself and his moment?” were his guiding questions for freshmen reading Homer and Ovid. All this had to be gleaned from a passage of no more than a 100 or so lines, but it was, and still is, for me, an exhilarating exercise. But if that is the one *skill* I want students to leave with, the other critical element remains non-national thinking. I never teach a course in a single language or to do with a single moment or people. My Jane Austen course is actually a longer study of the novel and domestic politics from 19th century England into present-day Pakistan. The readings and materials are always in English and Urdu. Likewise, the Western Canon courses are invested in two questions: what is Europe and how to read these works when we move them outside of the Euro-American academy and into the fragmented, godless present that we ourselves exist in? I want students to question the totalising and insular concepts of a single “tradition” or a literature in a single language.

**In a recent email, the Gurmani Centre revamped the SALT minor. Could you shed**

### some light on the thought process behind it?

Well, the Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies (CLCS) minor is a more cutting-edge and focused redesign of the South Asian Literary Traditions (SALT) minor. SALT had a national, single-tradition teleology implicit in its courses. CLCS asks for Urdu to be seen alongside Persian, Punjabi, or Sindhi, and also for the literary to be imagined as one of several aesthetic practices including film and music. All of these elements ought to be considered within the historical contexts of empire and modernity. Likewise, we wanted to create a curriculum that allows students with diverse interests—whether visual, creative, or critical—to be able to really pursue these interests, while at the same time also having a sense of the field. For the latter, we will be piloting our 100-level core which is team-taught by the entire faculty, and covers works as diverse as Homer’s *Odyssey* to Maji Majidi’s Iranian films. As for the other cores, students have a choice of whether to pursue fiction-writing, translation, or research methods in film or comparative literature. But I am super excited for Dr. Moeen Nizami’s course on *Qavvali* (cross-listed with Religious Studies) and Dr. Fatima Fayyaz’s course on the *Shahnameh* this fall.

### Finally, what should we expect from you in the future? Any new courses, book projects, or events on the horizon?

I think (and hope), a number of things. I am beginning work on a new book manuscript. Beginnings are painfully slow, but I think I am gaining some traction. Right now, the project is envisioned as a contemplation on teaching canonical works of the Western Canon in 21st century Pakistan. Parts of it frighten me because of the sheer grandeur of these works, and my own personal attachments to them, but I am also excited because it is an engagement with the very foundations of a Euro-American comparative literature. I will be teaching a couple of new courses this year for the CLCS minor—one on the cultural legacies of empire and the other on methods in comparative literature. I also want to organise a small workshop on present-day fascisms in the Spring.

# Faculty Interview

## Dr. Khalid Mir



Let us start with your book that came out just a few months ago—*Ethics and Economic Theory* (Routledge, 2019). What made you write it and what is it about?

The book challenges the core assumptions of the field of economics, especially the assumption that economic agents are rational, self-interested individuals. There is a growing body of literature in economics and beyond that focuses on the criticism of mainstream economics. I've tried to add to that critique by saying that many of our contemporary problems, from climate change and the decline of the public sector to the crisis of democracy and the neoliberal university, stem from a 'relational' crisis. That is, the inability of market economies and economic theory to 'picture' humans as essentially creatures that understand themselves in relation to time, place, and to other beings.

I have been teaching a course on Philosophy and Economics for many years now. I have investigated the "and" between the two fields and the range of possible relationships that it implies between the two subjects. In some ways, pretentious though it may sound, my monograph arises out of that simple word.

The very first sentence of the book states: "There is nothing new in this book." Why did you open the book with this statement?

The line is borrowed from Robert Spaemann—so nothing new there! The reason for starting the book with that sentence was that I wanted to question the idea that research has to be "original", as is typically claimed by the research university. Iris Murdoch once wrote that part of a serious education involves going back to the roots of a discipline. So, why can't memory be inventive and creative? Instead of a headlong rush into incremental additions to a body of knowledge perhaps we sometimes need to move backwards in order to move forwards. And that going back to the fundamental and often hidden assumptions of a discipline becomes crucial when the system that rests on them shows signs of collapse.

Also, though, there actually *is* nothing new in the book.

You are someone who takes language and its nuances seriously. How do language and jargon affect the way we think about the rational being in economics?

One of the core assumptions of economics that I question in the book is the idea of a rational being. Rationality, as understood by economics, is just one way of describing the way in which human beings act or think about how to act. But it's not a very good description. The language, let us say, is too 'mechanical'. We often think with, for, and about other people. The isolated rational thinker of economic theory turns out to be more like a robot than a human being! William Blake wrote, "He who sees only *ratio* sees only himself". I think that's about right. There is no timeless, abstract, or perfect understanding of who we are and how we choose. Instead, we are embodied beings who learn how to think clearly over time, with the help of other people. All of that means that we shouldn't tie our idea of reason too closely to the language of mathematics.

This takes us back to 'relationality'. How would economics change if we said human beings are fundamentally social and

co-operative beings who only sometimes act out of narrow self-interest? Our better selves also love, sacrifice and play; build, sing and write. And we do all these things with other people. From a religious perspective, could there even be an 'I' without a 'Thou'?

So, I'm really questioning whether we should think of reason as a mechanical decision procedure and of economic agents as acting out of *individual* rationality.

Are you done with Philosophy and Economics? Or do you plan to work on it and write on it in the future as well? Also, what is your next project?

My next project will probably be something along the lines of Religion and Economics. How does religion give us a new (old?) way to think about persons (rather than the isolated and amoral individual of economic theory)? Religion (and perhaps poetry as well) gives us a different vocabulary to talk about human beings and their relationships amongst each other and with other non-human beings. That very old idea of personhood is bound to change the way we see economics as it provides an ethical paradigm which mainstream economic theory has typically avoided.

And while I am not quite done with Philosophy and Economics, it might have done with me after the book came out! But you're never really 'done' with anything in academia. I'm not sure if that inability to conclude is necessarily always a good thing.

Finally, what are you reading these days?

I have been reading a lot of, and around, Robert Spaemann recently. Also, Rowan Williams is one of my favourite thinkers. His small, gem of a book, *Being Human*, is proving to be insightful. Eugene Vodolazkin's novel, *Laurus*, take us back to an older way of thinking. And I've just finished Olav Hauge's wonderful collection of gentle, quiet, and wise poems.



## Out in the Open

### Learning from Peasants About the Politics of Seeds

Dr. Kasim Ali Tirmizey

"Peasants are the world's unrecognised scientists. We do experiments and we select crops according to our needs", Chaudhry Muhammad Aslam, a smallholder kisan (peasant) in the outskirts of Sahiwal, tells a group of students from LUMS about their efforts to grow, store, exchange, and share traditional seeds in a world where corporations are increasingly controlling what seeds are sown and sold.

Aslam is making a powerful statement because it also presents a different sense of knowledge: learning happens in the field and peasants have knowledge that comes from experience, intergenerational teaching, and from political self-organising. Yet, these ways of knowing have often been neglected by the academia.

As part of the course that I teach, "Food, Land, and Politics", I organised a fieldtrip for students to a village just outside Sahiwal. The students were accompanied by the NGO Roots for Equity. Such fieldtrips are important because we need to recognise the existence of multiple ways of knowing and learning. For example, I get students to conduct intergenerational interviews with their parents and grandparents, to understand the social and historical processes that have led to changing relationships to food and land. My students were quite impressed by how knowledgeable these small-scale peasants are about the political, economic, and environmental consequences of transgenic and hybrid seeds.

Two recently passed laws—the Seed (Amendment) Act 2015 and the Plant Breeders' Rights Act 2016—have major implications for farmers in Pakistan. The small-scale peasants in Sahiwal tell my students that these laws, if fully implemented, make it a crime to share, exchange, and sell seeds if not done through a certified dealer. Yet, these practices have been the right of farmers since the domestication of plants, a history that takes us back to the Indus River Civilisation and places such as Harappa.



The peasants tell my students that these laws are an initiative to take the control over seeds away from farmers and into the hands of seed corporations. These laws give intellectual propriety rights to companies in producing transgenic seeds. The peasants of Sahiwal explained that transgenic seeds not only reduce biodiversity and can have unpredictable environmental and health consequences, it also forces peasants to increase their input costs by having to buy corporate seeds rather than using their saved traditional seeds.

Aslam shows a field where there a variety of seeds like *sarsoon* (mustard) are being dried. He explains their medicinal and nutritional qualities. Students took a handful of traditional wheat grain and contrasted it with a hybrid variety harvested from a field nearby.

This agro-ecological project of having a seed bank for traditional seeds is not the only way these farmers are trying to

recover their sovereignty over food, they are also organising politically through a peasant movement—the Pakistan Kissan Mazdoor Tehreek (PKMT). In addition to holding protests when these seed bills were being discussed in the parliament, they have also filed a petition in the Lahore High Court to highlight the ways in which these new laws violate the rights of farmers and will lead to a loss in biodiversity.

Back in the classroom, I asked my students about interesting ideas that they learnt from the trip. One student mentioned how he was struck by something a kisan said: that these laws were made without any participation of small-scale peasants and that if the voices and the labour of the kisan would be valued, the laws and practices of this land would be very different. For many of my students, they have developed a growing sense of realisation that these small-scale peasants have profound knowledge about their land and labour, as well as about the political dimensions of these.

# Feature

## Pakistan@100: Future of Policing

Muhammad Abubakar Umer

"Do you have faith in the police? Or do you see it as a coercive arm of the state? How many of you will raise the hand and say that you don't trust the police?" These were some of the questions asked by one of the panelists and former Inspector General Police Balochistan (IGP) Tariq Khosa at the panel discussion on The Future of Policing in Pakistan. Except for his wife and a few others in the audience, everyone raised their hands to reflect the

The discussion was moderated by Dr. Ali Hasanain, Assistant Professor of Economics at LUMS and a moving spirit behind Pakistan@100.

"How do we want to see Pakistan in 2047", asked Tariq Khosa while setting the agenda for the discussion. Out of the seven broad categories that are to be addressed as part of Pakistan@100, governance is one of them. Governance

Tariq Khosa also mentioned that currently the complaints received by the general public at the offices of IGPs were mainly about non-registration of First Information Reports (FIRs), faulty investigation, bribery, illegal detentions, registration of false cases, and arresting innocent people.

As a method of course correction, Tariq Khosa proposed a six-point national



pervasive distrust between the people and the police.

This policy talk was organised under the joint project of LUMS and the World Bank titled Pakistan@100. Among the other panelists were former IGP Punjab Shaukat Javid, DIG Police of IT in Punjab Zulfiqar Hameed, and Associate Professor of Economics at LUMS Dr. Ali Cheema.

means rule of law which depends mainly on the future of policing in Pakistan.

According to Tariq Khosa, currently police is a broken force and he laid out five strategic parameters for the kind of police he envisions for Pakistan in 2047: (1) depoliticisation; (2) accountability; (3) administrative and operational autonomy; (4) professionalism and specialisation; (5) a sense of service, not a coercive arm of the state.

agenda. First, Police must respond immediately and with care when citizens call in distress. Second, free registration of cases must be given the highest priority and citizens' complaints should be recorded whether received telephonically or personally. Also, serious action should be taken against false accusations or illegal arrests.



Third, instead of relying on ocular testimony or resorting to fake witnesses, investigations should primarily be based on circumstantial evidence corroborated by scientific methods of evidence collection. The only job of the police is to collect evidence and present it before a court of law. Police are not supposed to act as judges. Fourth, no illegal detentions, torture, false arrests, or fake encounters should take place. Police are not executioners.

Fifth, police corruption must be curbed with an iron hand. Sixth, police as an institution can only survive through public consent. With the temperate use of its considerable powers, it will be able to walk the hazardous tightrope of public opinion.

Tariq Khosa also claimed that governance and accountability have remained hollow slogans thus far, resulting in issues such as corruption, inefficiency, and high-handedness in police.

Former IGP Shaukat Javaid was asked about the roadblocks in achieving effective policing in Pakistan. To this, he responded by plainly stating that we have wasted the last 70 years by implementing dozens of police reform groups comprising people who had little to no knowledge



of the workings of the police to begin with. The first serious attempt was made in 1985 when a police reforms committee was formed wholly consisting of senior police officers and that committee report is still considered to be one of the best reports on police reforms. One of the recommendations of the report was that urban areas had different policing paradigm, as a result, a different mechanism should be adopted for such urban centers comprising population of half a million or more.

Before talking about the challenges in implementation of these reforms, Mr. Javaid gave brief historical background and the policing model of pre-Partition India.



The police system which was introduced in 1856 in the three presidency towns of India—Bombay, Calcutta, and Madraas— was based on the model of the London Metropolitan Police. A year later, mutiny took place in 1857 which forced the Crown to safeguard its interests by introducing another police model based on the Irish Constabulary Act, in the rest of India. The new act was passed and enacted as the Police Act 1861.



The two parallel systems were working in India at the time of Partition. Unfortunately, none of those presidency towns came to Pakistan and Pakistan was devoid of that experience which had gained strength in India.

Soon after our independence in 1947, the Constituent Assembly passed the Karachi Police Act. This act could not get the signature of the Governor General Muhammad Ali Jinnah as he was in Ziarat (severely ill), as a result, the law could not be enacted and we could not adopt the system which is now prevalent in 60 cities of India. Even Bangladesh has the same system in four of its cities. None of Pakistan's cities have this model of law enforcement and we are still blindly following the rural model of policing based on the Police Act 1861—this does not have the ability to cope with modern challenges of big urban centers.

After giving this historical context of policing, Shaukat Javaid goes on to point out that police was only given some importance in autocratic rules, whereas in democratic tenures politicians always used police as an instrument of coercion that suited their constituency politics. Urban policing was finally separated in the Police Order 2002 and some specialisation was introduced.

However, as soon as the Musharraf government ended, Balochistan and Sindh provinces reverted back to Police Act 1861.

Unfortunately, policing was never the priority area in Pakistan so hardly any attention was paid in its capacity building unlike civil armed forces or other wings of the security forces (like the army). Whenever a serious law and order situation arose, we would always call the civil armed forces. He ended his talk by appreciating the latest KP police model that gave police more autonomy and internal accountability mechanism. "I am optimistic about police reforms in Pakistan now as the beginning has been made from KP", concluded Shaukat Javaid.

"The reason why we couldn't implement 19th century London metropolitan police model to Pakistan is because the political institutions in 19th century England were led by the parliament and we have an executive heavy political institutional structure. So the police is partisan by definition because the executive has

much more authority and control within the structure", said Dr. Cheema when asked about framing the policing issue in Pakistan.

According to him, the police face three main challenges. One, partisanship—the more you strengthen the link between the executive and the police, the more partisan it becomes. Two, we think the criminal justice system problem as a problem of criminality, whereas it also has links with social changes such as increase the property crimes and contestation over land rights. Third, the absence of effective local government system.

Dr. Cheema concluded his talk by stating that we cannot do police reforms in isolation. We have to work simultaneously on reforms of property rights settlement as well as on the decentralisation of the state structure. When we talk about reforms, we should also keep in mind the financial constraints the state faces. In order to divert financial resources for the

reforms, you have to give up on certain things—as a result, the costing of reforms is an equally serious concern.

Carrying forward the discussion, DIG Police of IT Zulfiqar Hameed mentioned that with the help of technology we can reduce our costs, for example by doing smart patrolling or by keeping a check on critical spots through strategically installed safe city cameras. Hameed, being Regional Police Officer, was the key officer of the team that solved the Zainab rape-murder case. He talked about how technology was used in order to apprehend the culprit and the role of the state-of-the-art Punjab Forensic Science Agency in collecting samples and matching DNAs. "Our findings against the culprits were scientific in nature and not merely based on witnesses", said Hameed. In conclusion, he said that while technology can improve certain aspects of policing, the question of its complete overhaul would demand a lot more than just the use of information technology.





# Student Contributions

## Korea Calls

Laiba Paracha

College is a time for us to evolve as people, to shake off the remnants of childishness that cling after the A-levels and take some steps into the vast expanse of adulthood, shaky though they may be. Living alone, making a bank account, managing your finances, navigating public spaces, a whole list of other quasi-mature actions must be performed in due time for graduation, practice, for when we really do have to grow up and fend for ourselves.

Living in Lahore and commuting via Careem to and from LUMS felt like university was just an extension of school. With the dorms at full capacity, living on campus wasn't an option either.

I am fully aware of the benefits and comforts of having a home and family close by; however, that also extends the portion of your life where you exist as someone held back, sheltered despite wanting to branch out. Safe, but unaware.

I wanted to live alone, to get lost so I could learn how to read maps better, to make

mistakes so I could do better; to force myself out of my comfort zone and expand it at the same time. Korea provided all this for me, and then some.

I would be doing Seoul National University a disservice by not mentioning their Buddy programme. Every four exchange students are assigned a Korean Buddy, a full time SNU student who acts as a guide and a friend. The Buddy programme divides the exchange students into groups of 32 and then lets the buddies plan activities for every week of the semester. Every single week. Picnics, biweekly group lunches, carnivals, music festivals, ice-skating, meditative temple retreats, an international food festival, and multiple overnight trips are a small part of the itinerary. The numerous activities and the effect of globalisation (millennial and Gen Z culture merge into one) ensure that some friendships pop up spontaneously, others are built over time, but they have a strong foundation of shared values that transcend race, ethnicity, religion, and gender.



SNU students have a reputation to uphold, as do the professors, who don't go easy on exchange students. As a liberal arts student, though, I was well-prepared for the reading workload and had an easier time adjusting to the weekly writing requirements for some of the courses. What I truly was not prepared for was the amount of running I would be doing to get from one building to the next in time, as the SNU campus is its own mini city—over 30 cafes and restaurants, banks, a farmer's market, a cinema, numerous convenience stores, salons, gift shops, and a thrift store, among other things, carved into a mountain range. Every day was and still is an uphill battle, quite literally because getting to some of the classes is a hike and a half from the dormitories. Regardless, with the arrival of spring the campus has bloomed, with trees taking on hues of pink and yellow and green and red, streams flowing with clear water next to sidewalks, and a blessed multitude of cats for company on these aforementioned hikes.



With the campus providing for and catering to every need a student could have, one could expect a comfortable four months just spent living as a hermit in the dorms. However, as one must also explore the rest of the country one has travelled to, the dorms must be left and Seoul must be seen and heard and known. It's really the least one can do for a city that is so vibrant, so bustling, and so open and friendly and easy to get along with.

So far, traveling outside Seoul with SNU Buddy and friends has yielded numerous memories to cherish, and performed the added function of attaching to Seoul and the SNU campus in particular a comforting sense of familiarity. Busan, the port city, was mellow and laid back. Gwangju was brief but unforgettable. Yeongwol mad fun but a blur in every sense of the word.

All these experiences were proof that I made the right decision by trying for an exchange programme. Every mistake was only a confirmation of all that I needed to learn. When with friends, I thought of how lucky I was to have met them, how much we all have in common despite being from

completely different countries, with different cultures and traditions and quirks. When alone, I thought about how much more there is to the world than our limited experiences and understanding of it, and how vague and ambiguous the term "foreign" becomes when there exist common passions and fears that transcend geographic bounds.

I am getting better at reading maps, and budgeting, and being comfortable with my own "foreignness" in this country. It has given me so much to be grateful for, and I hope the rest of my exchange has more to teach me.





## A Debate on Military Courts

Marha Fathma



Debates and Recitation at LUMS (DRUMS) organised its last Quarterly Debate of the year on April 24. The motion under review was "This House Supports the Extension of Military Courts". Director Projects, Talha Wani, moderated the debate. The motion was rather controversial but both sides put up a fierce and engaging debate.

Quite fitting to the motion, General (R) General Ghulam Mustafa started off the debate with insights of his own from his years of service in the army.

He was then followed by the crowd favourite activist and politician Jibran Nasir who was welcomed with roaring applause. He injected his customary pathos into his speech and his words engulfed the packed auditorium. His sarcastic remarks were celebrated with even more applause.

Following him was not an easy task but resident DRUMS debater Momina Khurshid took on the challenge and certainly delivered with her compelling arguments.

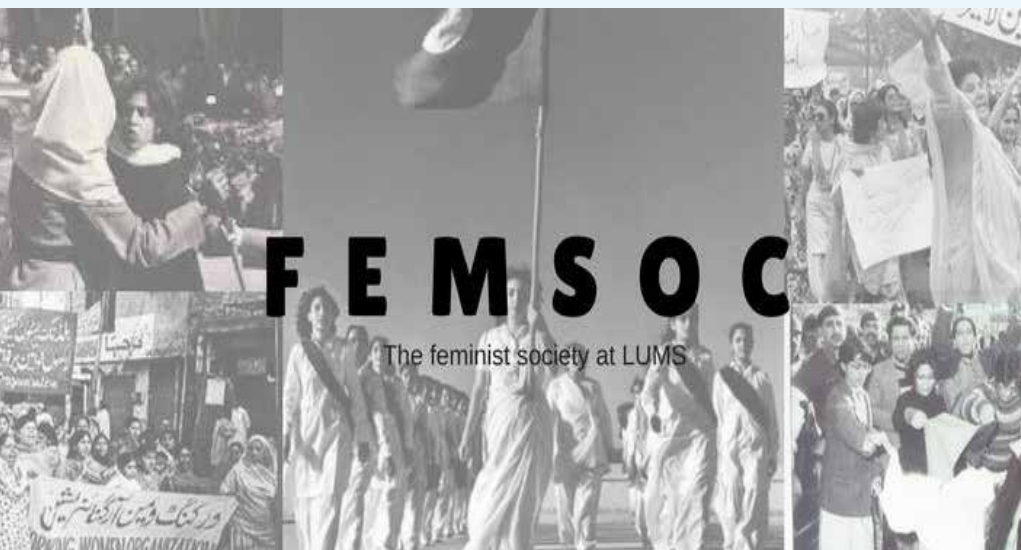
Following her was Taha Iqbal, a junior at LUMS who has been a Quarterfinalist as well as an Octofinalist at the United Asian Debates Tournament. He gave a very fiery speech and his sarcastic remarks were most definitely a crowd winner. Renowned members of the debating circuit and now practicing lawyers, Hammad Saeed and Ali Javed, both affirmed team government's position with speeches backed by facts and well-constructed arguments.

However, Oxford Union member Mehrunissa Sajjad and Assistant Professor at Forman Christian College Dr. Ammar Ali Jan were not going to back down without a fight. They used humor (a recurring theme by this point) to sway the audience while also building upon and refuting the arguments by previous speakers. People took a keen interest in the topic and the number of hands up during the question and answer session certainly reflected that.

After a fantastic and engaging debate, with the outcome of a public vote granting 103 votes to the proposition and 184 votes to the opposition, team opposition took the victory home.



# FemSoc— Feminism, Society, and Freedom of Speech



**Nawal Zahra** is a Sociology/Anthropology senior at MGSHS who has been at the forefront on representing the female voice at LUMS through her position as President of the coveted FemSoc. After her retirement from the post, **Anam Fatima Khan** sat down with her to have a conversation on gender politics at LUMS and in Pakistan. They spoke about freedom of speech, what the term implies, and the qualifications that accompany it. Nawal reflects on the larger problem of power dynamics associated with gender and how they play out on a campus like that of LUMS.

**What are your views on what has been happening in terms of a conversation surrounding gender?**

A lot. After four years of working with FemSoc, all these issues do not come as a surprise to me. Starting with a recent problem that was brought to light involving a certain Facebook group, I feel that it was not an isolated incident but part of a larger problem that starts as soon as you enter the campus for the Orientation week.

It was an extreme manifestation of sentiments that were heard across campus, sentiments that are ever-present in guys-only Whatsapp groups and generally most conversations that involve women. The unsettling part was that in a group of 600 people, only 2 or 3 people thought it was important to speak up against the vile memes that were posted about women. This is the kind of attitude that we are tackling and that brings me to another issue—the misrepresentation of our society. There is a general sense around the campus that we are a bunch of bra-burning women, consequently labeled as extremists. The same language is not used for men who have misogynist tendencies and many a time they get away with it by using the freedom of speech argument.

**How would you respond to the freedom of speech argument that has been posited by many during the past few months?**

It is not very hard to admit that women should have basic rights—they should be allowed to work—but it is important to note that there is a certain threshold to

that narrative as well. We often find that on campus, men and women ascribe to certain notions of 'woke-ness' until it starts threatening their privilege. This inconvenience brings about debate that surrounds freedom of speech and this was particularly noticed in the response to banning Daku Day. However, that brings us to a bigger question of how to ensure our freedom to speak without infringing upon the right of others? That brings me to an incident that took place where the feminist society was subject to slurs as part of a comedy skit and someone very rightly pointed out that humour should punch upward as opposed to punching downward. The use of humour as a tool for certain gender-biased narrative was at work also in the Facebook group. At the end of the day, jokes are always directed to those who are weak or lacking in privilege in one way or another and that is the problem here. It is these little snide remarks that many a time eventually lead to violence. Recently, with the events in Srilanka, Facebook was banned for a while due to certain events that sparked Islamophobia and the online platform does not remove everything that violates its community standards.







**How has the response been after you submitted the recommendations?**

This has been a very busy week and we are yet to draft a formal letter of recommendations. Some of our accounts were hacked in response to our actions against the online community. Since then we have received stabbing videos and pictures of headless women amongst other threats. Despite everything, our suggestions to the OSA are not based on retributive justice. We demand an action against this kind of behaviour so that it acts as precedence in preventing future mishaps.

In terms of the recommendations, we suggested that a mandatory session on sexual harassment be in place, because it is a legal requirement according to the Workplace Act. Additionally, it needs to be conducted by a professional who can talk about it in detail because currently there is a lot of misinformation about the subject. The session should take place once every semester and missing it should lead to some kind of serious administrative impediment. Also, we feel that it is important to have formal gender sensitivity training through coursework. This is a very nascent idea but we are working with the OSA to give it some form.

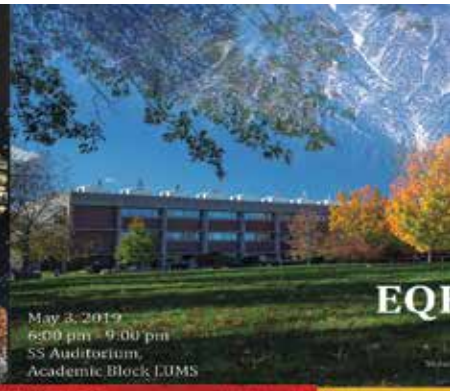
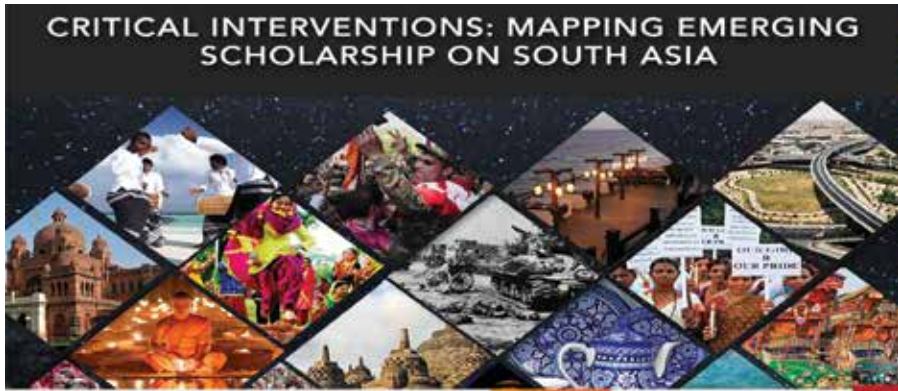
Finally, we had an informal circle where women spoke up against incidences of harassment and that was a big step in moving this conversation forward. People assume that LUMS is a place where there is relatively more freedom; therefore, they do not acknowledge that there is misogyny here. This circle demonstrated that this community, like others, has women who have faced trauma through childhood sexual abuse, rape, or harassment of other kinds and that there needs to be a platform to address these issues and this conversation needs to keep going. The worst kind of misogyny wraps itself in a guise of jargon and complex ideas like freedom of speech. We need to keep talking about how all opinions are not the same in a community where one is trying to protect their right to exist while the other is violating that right.

**What does the future hold for you?**

That is always a tough question but I know for sure that I want to keep working in this area. This year, I got to know so many wonderful groups outside of LUMS who have been working to advance the cause of equality. Most of them are from public universities— they arrange street theatre and other activities. I would like to remain active on this front.

There is a link between that and what happened at LUMS—we felt like the presence of online groups that perpetuate such harmful conversations like the beating up of women eventually lead to actual instances of violence. Therefore, after the recent protests against the Facebook group, we gave certain recommendations to the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). We emphasised that a sexual harassment clause be added to society constitutions because we want a systemic, institutional effort to be made.





Mushtaq Ahmad Qureshi  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
The Department of Economics  
Broom Wing Sector

### Judiciary's Achilles Heel: Executive Control via Appointment Power

A talk by  
**Sultan Mehmood**  
Doctoral Candidate  
Paris School of Economics

Friday, February 1, 2019  
3:00 PM  
A-11, Academic Block, LUMS

**PUNJAB'S NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A DIALOGUE**

Dr. Ali Cheema, Associate Professor of Economics, LUMS  
Dr. Usman Javed, Assistant Professor of Political Science, LUMS  
Dr. Sarwan Mehmood, Assistant Professor of Political Science, LUMS

With Honorable Guest: Secretary Local Government Punjab

JOIN US FOR A DISCUSSION ON  
**PUNJAB'S NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A DIALOGUE**  
AT A-4 AUDITORIUM, LUMS,  
FRIDAY, MAY 3 2019, 4:30 - 6:30 PM

LUMS | Center for Language and Literature

## REBEL ANGEL

### Asim Butt

In Memory of the Life & Art of

Edited by TARIQ S. BIZRAH

Mushtaq Ahmad Qureshi  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

LUMS | Faculty of Education

A talk by  
**Dr. Saira Rizvi**

### Book Talk: Women, Healthcare and Violence

Tuesday, February 19, 2019  
A-8, Academic Block, LUMS  
3:00 PM

**Yeh Freedom Life**

(Film Screening)  
Director: Priya Sen

5:30 pm, March 15, 2019  
Faculty Lounge, VC Office, LUMS

LUMS | Faculty of Education

**22-24 February, 2019**

**PAKISTAN@100**  
SHAPING THE FUTURE  
2047

LUMS | Faculty of Education

31st JANUARY 2019  
ACADEMIC BLOCK  
105 & 113  
9:30 - 10:30 PM

## راگ و شام

Sham Aaymen  
Aik Tafaruf

**Can Feminism Be Gender, Space and Mobility in Lyari, Karachi?**

A talk by  
**Dr. Nida Kirmani**  
Associate Professor of Sociology, Mushtaq Ahmad Qureshi School of Humanities and Social Sciences, LUMS



**Eqbal Ahmad His Life and Legacy**  
**BAL KA KHAWAB**  
 Edited by **Mohammed Hanif**

**Eqbal Ahmad**  
**His Life and Legacy**

Guest Speaker  
**Mohammed Hanif**  
 (Author of *Unsettling Settlers*, *Unsettling Settlers*, *Unsettling Settlers*, *Unsettling Settlers*, *Unsettling Settlers*)

"It was that rare thing, an intellectual unimpaired by power or authority, a sophisticated man who remained deeply true to his ideals and his insight still his last breath"  
 Edward W. Said

May 2, 2019  
 Forman Christian College

May 3, 2019  
 Faculty Lounge, VC Office, LUMS

**Political Kinship**  
 The Role of Politics in a Democracy

**BANDUNG HUMANISMS**

Public Lectures

**The Late Style of Bandung Humanism**  
 Aamir R. Mufti  
 (Professor of Comparative Literature, University of California, Los Angeles)

**The Legacy of Decolonial Humanism**  
 Sathya Gangopatri  
 (Professor of Comparative Literature and Classics, Columbia University)

Monday, February 11, 2019  
 6:00 pm  
 SS Auditorium, Academic Block, LUMS

**پنجاب: تواریخ آتے ثقافت**  
**دو جی سالانہ کانفرنس**

**عقوبت پر گرام**  
 نسرانج تحسین  
 فہمیدہ ریاض  
 (۲۰۱۸-۱۹۳۶)

April 13, 2019  
 SS Auditorium  
 11:00am - 4:00pm

**کھوکھا ناٹک**  
 آن رنگ ہے

**Venue**  
 Day 1- 505B 105  
 Day 2- 505B 105 & 303  
 Day 3- 505B 105 & 303

**پاکستانی ادب؟**  
 ایک سوال - تاریخ اور مباحث

**عزیز ابن الحسن**  
 PAKISTANI LITERATURE? a question, history & debates

۵ جے

**CHALLENGING BINARIES:**  
 New Directions in Gender Studies in Pakistan

Student Colloquium 2019  
 April 26 - 27, 2019

Presented by  
 Ms. Bushra Chohan  
 Director, Institute of Women Studies  
 Assembly and Human Rights Action

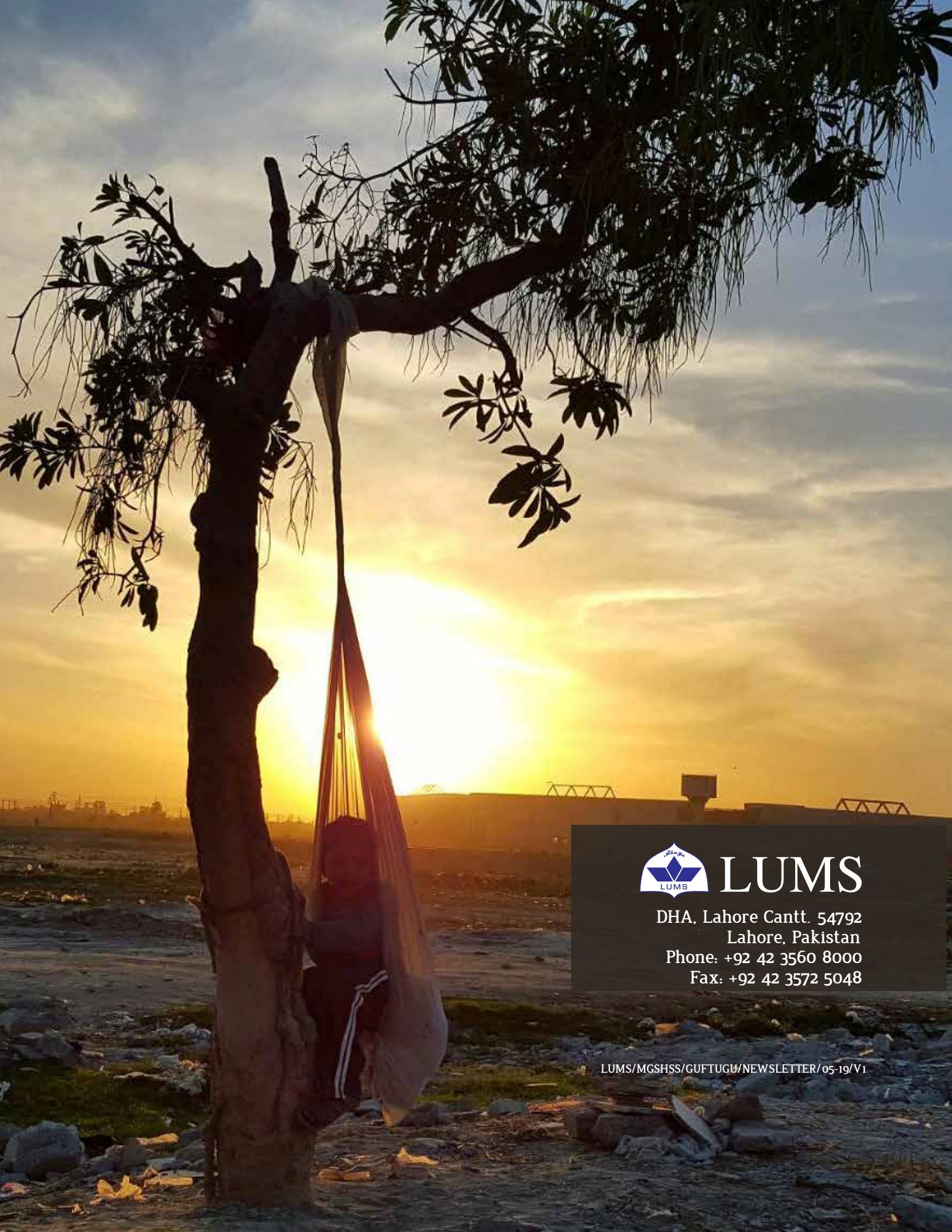
April 26, 2019  
 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm  
 Auditorium A-11 and A-15  
 Academic Block, LUMS

April 27, 2019  
 9:30 am - 3:30 pm  
 Auditorium A-6 and A-7  
 Academic Block, LUMS

**Fun? Karachi**

April 23, 2019  
 8:00 pm  
 Faculty Lounge, VC Office





**LUMS**

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Lahore, Pakistan

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