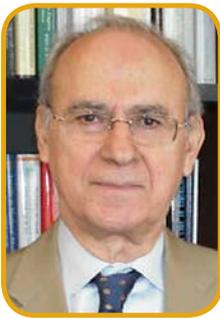


IIS Alumni Newsletter 2015

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTOR



Dear IIS Alumni,

These are exciting times for the IIS. All our students have now moved into the AKDN's purpose-built student accommodation in the King's Cross area of London. The students' feedback is overwhelmingly positive — they are all delighted. With this move, we hope that the learning experience at the IIS will be enhanced even further.

This year we organised our first-ever PhD seminar at the IIS. It brought together twelve recipients of the IIS' Doctoral Scholarship who are currently pursuing their studies. All heads of department and units mingled with the students and shared with them the main objectives of the various programmes and activities of the IIS. The participants' presentations covered subjects related to a wide geographical spectrum — from Syria to Tajikistan, from Iran to the Subcontinent. It is also interesting to note that the subjects covered at the seminar reflected the diversity of research interests of the IIS: history, education, manuscript studies, philosophy and theology, ethics, literature, anthropology and sociology of religion, aural traditions and material culture.

Another important IIS project that will be of interest to the alumni is the Ismaili Heritage Programme. After some years of preliminary research, the IIS has entered into a collaborative relationship with AKTC and DJI to map and

document (and ultimately, whenever appropriate, make provisions for selective restoration) of all sites related to the history of the Ismailis and the Imamats across the globe. This is a wonderful opportunity for the alumni to get involved and contribute to these research efforts.

As you may know, the family of the late Professor Mohammed Arkoun donated his personal archive to our Library. Now, with the help of a professional archivist, we are cataloguing this important collection that documents the intellectual trajectory of this eminent Muslim scholar. All alumni are invited to donate to this archive materials that they may have related to Professor Arkoun (photographs, papers, recordings, and so on). It is hoped that the final catalogue will be made available to researchers through our website.

On a related note, we have also initiated a Manuscript Analysis Project that aims not only to complete the cataloguing of all our manuscript holdings but also to assess the contents of our collections and their significance. Alumni are welcome to participate in this analysis project, as we are inviting scholars to explore our collections and give us detailed feedback on their findings on individual manuscripts.

Finally, a reminder that the IIS' mission, whether it be its academic and research outlook, its educational endeavours or its commitments to the Ismaili community, is a work that is carried out both in London and by all of you, in your own institutions and countries as well as in your various fields of endeavour. As the work of the IIS expands, we will need you — our alumni — more and more.

Dr Farhad Daftary

In 2015, alumni had the opportunity to explore three cities: Athens, Konya and Toronto.

- Athens: Generally considered to be the birthplace of western civilization, Athenian philosophy, architecture, literature and political ideals are bequests to the world.
- Konya: As the capital of the Seljuk sultanate in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Konya reached the pinnacle of its prosperity and was considered one of the brilliant cities of the world.
- Toronto: Since the second half of the twentieth century, Toronto has grown phenomenally, from a sedate provincial town to the most populous metropolitan city in Canada, and the country's financial and commercial centre.

In these cities, they explored the collections of Islamic art housed in three museums:

- The Benaki Museum's collection of Islamic art, comprising over 8,000 artworks, ranks among the most important in the world.
- The Tekke of Rumi, comprising a number of buildings and the mystic's mausoleum has, since 1917, been used as a museum.
- The Aga Khan Museum is the first museum in North America devoted entirely to showcasing Islamic art.

The museums and their collections not only represent the cultural patrimony and artistic heritage of Muslim civilisations, but also exemplify knowledge and enlightenment, signifying connections across time and linking us to the past.



I am happy to report that 98% of alumni responded to the annual survey and would like to say a big thank you to all of them! Among the interesting outcomes of this survey is that we have an expansive set of linguistic abilities — with speaking and writing skills in nearly twenty-five languages. As well, more than 60 alumni have expressed an interest and willingness to undertake professional projects in their country of origin. It is our hope that in 2016 there will be more opportunities for alumni to contribute to IIS projects, some of which are highlighted in Dr Daftary's message. As always, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new alumni and wish them the very best as they begin their careers. Congratulations!

Shellina Karmali, Alumni Relations Coordinator

ASIAN CHAPTER GROUP



Alumni from across Asia met in Konya, Turkey, for their annual meeting on 28–30 March. The meeting brought together 32 alumni to explore “Esoteric Traditions in Islam: Past and Present Manifestations”. Speakers included Dr Toby Mayer, Dr Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, Dr Leonard Lewisohn and Mr Shiraz Kabani. Alumni took the opportunity to visit the shrines of Shams Tabriz and Jalaluddin Rumi, in addition to other important sites.

EUROPEAN CHAPTER GROUP



Alumni from across Europe met in Athens, Greece, for their annual meeting on 19–21 May. The meeting brought together 37 alumni to explore “The Translation Movement between Greek and Arabic Philosophy”. Speakers included Professor Syed Nomanul Haq (Professor of Humanities, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi), Professor Peter Adamson (Professor of Late ancient and Arabic Philosophy, Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich), Ms Mina Moraitou (Curator, Benaki Museum of Islamic Arts, Athens), Dr Laila Halani (Head, Department of Graduate Studies, IIS) and Mr Shiraz Kabani (Head, Department of Community Relations, IIS). Dr Aziz Esmail, Governor, IIS, delivered a Keynote Address. Alumni had an opportunity to have a walking tour of Islamic Sites in Athens and to visit the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art.

NORTH AMERICAN CHAPTER GROUP



Alumni from across North America met in Toronto, Canada, for their annual meeting on 19–21 June. The meeting brought together 55 alumni to explore “Celebrating Pluralism and Cultural Diversity: Art, Architecture and Music in the Muslim World”. Speakers at the conference included Professor Jonathan Bloom and Professor Sheila Blair from the Boston College of Arts and Sciences, Professor James Wescoat from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Professor Regula Qureshi and Dr Karim Gillani from the University of Alberta, and Dr Henry Kim, Ms Ghazaleh Rabieci and Mr Amirali Alibhai from the Aga Khan Museum. Alumni showcases featured Mr Alnoor Kassam (Class of 1991), Professor Karim H Karim (Class of 1984), Dr Zulfikar Hirji (Class of 1997) and Ms Sehr Tejpar (Class of 2012). Mr Shiraz Kabani (Head of Community Relations, IIS) gave his presentation via video link. Alumni had an opportunity to visit the Aga Khan Museum and tour both the Aga Khan Park and the Ismaili Centre.



Alumni Association Central Executive Committee attendees



Alumni Lecture Series: Dr A Iloliev in conversation with Dr Y Baiza



ECG meeting: Alumni engaged in a team building activity



ACG meeting: Alumni in conversation at the Shams Tabriz Mausoleum



NACG: Alumni actively listening to various speakers

The first PhD Seminar for the IIS Doctoral Scholarship recipients was held at The Institute of Ismaili Studies on 23-24 October (<http://iis.ac.uk/news/phdseminar2015>). The event was hosted by the Department of Academic Research and Publications in collaboration with the Alumni Relations Unit. The seminar provided a platform for the participants to network, share knowledge and information, and learn more about the work of the IIS and how they can further contribute to its work.

Ten current scholarship recipients, who are at various stages of their doctoral studies, and two past recipients who have completed their PhDs gave their colleagues an overview of their individual research areas. Subjects covered by the presenters included alternate views of ethics in Islam, *hadith* literature, study on the recent history of Salamiyya, places of worship, and artistic and musical expressions.

Dr Omar Ali-de-Unzaga (GPISH 1997), Deputy Head of the Department of Academic Research and Publications and Coordinator of the Scholarships and Fellowship Programmes, commented:

“Bringing our PhD scholarship recipients together has highlighted the wide range of topics covered in their research. This includes history, manuscript studies, anthropology, ethnomusicology, and

literature. The geographical spectrum reflects the breadth of interest of the IIS, from Syria to Central Asia, from Iran to the Sub-Continent.”

Many of the scholarship recipients developed their interest in Islamic Studies at the IIS, whilst undertaking the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities, before specialising in a specific aspect of Islamic Studies.

Mr Shiraz Kabani, Head of the Department of Community Relations, added that this initiative provided the alumni an opportunity to be part of the intellectual milieu at the IIS and for people at the IIS to get a better appreciation of the research competencies and interests of its doctoral scholarship recipients. It is envisioned that this event will be the first of many opportunities for scholarship recipients to showcase their research.

The Institute of Ismaili Studies Doctoral Scholarship Programme was established in 1997 and has since granted forty-two scholarships. Twenty-seven of these recipients have completed their PhDs and have established careers in academia, not-for-profit and media sectors, to name a few. Some scholarship recipients have continued their academic career with the IIS and are playing integral roles in furthering the research agenda of the Institute.





CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS AND THEIR PHD TOPICS

Zulfiqar Khimani, University of Cambridge

Dissertation topic: *Transnational Religious Belonging: The Case of Nizari Ismaili Muslims*

Aslisho Qurboniev, University of Cambridge

Dissertation topic: *The Organisation of Learning and Knowledge Transmission in Egypt and Ifriqiyya under the Fāṭimids: Institutions, Patronage, Networks and Practices*

Rahim Gholami, University of Exeter

Dissertation topic: *Ismaili Neoplatonism in two Fatimid texts: A comparative study of al-Sijistānī's al-Yanābī' and Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Khwān al-ikhwān with an annotated English translation of Khwān al-ikhwān.*

Karim Javan, SOAS, University of London

Dissertation topic: *Qiyāma in Ismaili Histories*

Zarangez Karimova, University of Exeter

Dissertation topic: *The Structure and Content Analysis of Three Shi'i Hadīth Works: Kitāb al-ġāmi' al-Wāfi, Wasā'il al-shī'a ilā aḥādīth al-sharī'a and Biḥār al-anwār*

Rafiq Ajani, University of Exeter

Dissertation topic: *Alternate View of Ethics in Islam: A History of the Development of the Concept of "Rindī" from the 11th Century to the 14th Century in Persian Literature and its Significance on Ethics in Islam*

Ula Zeir, University of Edinburgh

Dissertation topic: *Salamiyya: A City of the Ismailis in Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Ottoman Syria (1839–1918)*

Sorbon Mavlonazarov, Durham University

Dissertation topic: *Changes and Continuity in Shrines Visitation in Badakhshan: A Case Study of Wakhan Valley*

Shaftolu Gulamadov, University of Toronto

Dissertation topic: *The Ethical Dimension of the Ismaili Tradition of Badakhshan*

Shumaila Hemani, University of Alberta

Dissertation topic: *Singing the Shah-jo-Raag in Pakistan and India*

Shiraz Hajiani, University of Chicago

Dissertation topic: *The Great Resurrection – Reconstructing Alamut*

Sabrina Datto, University of Chicago

Dissertation topic: *Fashioning Muslim Life: Yunani Medicine and Muslim Liberalism in Colonial India C. 1880–1930*

Wafi Momin, University of Chicago

Dissertation topic: *The Formation of Satpanth Ismaili Tradition in South Asia*

Jamil Kassam, University of Chicago

Dissertation topic: *The Nizaris during the Safavid Period*

Shamsiya Ashurmamadova, University of London

Dissertation topic: *Financing Education in Tajikistan: Tradition and Transition*

MATERIAL CULTURE’S ROLE IN DISPELLING THE ‘CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS’ THEORY

Aleem Karmali

Critiquing the ‘Clash of Civilisations’ Theory

Samuel Huntington’s well-known ‘Clash of Civilisations’ theory posits that there is a fundamental divide between what he called ‘Islamic’ civilisation and ‘Western’ civilisation, and that this divide is marked by insurmountable cultural differences. Summarising the interaction of these societies through the course of history and surmising about the future prospects, he said that, ‘Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years . . . This centuries-old military interaction between the West and Islam is unlikely to decline.’¹

Huntington’s argument details a history of conflict, ignoring the more dynamic, positive and creative interactions that have taken place over the centuries. The implication is that civilisations are like billiard balls, solid objects that simply bounce off one another when they interact. This perspective is founded upon a view of civilisations as being monolithic, without any internal diversity, and a belief that when two civilisations come into contact, it invariably results in violence. Many have critiqued Huntington, including Edward Said, who argued that civilisations are not ‘shut-down, sealed-off’ entities that have been purged of the myriad currents and countercurrents that animate human history, and that over centuries have made it possible for that history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest but also to be one of exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing.²



Material Culture as an Educational Tool

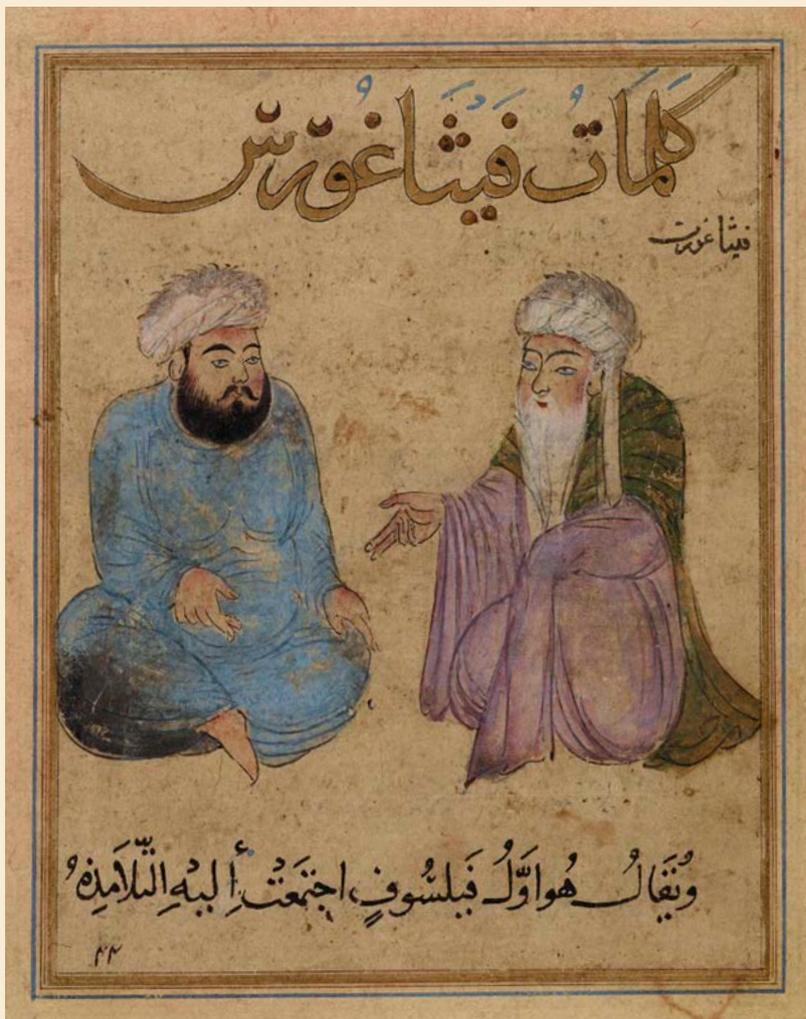
Material culture, such as art, artefacts and architecture, can help to counter such rigid views of civilisations. In their very substance, these objects contain evidence of the interactive nature of cultural interchange, including the borrowing of intellectual, technical and artistic approaches. Many museums’ mandates thus include using material culture to educate the public about other cultures and societies. For example, the aim of the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto is to contribute ‘to a better understanding of Islamic civilisations – and especially of the plurality within Islam and of Islam’s relationship to other traditions . . . [T]he Museum will help address what is not so much a clash of civilisations, as it is a clash of ignorances.’³

Exploring Three Museum Objects: An Illustration

To illustrate how objects of material culture, particularly historic artwork and artefacts from across the Muslim world, are able to challenge the ‘Clash of Civilisations’ thesis in a practical manner, it would be useful to examine three specific objects in the Aga Khan Museum’s collection.

The first object is the ‘Sayings of Pythagoras’, which is a folio from an Arabic manuscript from thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Iraq that contains sayings attributed to the Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras. The page has an illustration in which Pythagoras is depicted as a wise Arab *shaykh* speaking, possibly, with a disciple.⁴ Even with minimal description, this folio speaks volumes about the fact that Muslim scholars translated and studied the works of Greek thinkers, providing evidence that the intellectual sharing between civilisations is far from rigid, as Muslims borrowed freely from Greek thought, as well as from others.

The second object is a manuscript from Ibn Sina’s *Qanun [fi’l-Tibb]* (‘Canon [of Medicine]’).⁵ Originating from Iran or Iraq, it is one of the earliest-known surviving manuscripts of this encyclopaedic medical work, dating to 1052 CE. The *Qanun* is relevant to this discussion in that it brought together medical knowledge from the Muslim, Greco-Roman and Chinese traditions, and was later translated into Latin in the thirteenth century. It became the most influential medical encyclopaedia in Europe and was used as a teaching text in universities well into the eighteenth century. Ibn Sina, who died in 1037, came to be known in Latin as Avicenna. This one work bridged centuries of medical knowledge across multiple societies and cultures, highlighting the fluidity of the transfer of knowledge between them.



The third object is a planispheric astrolabe from fourteenth-century Spain, originating in the region historically known as al-Andalus.⁶ This bronze astronomical instrument may have been created in Toledo, which had been brought under Castilian rule during the Reconquista. What makes this object worth noting is that it bears inscriptions of constellations in both Arabic and Latin, as well as inscriptions that were later added in Hebrew, clearly showing that it was shared among diverse peoples who coexisted together on the Iberian Peninsula.

Conclusion

Taken together, these three pieces from the Aga Khan Museum’s collection illustrate the dynamic sharing of ideas and goods that has occurred for millennia between European, Asian and African societies. They dispel notions of Islam being incompatible with Western civilisation, as well as the common misconception that Muslims reject the use of the intellect. Instead, they demonstrate that the

intellectual and cultural boundaries between the Muslim and European civilisations were far more permeable than Huntington would suggest.

If a picture is indeed worth a thousand words, then material culture has a powerful educational potential to combat knowledge deficits, such as people’s relative ignorance of Islam and Muslim civilisations. Artwork, artefacts and architecture allow us insights into the complexity of cultural interchange, which is visible in their very substance, techniques and contents. They also reveal the internal diversity of societies whose material culture differed across time and geography. Such objects can succinctly demonstrate that the relationship between ‘Islam’ and the ‘West’ has been far more complex, fluid and peaceful than Huntington’s simplistic characterisation of ongoing conflict over the centuries.

NB: All websites accessed 13 October 2015.

¹Samuel P. Huntington, ‘The Clash of Civilizations?’ *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993. Available at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations>

²Edward Said, ‘The Clash of Ignorance’, *The Nation*, October 4, 2001. Available at <http://www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance/>

³‘Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, Toronto, the Aga Khan Museum and their Park’, Aga Khan Development Network, 28 May 2010. Available at <http://www.akdn.org/Content/993/Speech-by-the-Aga-Khan-at-the-Foundation-Ceremony-of-the-Ismaili-Centre-the-Aga-Khan-Museum-and-their-Park>

⁴‘Sayings of Pythagoras’, Aga Khan Museum. <https://www.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/sayings-pythagoras-akm283>

⁵‘Qanun [Fi’l-Tibb] (Canon [of Medicine]), Volume 5.’ Aga Khan Museum. <https://www.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/qanun-fi%E2%80%9991-tibb-canon-medicine-volume-5>

⁶‘Planispheric Astrolabe’, Aga Khan Museum. <https://www.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/planispheric-astrolabe>

THE STAGING OF THE 'REVOLT OF THE INTELLECT'

Farrukh Saidhasanshoev

The drama "Revolt of the Intellect" ("Isyon-i Khirad"), which is based on the life and journey of Hakim Nasir-i Khusraw, was developed and staged at the initiative of STEP teachers in cooperation with the actors of the Musical Comedy Theatre named after Mehruhbon Nazarov of Khorog city, Tajikistan. Eighteen students from grades 9–10 played all the roles and spent five months in preparation. The students were chosen from various schools in Khorog.

The script was developed in January 2015 by STEP teacher Farrukh Saidhasanshoev:

"I used to write poetry and articles in the past, but writing a drama was a new experience for me. To write the script for this drama, I had to read and reread all of Nasir-i Khusraw's works as well as works related to him and learn about how stage plays need to be written. Through this drama, we gave students an opportunity to test their abilities and improve their skills. In addition, we conveyed important messages and values to students and the audience. I believe they enjoyed the drama and learned quite important lessons from it."

The student actors were selected in February. In March 2015, Qimatsho Parpishoev, a stage director with the Musical Comedy Theatre of Khorog city, started working with the students together with other partners. As Qimatsho explains, this was a new beginning for the theatre and the students:

"It was for the first time after the dissolution of the Soviet Union that we have accomplished such a work together with school students. Even at that time, we did not have such big projects. During Soviet times, students of a particular school played roles only for five to six minutes. However, "Isyon-i Khirad" lasted for an hour which was in my view an awesome piece of work. I am pleased with the students. At their level, they could play the roles very well".

The stage play "Isyon-i Khirad" was performed from 24–28 May 2015 at the Musical Comedy Theatre. An audience of over 500 people, including parents, teachers and students of Khorog schools, packed the theatre to watch the drama. The students did an outstanding job during the performance. The play was dedicated to the 20th anniversary of His Highness the Aga Khan's first visit to Tajikistan.

Taking part in the drama enabled students to know more about the structure and successes of the Ismaili *da'wa* during Fatimid times. They became familiar with the efforts, devotion and commitment of the *da'is*, including Nasir-i Khusraw, and their role in propagating knowledge and the teachings of Ismaili Imams. Some of the main messages of the play were the importance of search in our lives, spiritual awakening and changes in thoughts and actions, the importance of gaining knowledge and the use of the intellect, having a sense of justice, human dignity, devotion and loyalty. Both the participants and the audience found value and enjoyment in performing and watching the play. As explained by Eraj

Sodatsairov, Academic Director of ITREB Tajikistan:

"One of our objectives is to help learners understand the notions of search, sacrifice, and spiritual awakening. Thus, the works and life experiences of Nasir-i Khusraw, as a *da'i*, a thinker, and the author of his *Safarnama*, are the best examples for us to use. Children became inspired and thrilled by enacting aspects of his life. It helps learners and the community to learn about Nasir-i Khusraw from different perspectives."

Ardasheri Abdusalom, a student of school # 2 of Khorog, shared the following about his experience:

"I have learnt so much from this drama about the life of Nasir-i Khusraw. While enacting his role on the stage, I felt all his pains and difficulties so deeply and got to know the great responsibility he had undertaken and how firm and loyal he was to fulfil this responsibility."



The play also had a significant impact in developing the acting skills and, more importantly, the confidence of students. Here are some of their feelings after completing the performance:

"It was for the first time that I took part in such a drama. I used to be shy and afraid to participate in big events like this but now that sense of fear has gone. From this drama I got to know that if a person wants, s/he can change his/her life. Moreover, I understood that a person should not imitate others but rather be a seeker and researcher. Participation in this drama increased my love for the craft and theatre." *Aligulov Maqsud, student of the Aga Khan Lycee*

"In the past, I was not confident and did not believe in myself. However, after participating in the drama I got to know that I have the ability and can handle the job quite well." *Hamroz Amrinazarzoda, student of the Aga Khan Lycee*

The organisers and participants of the drama were pleased and content with their work. The participants gained knowledge and understanding of certain key messages from Nasir-i Khusraw's life and also developed confidence in their acting skills.

The IIS Secondary Curriculum approaches Islam in general, and the Shia Ismaili tradition specifically, from humanistic, civilisational and normative perspectives. A way STEP teachers achieve this overall aim is to provide young people with the space and opportunity for creative self-expression through the use of drama, role-play, music, creative writing and other similar activities.

MANTO: THE MAN, THE MOVIE

Shahida Khan and Faheem Hussain

It is often said, 'writers are the conscience of a nation'. This holds especially true in societies that condemn or feel threatened by any efforts to question the prevailing ideologies. It takes a brave soul, a maverick, to do the unthinkable – identify the hollow foundations of such ideologies and challenge them. Saadat Hassan Manto (1912–1955) was one such maverick. The foremost short-story writer in Urdu of the 20th Century, Manto challenged the traditional ideas of what it meant to be a pious and honourable (*ashraf*) Muslim in pre-partition India as well as in the newly established Pakistan. Manto refused to conform to the societal dictates of his age and denounced them as an attempt to rob the 'weaker' members of society, namely the women and the poor, of their right to a dignified life. He was ostracised repeatedly for his honest portrayals. However, since he breathed his last in Lahore in 1955, the perception of Manto has changed. Today, he is considered a legend and has been posthumously awarded many national and international honours.

Pakistani cinema has recently flourished and produced a number of high quality films that provide a window into the socio-cultural situation of the country. Amongst these is the eponymously titled production, *Manto* (2015), which is based on his life and stories.

The film chronicles the journey of Manto both as a man and as a writer. Born into a middle class family, Manto is the son of his father's second wife. His mother dies when Manto is still a child, and Manto thereafter goes to live with his father's first wife and her children. An unwelcome guest, he is often ridiculed for his mother's 'dubious lineage' (she was from a poor family) and reminded of his alien status in the house. This experience contributes to his most brutally honest reflections on human misery and social injustice in Urdu literature.

Manto's broken soul is shown to find solace in two things – alcohol and the pen. While he uses the former to escape the haunting demons of his past, the latter is used as a scalpel to conduct postmortems on society's ideas of morality. He seeks to question the religious and traditional views of women and sexuality, and to free society from the 'tyranny of the majority', to borrow a phrase from the philosopher, John Stuart Mill.

The film then takes us into one of the most difficult periods of Manto's life. The Partition of India in 1947 and the subsequent migration of the population to either India or Pakistan shake him to the core of his being. He suffers first-hand the horrific process of this migration, and chronicles the crippling effects it has on identity and religion – effects which are to present continuous challenges to the newly independent

state of Pakistan for decades to come. He is castigated for being 'indecent' and is tried for obscenity many a times; he is considered a danger to the society's centuries old traditions and beliefs. However, this does not stop him from unrelentingly recording the depravity of some of the most powerful members of society. He famously says, 'If you find my stories dirty, the society you are living in is dirty. With my stories, I only expose the truth.'

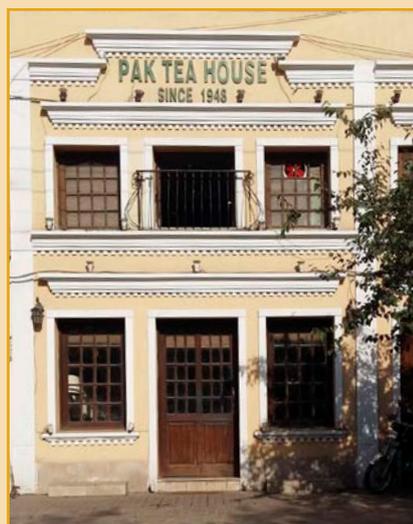


The film allows viewers a glimpse into Manto's world of imagination, where the characters of his stories are alive and in action. Throughout the movie, Manto's female 'alter ego' (*ham-zad*) helps him to realise and reiterate the dynamics of self, his mission as an artist, and his ability to expose the power struggles of a degenerating humanity. She enlightens Manto on the similarity in the patterns of growth of his life and of those of his characters, highlighting, in the process, the intricate relationship between art and life.

Ironically, Manto – the champion of the downtrodden – is shown falling short as a husband and father. Although he loves his three daughters immensely and seems a devoted husband, his addiction to alcohol causes a continuous struggle for his family to find financial and psychological security. This contradiction in Manto's character is depicted beautifully in the scene where Manto, instead of buying medicine for his critically ill daughter, uses the money to purchase alcohol for himself.

Thus, in addition to rebellion against obscurantist ideas, this film is a tale about yearning – Manto's yearning to create awareness of the evils of extremism, prostitution and the hypocrisy of the establishment – that would lead to positive action to root these ills out of society. The conflict presented in the movie between

Manto 'the writer' and Manto 'the father and husband' does well to convey the message of a man's struggle against the growing pestilence of his passion. The film invites viewers to reflect upon the tensions and ethical dilemmas in society, not just during Manto's time but today as well.



Adatia, Shelina (with Karim Mitha). *Toques and Tea, or Chappals and Chai: Muslims, Media, Masti, and Meaning*, presented at the Second Annual Conference of the British Association for Islamic Studies (BRAIS), London, 13–15 April 2015.

Ajani, Rafiq. *Mapping the Landscape of Muslim Responses to Biomedical Ethics*, presented at the Fourth International Conference on Islam and Bioethics, Coimbra, Portugal, 5–6 August 2015.

The Concept of 'Rindī' Classical Persian Literature, presented at the IIS PhD Seminar, London, 23 October 2015.

Al-Hawat, Sinan (with Wisam Elhamoui). 'In The Midst of Violence: Local Engagement with Armed Groups', in *Conciliation Resources* online, ed. Zahbia Yousuf and Sophie Haspelslagh, 2015. Available at <http://www.c-r.org/accord/engaging-armed-groups-insight/syria-civilian-interaction-armed-groups-syrian-conflict>

Ali, Adnan Fida. *Strategies that can be Incorporated into the Classroom Setting to Assist Students in the Process of Internalizing Content in General Education*, presented at the First Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) General Education Conference, 'Reforms in General Education', Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, 28–29 March 2015.

Ali, Salma. *Exploring Global and Local Issues in Order to Enhance Students' Awareness Concerning Service to Society: A Study in a Public School in the United Arab Emirates*, presented at the American Canadian Conference for Academic Disciplines, Ryerson University's International Learning Centre, Toronto, Canada, 18–21 May 2015.

Ali, Zohra. *Image-Text Relations: Use of Multimodal Instruction in Teaching the MSC Curriculum within the Religious Education Context of Karachi*, presented at the Annual Conference of The International Journal of Arts & Sciences (IJAS), Joseph B. Martin Conference Centre, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, 26–30 May 2015.

Think-Aloud: Teaching Students How to Read in a Secular Teacher-centred, Religious Education Context in Karachi, presented at the Annual Conference of The International Journal of Arts & Sciences (IJAS), Joseph B. Martin Conference Centre, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, 26–30 May 2015.

Ali-de-Unzaga, Miriam. 'North African Textiles: A Historical Perspective', 'Moroccan Textiles' and 'Tunisian Textiles', in M. Ali-de-Unzaga, D. Clarke, B. Gardi and K. Thakarin, eds., *African Textiles: The Karun Thakar Collection*. Munich, Prestel, 2015.

Islamic Andalusī Art and Material Culture, lecture given at The Institute of Ismaili Studies for the STEP Study Trip to Andalusia, July 2015.

Beyond Beauty: Rural Textiles, People and Values, presented at the IIS PhD Seminar, London, 24 October 2015.

Ali-de-Unzaga, Omar. *The Qur'an, Tafsir and Ismaili Approaches to the Qur'an*, presented at the Waezeen Refresher Programme of ITREB UAE, Dubai, 14–15 May 2015.

A Thousand and One Interpretations of the Qur'an, presented at the Ismaili Centre, Lisbon, 17 September 2015.

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