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AIPS Short-Term Research Grant Final Report

Project: *Voicing Dissent: Urdu Literary Modernism and the Progressive Writers in 20th-century South Asia*

I received a research grant from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies to fund archival research in Lahore for my second book, *Voicing Dissent: Urdu Literary Modernism and the Progressive Writers in 20th-century South Asia*. The grant allowed me to spend about six weeks in Lahore, where I worked primarily at the Nuqush Center at Government College University, Lahore, and met with and conducted interviews with relatives of Saadat Hasan Manto and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. I was also able to consult archives at the Punjab Public Library. In addition to these research activities, I gave a talk on the need for a standardized Urdu research manual at Government College University, Lahore at an international seminar on this topic. I also participated in a one-day workshop at the Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS for prospective graduate students in the Humanities interested in applying to graduate schools in North America. This workshop was attended by about 50 students and resulted in a website with online materials and model documents:

<https://gradappinitiative.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html>. Finally, I met with colleagues at Government College University, Government M.A.O. College, and LUMS.

At Government College University I worked primarily with Urdu literary journals from 1935 to 1975, including *Adab-e Latif*, *Adabi Duniya*, *Nairang-e Khayal*, *Nigar*, *Nuqush*, *Savera*, and *Seep*. I studied and documented the major writers, genres, illustrations, debates, and controversies covered in these journals. While progressive and modernist writers tend to be studied separately and are described as diametrically opposed to each other, my research revealed substantial overlap between these two groups. Writers identified with either the Progressive Writers' Movement or the Halqa-e Arbab-e Zauq were published next to each other in the same journals, and writers of each camp were often featured prominently in the other camp's official organs. Furthermore, the terms of debate for the dominant aesthetics of the time were constantly being worked out in the journals, through articles and published responses to those articles. Readers' letters, reports, and other public messages were a prominent and regular feature of the journals, and pointed to a diverse and engaged public sphere for periodicals.

At Government College University I also consulted published collections of letters such as those published by *Nuqush*, early editions or out of print copies of books, and special issues of important journals marking the death of important authors such as Manto and Krishan Chander. I am very grateful to the Vice Chancellor, the Chief Librarian, and staff of the Library and the Postgraduate Library at Government College University for granting me access to the collection and facilitating my research.