

AIPS Travel Grant Final Report

Project Title: Three Women in Elias' Khwabnama

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Conference: Annual South Asia Conference

Location: Madison WI

Dates: October 18-22 2023

1. Significance to Pakistan Studies

The roundtable interrogates a critical historical juncture in the study of South Asia, i.e. the partition of Bengal and the creation of Pakistan in 1947. Elias' novel is located in a problem space, in which 1947 both harkens to the coming community of Muslim peasants and is the one to which one has to return to be able to speak of this possibility, shadowed by the impossibility of a peasant centered imagination since the formation of Pakistan and later Bangladesh. It brings together Pakistani and Bangladeshi scholars in a critical forum to discuss this historical problem space, thus adding critical dimension to the study of Pakistan pre-1971.

My paper explores scenes of domesticity in the novel *Khwabnama*, as sites where exhaustion and potential descend into despair and madness are central modes through which several characters mediate the novel's broad sweep of events from the wartime famine to the post-Pakistan Tehbhaga movement in rural Bengal. My paper makes a significant contribution to the study of Pakistan by integrating Bengali and Urdu literary and fictional sources to understand more carefully the construction of domesticity, interreligious relationships, and social and political upheaval in the aftermath of the creation of Pakistan, in both erstwhile East and West wings.

2. Key Outcomes and Deliverables

Key Outcome: Received feedback and discussion on a forthcoming paper currently under review.

Deliverable: Peer reviewed article based on conference paper.

Key Outcome 2: Discussed my book project with mentors at the AIPS Dissertation to Book Workshop and received feedback and guidance on circulating my book proposal and finalizing the book manuscript.

Deliverable 2: My eventual first monograph (long-term deliverable)