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MARGINALISED VOICES AND FOUCAULT'S PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINARY POWER AND BIOPOLITICS IN UZMA ASLAM KHAN'S *TRESPASSING:* SALAAMAT AS A CASE STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Uzma Aslam Khan's Trespassing (2003) examines the complex dynamics of marginalisation through the character of Salaamat, who reflects the intersections of environmental degradation, displacement, and socio-political exclusion in a postcolonial South Asian context. Drawing on postcolonial ecocriticism and Michel Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, this study argues that the novel reveals subtle mechanisms by which power regulates and marginalises individuals, communities, and ecological resources in formerly colonised societies. Salaamat's story underscores the deep interconnection between human and non-human life, illustrating how environmental capitalism, surveillance, and spatial control commodify both people and nature. As a representative of deprived groups, including religious minorities in Pakistan, Salaamat exposes entrenched socio-environmental injustices. The novel functions as a critical literary intervention, urging ethical accountability, ecological awareness, civic inclusion, and a reimagining of coexistence grounded in equity, empathy, and environmental responsibility.

Keywords: *Coexistence with nature, Colonial Consequences, Corporate intrusion, Ecocritical, Ecology, Identity, Literary representation, Marginalised, Postcolonial.*

INTRODUCTION

In the enriched landscape of South Asian literature, any narrative serves as an influential site of resistance, where marginalised humans and non-humans are given voice, space, and subjectivity. It is also the cauldron of stories, which has shed light on the cultural complexity and social nuances of the postcolonial canvas. These carefully woven narratives are not only potent amplifiers of marginalised voices but also trenchant critiques of current societal standards, especially those around gender, class, and ethnicity. But what part is played by literature in the resistance of these dominant structures, and how well can they give voice to the voices which they are intended to incense? Masood Ashraf Raja (2018) notes that, whatever these writers write about, their artistic representations appear intertwined with national politics and national representation (p. 1). This research paper examines *Trespassing* (2003), a postcolonial and ecocritical novel by Uzma Aslam Khan, as a case study to explore how literature articulates multiple layers of marginalisation—economic, cultural, and ecological —and how power operates across these terrains. In such a case, Kamila Shamsie (2014)

asserts in an interview that when writing a novel, one must select something with which one is joyfully preoccupied (Mitra, 2014). Upon which Shamsie quotes Gillian Slovo, saying that when he is writing, he feels most himself, and in the same manner, Shamsie thinks that writing is a sense of being home for her (Ibid).

The richness and multiculturalism of South Asian literature may be discussed in terms of gender narratives that, in one way or another, defy the existing paradigms of society, which can be vividly illustrated by works of such authors as Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice Candy Man* (2000) and Kamila Shamsie in *Kartography* (2018). At the same time, the class differences become a suggestive context in the literary works created by Mohsin Hamid, *the Moth Smoke* (2019) and Daniyal Mueenuddin, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (2010) and ethnic diversity, which is praised in the literary works by Jamil Ahmad, *the Wandering Falcon* (2011), is a tribute to the complex tapestry of South Asian literature. These stories discuss the difficulties that each ethnic group faces. Moreover, ethnically and culturally heterogeneous environments can be quite complex, and these challenges shed light on this complexity. However, are these literary images able to transcend the representation of culture to confront those systems that reproduce and perpetuate marginalisation?

Khan *Trespassing* (2003) is a postcolonial ecological novel set in Pakistan, amid an ocean of literature. It equally delves into the intricate details of marginalised voices of humans and non-humans in the fabric of society in Pakistan. Shazia Reham (2021) writes that the isolation of postcolonial literary studies from environmental concerns has limited the field's intellectual reach (p. 115). Moreover, in one of her previous works, Rehman (2011) observes that Khan highlights the interconnections between humans and non-human entities within the framework of multiple nationalisms, religious extremism, and the global economy (p. 261-262). Kirkus Review (2004) notes that *Trespassing* (2003), on the one hand, is a work that resists narrative summaries, and on the other hand, a complex fictional universe that illuminates the actual one and flawlessly integrates the intimate with the greater societal conundrums we all confront today (Reviews).

Khan's narrative follows the protagonists' romantic connection—Daanish and Dia. It becomes evident that Salaamat is merely a supporting character in Khan's work, serving only as a gap filler to keep the main narrative intact; as the reader gets to know him, it becomes clear that Salaamat is a microcosm that represents numerous aspects of marginalised society. The paper aims to investigate Salaamat's character as a case study, analysing his portrayal to illustrate broader issues of cultural, economic, and voice-related marginalisation throughout the narrative. The novel's marginalised perspectives provide invaluable insights into the organisation, traditions, and the enduring injustices of society, and would be used in critical discourse to foster greater inclusivity in the future. But how is this marginalisation positioned, in the novel, not only as an effect of inequality but also as a mechanism of more insidious systems of surveillance and regulation? Michel Foucault (1977) explains the history of the shift towards less visible disciplinary measures that control behaviour through surveillance, schedule, and standardisation. This transformative experience, as exemplified by the panopticon model, not only applies to the confinement of prisoners and the operation of asylums but also extends into social and environmental spheres, where individuals and communities have become subjects of inspection and manipulation. The process of marginalisation and displacement of Salaamat and his people is not only an economic and cultural phenomenon, but it is also the practice of disciplinary power that settles in the industrial space of the urban as well as the indigenous rural landscapes. Analysing through a Foucauldian lens, we will be able to understand how the distorted identity and subjectivity of Salaamat serve as the projection point of corporate capitalism and state apparatus, where conflation is carried out by positing progress as the legitimising reason, and therefore, exposes the underlying criticism of postcolonial rule and environmental injustice evident in the text.

The other layer that goes deeper is Khan's ability to adopt an ecological position by creating a voice

for the non-human world and by exploring the intricate relationship between degraded ecosystems and human activities. The characters in this environmental story, like Salaamat, skillfully navigate societal and environmental changes as they struggle against corporate encroachment on their rights. Is it possible, then, to interpret ecological degradation without the systems that structure the experience of human marginalisation, or are these modes of control profoundly integrated? To get the entire picture of power and surveillance in the context of marginalised people, it is essential to comprehend the processes that govern people in *Trespassing* (2003). Foucault's ideas of power and surveillance offer a significant framework for deciphering the mechanisms of a system that controls the marginalised. Based on the preceding discourse, the current study explores challenging questions on the representation of marginalised voices:

1. How do the marginalised voices at the grassroots level have significance in rooting out the evil from our societies?
2. How do the authors authentically represent these voices, and what is the social position that influences that portrayal?

Such questions highlight the complexities and the weight of representation in literature while calling for thoughtful consideration of social systems and the stories of underrepresented groups.

There are three main reasons this paper is interdisciplinary. To begin with, it introduces Foucault's theoretical framework on the role of power exercised over marginalised individuals and communities, and how this power operates through institutions and social environments. Second, it offers a profound reading of the character Salaamat, as a case study, who embodies various forms of marginalisation, and also discusses the problem of displacement and ecological vulnerability from an environmental postcolonial perspective. Finally, the paper seeks to develop new methods to empower the underprivileged, drawing on the literature to create an egalitarian and just society.

By situating Trespassing (2003) within both postcolonial studies and ecocriticism, this paper will examine how Uzma Aslam Khan's story reinforces an inevitable overlap between human and natural marginalisation, often neglected in recent theoretical frameworks. The character of Salaamat and the novel's overall ecological issues allow Khan to expose the intricacies of power, surveillance, and exclusion that underpin contemporary South Asian Societies, especially Pakistan. Accordingly, this is the extent to which the novel is not simply about the marginal; it is about proving marginality itself. Collectively, this writing therefore contributes to the discourse not only on literary representation and environmental justice but also on more collaborative futures and engaging possibilities, thereby making Trespassing (2003) an essential text for a more inclusive new world.

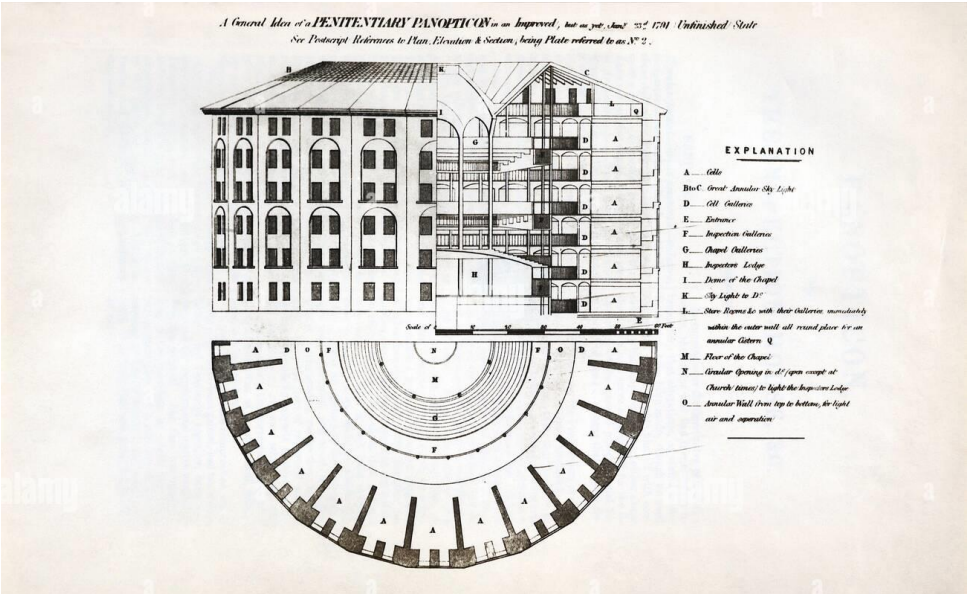
Literary Analysis of Salaamat: From Spectacle to Surveillance

The experiences of Salaamat provide a clear illustration of Foucault's concept of the Panopticon, in which surveillance is a technology of power that shapes the identity and behaviour of the individual by fostering an internalised sense of being under surveillance. Being isolated in a cramped, polluted bus-making shop, Salaamat is exposed to environmental risks and to social exclusion as a form of discipline that shapes his body and his social mobility. The poisonous fumes of the factory, aggressive business establishment, and the humiliating working conditions work in concert with the biases that exist in society, making Salaamat the object of control and marginalisation at all times. This spying, all-encompassing surveillance, indicates the invisibility and all-pervasive character of Foucauldian power, which makes marginalised subjects visible to institutions while depriving them of agency and solidarity. According to Sara Mills (2003), what Foucault's work attempts to achieve is to take thought beyond this perception of power as a repression of the powerless by the powerful to an exploration of how power actually works in everyday relations between individuals and institutions (p. 33). The internalised sense of exclusion, the sense that Salaamat is a stranger in his own land, is reminiscent of Foucault, who claims that disciplinary societies create self-regulating subjects; that, despite their disadvantage, they acquiesce to the power structures.

Michel Foucault (1977) in Discipline and Punishment provides a seminal genealogical study of the changes in penal practices in Western society. At the heart of Foucault lies the shift from public corporeal punishment to mechanisms of surveillance and discipline, grounded in the regulation of time, space, and behaviour. He begins by giving a graphic description of the execution of Damiens in 1757, which was a spectacle of the sovereign's power over the body (p. 3). Such punishments were more than a mode of vengeance but a means of instilling fear, as well as strengthening the state's power over its subjects, especially the marginalised, whose bodies were over and over again in the path of such violence (Elliott, p. 72). According to Foucault, the juridical and penal systems began to discard these spectral displays in the 19th century in favour of more covert and effective disciplinary production processes. The emergence of imprisonment indicated this change. Incarceration was no longer aimed at punishment but at changing people through correction and observation (Foucault, p. 7). Discipline substituted brutality, and its functioning was executed not by pain but by psychological manipulation. The prison under this change became not only an incarceration facility but an institution of behavioural engineering, mainly targeted at those who are marginalised, whose submission to these regimes was not questioned.

Nevertheless, how can knowledge of disciplinary power help us understand the daily realities of marginalised subjects in postcolonial settings, as in Uzma Aslam Khan's novel Trespassing (2003)? Foucault's theory allows one to critically assess Salaamat's lived experience: how he is led to a toxic factory and exploited through his labour, and how he is estranged from the land of his birth. Similar to Foucault's description of the internalisation of surveillance and disciplining, Salaamat's identity is a product of environmental degradation and socio-political marginality; he is therefore an object of visibility as well as dispossession. Thus, *Trespassing* (2003) does not merely echo Foucault's ideas; it extends them to a postcolonial ecocritical terrain where bodies and landscapes alike are subjected to subtle but persistent regimes of control.

Calhoun et al. (2022) posit that one of the most significant conceptual tools in Foucault's analysis is Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, an architectural model wherein a central tower allows constant observation of inmates without their knowledge of being watched (p. 211).



The panopticon prison was designed by the British philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) (Alamy, 2015)

The power of the Panopticon lies in its ability to produce self-regulating subjects. As Foucault observes, the inmate becomes 'an object of information' visible at all times, isolated from others, and thus stripped of opportunities for resistance or solidarity (Calhoun et al., p. 212). A person inside the Panopticon knows they are being watched or could be watched at any time, so they start to watch and control themselves. They act like the rules are coming from inside them, even though they are coming from outside. They end up controlling themselves, as if they are both the watcher and the watched (Mills, p. 46). Hence, the design of the Panopticon renders power visible and unverifiable, instilling the concept of discipline into the minds of the gazed upon and virtually automating the action of control. However, in what ways does this architecture of control ring in the lived spaces of the featured *Trespassing* (2003), where exiled figures such as Salaamat exist within the realms of unhealthy work, environmental destruction, and imposed invisibility? The fact that surveillance is represented by Khan not as a literal tower but as part of economic, ecological, and social organisation implies that the panoptic gaze of the postcolonial world might no longer require walls, because it is dusting, sweating, and marginalising. It is in this way of reading that the novel can generalise the Foucauldian discipline and show how it can be modified to suit new regimes of discipline in the face of global capitalism.

Foucault stresses that such a model of discipline did not remain confined to the prisons. Rather, it was recreated in different institutions, including schools, factories, hospitals, army camps, and other institutions, which all implemented surveillance, scheduling, and down-up methods of observation (Calhoun et al., p. 213; Mills, p. 45). Such institutions oversee and control the fringe, the poor, the criminalised, the mentally ill, and the non-conforming. In this respect, discipline serves as a normalising power that not only trains bodies but also shapes subjectivities to conform to society's expectations. But how does such an institutional logic of control work in the postcolonial terrain of a place such as Pakistan, where new neoliberal governments magnify the remnants of colonialism? In *Trespassing* (2003), Khan indirectly demonstrates how disciplinary power pervades both urban and rural space, where Salaamat's workspace is a microcosm of the factory-prison, and his dispossession is the normalisation of structural exclusion. The novel, hence, carries Foucault's disciplinary society into the context of postcolonial daily life, where marginalised characters are manipulated into internalising social hierarchies under the banner of economic development and institutional normalcy.

This change is traditionally associated with broader structural shifts, such as demographic growth, the weakening of feudal models of authority, and the emergence of the capitalist mode of production. According to Foucault, the growing population of floating people and the expansion of the economy demanded new forms of regulation beyond traditional models of sovereignty. Discipline was introduced as a way of controlling the people and assimilating them into productive systems (p. 214). At the same time, with the emergence of the bourgeois legal order, a so-called egalitarian political system was created that, while it relied on micromechanisms of policing and regulation to ensure social order, was nevertheless marked by inequality (p. 216). But does this historical pattern of control reveal the processes of exclusion that continue to take place in postcolonial societies that are bound by colonial pasts as well as by neoliberal forces? In *Trespassing* (2003), the Author Khan predicts that characters such as Salaamat, who are not part of the promise of modern progress, are essential to maintaining systems that support it. His position as a manual worker in an industrialised workspace reflects Foucault's claim that disciplinary power is directed against people deemed economically necessary and socially disposable. In this respect, the marginalisation of Salaamat is not just a story of poverty, but the product of a restructuring of society by new forms of power.

Notably, Foucault anticipates how power and knowledge are interwoven in these institutions. The prison is a carceral apparatus and a place of knowledge production, where prisoners are recorded, scrutinised, and redefined through well-choreographed practices. This codification and classification of behaviour is a novel form of

power. One that aims at people and implements power according to scientific and administrative protocols (Foucault, p. 231). According to postcolonial theory, colonialism was not simply the domination of a population by a strong foreign presence over an otherwise helpless group. Instead, it was an uncertain, trembling possession of a land, which was not had just by force and conquest, but by domination of knowledge and information. This domination was continually under scrutiny and continuously had to be guarded against opposition (Mills, p. 30). In *Trespassing* (2003), this relationship between power and knowledge surfaces in the way industrial and political systems reduce figures like Salaamat to mere data points—anonymous, replaceable workers whose lived experiences are rendered invisible by the very bureaucracies meant to manage them. Is the dehumanisation of labourers through institutional 'knowing' a modern-day extension of this disciplinary logic? Khan critiques the reproduction of the carceral logic of modern surveillance through the social invisibility and ecological vulnerability of Salaamat, as knowledge is extracted and agency is denied through contemporary institutions such as factories, urban planning systems, and state policies.

A similar point of view is also available in Asylums (1961) by Erving Goffman, who studies the essence of so-called total institutions, especially mental hospitals. According to Goffman, such institutions can be of five types. Still, he pays attention to the second (people perceived as a threat to society: prisons, concentration camps), the institution housing individuals who are perceived to be both incapable and dangerous, including large state-run mental hospitals (p. 16). These institutions impose on themselves what Goffman terms the mortification of the self, a ritualised death of personal identity through mandatory bathing, haircutting, and even the distribution of uniforms (p. 26). Like Foucault's Panopticon, the asylum obliterates boundaries between public and private life, exposing individuals to total visibility and control.

Both theorists underscore the regulated, often dehumanising nature of daily routines. Goffman observes that patients are subjected to infantilising rituals, such as eating all meals with a spoon or standing at attention (p. 30), while Foucault highlights how regulated timetables shape inmate subjectivity (p. 233). Both institutions deploy surveillance through systematic record-keeping, Foucault through behavioural logs and medical files (p. 231), whereas Goffman through institutional dossiers that catalogue discrediting personal information (Goffman, p. 32).

But what happens when this totalising control is transposed onto the socio-economic margins of a postcolonial state? Postcolonial thinkers believe it is essential to say that the way colonial powers described colonised people was wrong or false. For example, during colonial times, British writers often wrote that people in India and Africa were lazy, dirty, or backwards compared to the modern West, and postcolonial theorists want to challenge those harmful and unfair descriptions (Mills, p. 75). In *Trespassing* (2003), Salaamat's working life mirrors the logic of these institutions: stripped of privacy, identity, and autonomy, he is made visible only in terms of his utility to the state and industry. Through this parallel, Khan critiques the broader societal mechanisms, industrial exploitation, bureaucratic erasure, and socio-political neglect that function like modern asylums, producing docile, depersonalised subjects while masking their subjugation as care or progress.

Conclusively, together, Foucault and Goffman offer a compelling critique of how modern institutions discipline and regulate the marginalised not merely through physical containment but through epistemological and psychological transformation. Constant surveillance, behavioural regulation, and identity reconstruction do not reform but transform marginalised subjects into governable subjects in dominant systems of power. This change is evident in Salaamat's lived experience in *Trespassing* (2003), in which industrial spaces have become disciplinary institutions. He is made fungible to the capitalist machine and cannot have agency, community, or even spatial agency.

The final argument by Foucault that disciplinary practices constitute a pervasive form of social control goes beyond institutions such as the prison or asylum and permeates daily life. He mentions that the Panopticon becomes a generalisable

function (Calhoun et al., p. 213), defining how power is wielded unseen across a variety of institutions. This diffuse power in the setting *of* Trespassing (2003) is not only found in factories or bureaucracies, but also in landscapes, relationships, and even ecological systems. The story of Can Salaamat, then, can be described as an indictment of a society in which marginalisation is tantamount to being permanently in the view of authority, and invisibly in the view of justice, rights, and recognition. The novel, therefore, not only condemns exclusion but also the processes by which marginalisation should be seen as the order of the day, effective, or even natural.

Salaamat: A Foreigner to His Land

The Prologue of the text: Death starts with a female turtle nesting among fishing boats that soon throng the once-clean shore (Khan, p. 1), making *Trespassing* (2003) an instant entry in the narrative of an ecological intrusion. The picture of an animal performing a ritual from primitive times under fire is the expression of Uzma Aslam Khan's environmental criticism: the human invasion has made nature a place of brutality, where industrial capitalism drains it of beauty and life. The visual sign of this invasion is the boats that have become like giant moths (Ibid.) with their mechanical power crushing the Indigenous and natural life cycles.

Khan is a representation of a nonhuman-human coexistence breakdown by means of Salaamat, a boy in a fishing society located near the coast. His instinctive understanding of the turtle and the eggs (Ibid.) is in strong contrast to the violent exploitation of outsiders. This scene, in which the turtle identifies him, is the interspecies solidarity against capitalist erasure. So, it means that the only character who can have a non-extractive relationship with nature is not only marginalised but also dispossessed?

Salaamat and her family are on the move due to ecological depletion, which they experience as a Form of Trespass (p. 2). The novel tackles the displacement caused by environmental degradation. The fact that Salaamat is traumatised by seeing the eggs of the turtle destroyed (p. 122) and the fact that he is assaulted brutally is not just a signal of personal loss but also of how extractive systems make people silent and disempowered. Their saving a huge turtle turns out to be a symbolic stand, and the non-human world is portrayed not as a victim of the situation but as a participant in the story, fighting environmental injustice.

Taking place in Sindh during the 1980s and 1990s, and in Karachi, Thatta, Makli Hills, and Badin, *Trespassing* (2003) follows the spread of environmental capitalism that renders whole communities, such as Salaamat, expendable. Traditional lifeways have been destroyed, and their downfall is reflected in the wilting of plants and the depletion of freshwater, as Khan documents in visceral prose (p. 359). Here, Salaamat's narrative provides a heart-rending point of entry into understanding how environmental and social marginalisation intersect in neoliberal developmentalism.

Although Salaamat is based in his own Indigenous fishing community, he also experiences a deep sense of alienation in the Karachian sprawl. The people who call him an outsider are the same people who inhabit his own ancestral lands, and he questions how they could refer to him as an alien, yet we were the first people in Karachi (p. 131-132). His displacement is not only geographic but also ontological. The displacement is a compulsory disconnection with land, identity, and history. As Salaamat (2009) notes, the longing for his home country represents more of a break that transcends the physical distance to the essence of cultural disinheriting (p. 107).

Khan builds Salaamat as a character upon whom the brutality of environmental capitalism and social marginalisation meet. Imprisoned in a toxic bus-making garage, he comes out with bloody eyes and stomach-ache as a result of day-to-day exposure to poisonous fumes (p. 238-239), which is not just a sign of physical degradation, but an indication of how postcolonial capitalism disciplines and exploits marginalised bodies. The whole urban environment, including contaminated air and dehumanising labour, is a Foucauldian institution in which space, health, and labour are well regulated to curtail dissent and assimilate displaced populations (pp. 233-401). Here, we can see Foucault and his concept of a docile body,

regulated by spatial confinement and biological control. However, how does the invisibility of the ordeal of suffering Salaamat has endured reflect the broader dynamics of urban marginalisation and ecological forgetting? This point reminds the researcher of a beautiful short poem written by Gwendolyn Brooks:

We cool. We
Left school. We
Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We
Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We
Jazz June. We
Die soon. (Melhem, p. 128).

We Real Cool (1959) by Gwendolyn Brooks (Poetry Foundation) explores the tension between existential freedom and fatalism. The pool hustlers claim to be free individuals, break the rules, and become rebels, but their decisions lead to their demise, which proves the fallacy of their autonomy. This poem questions whether creating a rebellious identity in opposition to society is actually liberating or merely a pathetic improvisation of meaning in a world with few effective choices. Through a Foucauldian lens, the rebellion exemplified by the pool players is a manifestation of how power functions through norms internalisations—what can appear as resisting power is produced by the same structures its rebelling against; likewise, in Khan *Trespassing* (2003), whenever there is an act of resisting, it is usually an expression of complicity in hegemonic discourses and not an act of independent action at all.

However, in Salaamat's case, despite his marginal position, he fiercely resists corporate intrusion, defending his community's sea boundaries (p. 2). His intimate bond with land, 'sentimental' and 'catalytic' (pp. 18, 358), becomes both a source of strength and trauma. The environmental collapse he witnesses upon returning to the coast (p. 255) encapsulates Khan's ecocritical warning: that indigenous worlds are being sacrificed for a development narrative built on erasure. His profession, as well as his mother's labour on behalf of people who displaced them (p. 132), revives the cycle of historical colonisation of oneself, in which the displaced are made to serve those who displaced them.

Thus, Salaamat, as a narrative counterforce, is his opposition, his struggle, and his environmental consciousness that shines a light on the ecological destruction and the dehumanising effects of developmentalism. Khan, through him, considers ecological conservation and the rights of Indigenous people (p. 390). Yaqoob and Irum (2016) observe that Salaamat struggles to introduce readers to the question of what knowledge and a sense of belonging are rejected when the voices of marginalised groups are not acknowledged in the planning and policy formulation processes in cities (p. 18).

The path of Salaamat can be seen as an illustration of how *Trespassing* (2003) is restructuring Foucauldian disciplinary power in a postcolonial ecological context, where surveillance, displacement, and environmental degradation are combined to control and silence subaltern lives. His bodily dislocation and physical pain show how marginalised bodies are places of ecological violence as well as institutional control. However, with his close relationship with land and non-human life, Salaamat disrupts the normal hierarchies of modernity and development. Their disconnected subjectivity turns out to be an effective counter-narrative of the expenses of capitalist growth and erasure approved by the state. The text of Khan is therefore a literary and political intervention, a pre-emptive call to the decolonial ecological justice ethics.

Salaamat's Interconnectedness with Nature

Khan masterfully portrays Salaamat's struggles within an industrialised landscape, highlighting his profound connection to the natural world. Along the coast, Salaamat's introspective walking evokes a longing for the lost village, abandoned by the foreign trawlers licensed to fish (p. 236). This involuntary moving away is reminiscent of Foucault's power of discipline, which restructures space and labour such that the disenfranchised communities can be ruled. Salaamat's heartache is further stretched to his lack of harmony with nature, which is dramatically expressed through his painting of images of his old lifeboats, swarming seas, dunes, and turtles on his bus,

defying environmental and social injustices (p. 239). His ecological knowledge, surprising to viewers from urban environments, validates indigenous epistemologies (p. 234) that remain invisible to hegemonic capitalist structures. His internalised surveillance and moral destabilisation under postcolonial rule are exemplified by his paranoia, which at one point manifests as a fear of becoming like the boozy poacher of his village (p. 255). As a result, Khan portrays Salaamat as a victim of multiple wrongs: imperialism, capitalism, ethnic conflict, and displacement. She raises the issue of marginalised people who are used by those in power, enduring degrading labels and social exclusion (p. 354). But does the passive resistance of Salaamat in terms of memory, nature, and silence, as a form of resistance, imply a form of agency that escapes or, at least, re-creates a Foucauldian grid of visibility and control?

Salaamat's community is food-deficient as they have been marginalised and lost traditional livelihoods. Thus, the invasion of outsiders to the Indigenous lands is not just the economic story but a story of capitalist invasions of the Indigenous cultures (Irum and Yaqoob, p. 17). Khan points out environmental degradation and forced displacement (p. 359). It develops Foucault's biopolitical regime in which life itself is administered and controlled. Freedom for Salaamat is a re-connection to his ecological and cultural roots. His moments of solace by the river (p. 353), his sister's advice against violence (p. 365), and his joyful return to wheat fields and children at play (pp. 380, 386) all testify to his resistance to the atomising effects of urban industrialism. But is this return a shattering of disciplinary structures or is it a symbolic eschaton within still prevailing order? The image of turtle hatchlings coming ashore (p. 445-448) is a powerful metaphor for rebirth, not only for Salaamat but for a generation wanting to live in harmony with nature. And Salaamat's submersion in the waves is a ritual exorcism from the dehumanisation of industrial modernity.

Changing the Meaning of *Trespassing* in the Modern World

The story from Salaamat sums up the enduring effects of colonial exploitation in terms of the environment and mistreated people as a whole. The incursion of industrial corporations and the depletion of natural resources mirror colonial modes of domination that reduced both people and land to extractive commodities. As Shubhanku Kochar and M. Anjum Khan (2021) observe, because colonisers were driven by greed, they had little regard for the human and non-human subjects under their control. Because both were ignored, to them, culture and nature, or men and land, were alike and nothing at all (p. 2). This entanglement of ecological and human subjugation is historically rooted, as illustrated by the fate of the docile Dodo, which was wiped out within a century of European contact (p. 3). How does Khan's portrayal of Salaamat's dispossession critique not just postcolonial environmental degradation but also the internalisation of disciplinary power by the oppressed? Here, Foucault's concept of 'biopolitics' offers insight: the displacement of Salaamat's community reflects how modern regimes extend power over life itself, regulating, categorising, and marginalising Indigenous bodies through environmental capitalism. This pattern of structural exclusion is not new; as Srinivasa-Raghavan (2015) notes, colonial spaces institutionalised racism in even the most mundane arenas, where dogs and Indians were not permitted in various elite facilities of the British (Business Standard). M. S. Gill (2005) also recalls stories of signs proclaiming that "Dogs and Indians are not allowed," which marked racial and class hierarchies in public life (p. 86). Such histories, in Khan's narrative, resonate in the violence of ecological dispossession, land-grabs, and social erasure such that Salaamat's body and land sites simultaneously become sites of colonial and capitalist violence.

In settler colonial societies like Pakistan, the structural logic of colonialism still enjoys a stranglehold on the modern forms of exclusion, dispossession, and neglect of the environment. While colonial rule was officially over, the spirit of 'more for me, less for others' has perpetuated inner divisions, which are reproducing the enslavement of vulnerable communities. Ahmed Ali (1993), Twilight in Delhi: The Raison d'Etre, deplores, "There is nothing to be done about the destruction of the infrastructure of the colonised by the

powers of colonisation." (p. xi). Yet how long can we continue to blame others and outsource without looking at the systems that we have supported ourselves in? In his review of *The Last White Man* by Mohsin Hamid, Rizwan Akhtar (2022) comments on the failure of Pakistan to recognise linguistic and cultural rights by linking the tragedy that unfolded in Dhaka and the denial of the birthright of a community, a form of racism that is institutionalised in our own socio-political order - Punjab University Library. As he is well entitled to point out, our history is full of bigotry, discrimination, ethnocultural and geographic conflicts of all kinds. "We are in a beautiful place, and we are in a troubled place at the same time" (Ibid.). Khan's *Trespassing* (2003) functions as a fictional testimony to this reality and sheds light on how both humans and non-humans are made expendable in the service of profit, identity consolidation, and state power. This is not a literary matter only: as Sarah Zaman (2023) notes in her study of urbanism, Lahore is now the second-worst city in the world in terms of air pollution—these kinds of problems mark the material cost of such neglect (VOA). The question is then raised of the articulation of how to break with these internalised and inherited structures of violence that attack not just marginalised people but also the environment that supports them.

The dynamics of elite exploitation in *Trespassing* (2003) resonate, too, in larger structures of structural inequality and dispossession in the world. Syed Mohammad Ali (2022) points out that although deprivation and inequality are global concerns, their impact in elite-dominated developing nations such as Pakistan is especially dire, as the gap between the rich and the marginalised appears entrenched (Tribune). Mohammed Ajeeb (2021), quoting Virginia Post, has it grimly that Pakistani courts are regarded as the bitches of the rich due to the systematic subjugation of justice by wealth (thepenpk.com). Within this context, Salaamat becomes not only a marginalised person but also a figure of ecological and cultural resistance. His close relationship with the turtle and his longing for his lost village are examples of spiritual and environmental disconnection. Hildegard George (1999) recalls Gandhi's reflection, "the measure of a nation's moral greatness is the way it treats its animals" (p. 380), a measure *Trespassing* (2003) struggles with in the light of the violent incursions of capital. Yet this representation also raises an important question: is it possible for Uzma Aslam Khan, as an elite, Western-educated writer, to fully interpret the lived experiences of communities such as Salaamat's without speaking with, not about, them?

However, the symbolic arc of Salaamat's narrative, at the end of which he is seen guiding his nephew and hatching turtles' eggs (p. 445-448), does provide an image of intergenerational survival. His resistance is not just an ecological position, but a cry for postcolonial renewal, cultural memory, and the reclamation of environmental balance. Such a collapse of the boundaries of species in the novel, Salaamat's rescue by a turtle (p. 122), Dia's desire to become a silkworm (pp. 14, 107), and Daanish's desire to live as a nautilus (p. 175), brings about postmodern fluidity which challenges anthropocentric narratives. Eric S. Nelson (2020) advances a similar ethos, arguing for a non-coercive, non-possessive coexistence with nature, in which humans work to harmonise rather than dominate (p. 40). This also reminds the researcher of the Buddhist philosophy of pratītyasamutpāda. It says, "To study the Buddha way is to study the self." The method of knowing the self is by forgetting the self. "To forget the self is to be actualised by things manifold" (Genjoushoan). This is the spirit of interrelatedness, actually of this verse. To forget means that when individuals forget they are separate entities, they become fully in tune with the world around them. Khan articulates, in defence of the claim made by Chellis Glendinning (1995), that we are Earth-born beings whose well-being is conditional on intimacy with the natural world (p. 52), Salaamat, not as a victim, but as an ecological subject, capable of restoring his agency through rootedness.

The novel by Khan, hence, becomes a significant space in which not only environmental degradation but also the co-constitutive nature of dehumanisation or ecological violence in the postcolonial world can be discussed. In a society of self-interest and industrial greed, the pursuit of profit globally has been in flagrant defiance of

ecological balance. Do they contribute to environmental degradation or uphold the ecosystem because of militarisation, uncontrolled industrialisation, or exploitative development? Human obsession with control is a significant question. However, as modern science seeks to address the ecological meltdown through technological intervention, it cannot solve the real problem of severing our relationship with the natural order. The book *Trespassing* (2003) opposes this disconnection by demonstrating, in a complex way, the interdependence among humans, non-humans, and their surrounding environment. It means that ecological healing is not domination and artificial balsam, but the reversion of the integrity of natural cycles. The displacement of Salaaat due to the imbalance of the geo-economic environment only testifies that the environmental injustice is not only a natural disaster, but it is also an indicator of the social and economic unequal treatment. Khan's path is a spiritual ecological adventure, and readers cannot help but consider how they have contributed to the creation of environmental disasters. In this vein, Khan urges the development of mutually interdependent modes of being that oppose exploitative systems and promise ecological balance.

Concluding Remarks

The Foucauldian disciplinary power conceptualisation is what provides the analytic approach to *Trespassing* (2003) as a story that describes ecological and social exclusion. Rather than presenting *Trespassing* as a stinging commentary upon the diffuse and usually unnoticed nature of power relations within postcolonial Pakistani societies, the study by Salaamat explores the relationship between the process of creating authority over the marginalised bodies and landscapes and the capitalistic exploitation of nature, as well as the disciplinary and commodifying processes of bodies, landscapes, and ecosystems. With this Foucauldian prism, the text prefigures a more encompassing message of resistance to hegemony, modalities of control, and creation of alternative modalities of coexistence that respect Indigenous texts of rights and ecological interrelations.

Salaamat is a microcosm of the marginalised voices in Khan's Trespassing (2003), providing a prism through which to view larger socio-economic issues. His very character becomes the emblematic representation of multi-faceted marginalisation as the narrative weaves the intricate tapestry of cultural nuances, ethnic displacement, and ecological violence into another fabric of societal oppression. Khan does a masterful job of portraying Salaamat's plight in an industrialised postcolonial world, including his deep connection to the land and his mission to preserve the environment and culture.

Salaamat's tale speaks beyond the realm of fiction. Finding Black Asparagus is the tale of the long-lasting impact of colonialism, exploitation, and the modern apathy towards vulnerable communities. A similar one is the Pakistani Christians. At the same time, the structurally violent, religiously prejudiced, and spatially segregated slum dwellers suffer from marginalisation as each group is called upon to do dehumanising jobs like sweeping the streets or working as a sanitation worker. Through Foucauldian analysis, one can see how their existence is very much policed through invisible but extensive networks of surveillance through derogatory comments, discriminatory laws, educational hurdles, and housing policies to produce docile bodies and maintain a hierarchy that favours the religious and economically dominant classes. The positioning of Christians as permanent strangers in society exemplifies Foucault's concept of biopolitics, in which life itself can be used as a political tool.

To further bring to the fore the inner truths of such marginalisation and a controlled existence, the poem Anomaly explores these themes from a subjective perspective. The study is primarily grounded in original research and is used to demonstrate the emotional dimension investigated. As it echoes Foucault's concept of disciplinary power and biopolitics by giving voice to a subject rendered marginalised, monitored, and silenced, much like Salamat in the *Trespassing* (2003):

Is this me–
or the echo

of a joke that asphyxiated
on its own laughter?
Am I in the mirror–
Or the fracture within it?
I have been fermenting here
too long, sweetheart.

Let's unpeel the skin.
Forget toenails, polish,
the mask that won't come off.
Erase the tapestry
that insists on remembering us.
Let's strip to a new raw frame–
offer the world
a smarter sickness,
an articulate void.

In the meantime–
let them
drape themselves in their futile glory,
Those who cry
for admiration.
While we invent
an intelligent madness,
a new kind of silence–
on which they'll chant
like hymns.

Let them quiver
in their own broken mirage,
twirl in their luxurious gowns,
practice desuetude, pallid authority–
to linger on us
a silent apodyopsis:
To paint stories–untrue.
A 360-degree panopticon
and call it worship.

Let them own this–
tainted, ephemeral power.
While we question
the bone and flesh of our existence,
probe the future into darker possibilities,
write backwards–discourses on time–
e.g., "What brought us to this point?"
Then,
await...
and forget to leave–
this three-edged prison.

But I–
I am the leftover morsel
of a discarded prose, no one finished.
A broken instrument.
A wrong note.
A ticking clock
no one listens to.
A double entendre
with canine teeth.
And no one flinched.

Contumacious,
they call me–
Freak.
Anomaly.
Accident.
A sermon etched
by a dead UFO,
in a dialect
no one dares to decipher.

For long–
We have endured
their jejune harangue.
Every syntax–a dull sickle.
It slices shallow
but leaves a mark.

We have spent our lives.
Unbeautiful forever.
Malformed–
born with rusted mouths, and
skin stitched with errors at the seams.
But–
taught to kneel,
bow down,
before our own reflection, and
to dub it love?

Though this is a poem of alienation, marginality, and dismemberment of identity with vivid images and a defiant voice, the final discourse places these tensions in the context of Salaamat's life story. It reiterates the broader implications for ecological awareness, communal power, and the exercise of the voice of forgotten histories. Given the symbolic breaking out of turtle hatchlings and Salaamat's position as a pioneer for the new

generation, his story illuminates the need to recontextualise the relationship among the environment, community, and history. It centres on how the silenced voices of marginalisation serve as the foundations for resistance and renewal. *Trespassing* (2003) therefore calls for a radical change - from domination to stewardship, from exclusion to inclusivity, with ecological and human vulnerability at the heart of ethics.

Uzma Aslam Khan asks us to question the validity of systems that make people and nature disposable. Her novel compels readers to ask themselves: if the paradigms of colonialist and capitalist systems continue to serve as the basis for life in the postcolonial world, who really benefits from the illusion of progress, and at what cost to ecology and morality?

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